

## Gian Calandrelli Oral Health Promotion Activity Reflection Paper

For my Oral health promotion activity I chose to volunteer in Tufts Pre-dental day, which was a very fulfilling experience. Speaking to individuals who have a similar passion in dentistry as I do really excited me and made the day worthwhile. To see the excitement in each of the individual's eyes, really reminded me of the reasons I chose dentistry in the first place and that was to make others smile. Most of the volunteering revolved around helping the attendees perform an amalgam restoration, which was a very interesting experience. It was a great opportunity to attempt and improve the communication abilities learned in Oral Health Promotions this year. Using basic language was important when speaking with the attendees as many of them had no experience in the dental field, so I needed to word my sentences carefully when speaking about things such as amalgam, the instruments being used, caries etc. as many of the words were not known. I found myself turning back and explaining what I was teaching them more carefully and found I was using the teach-back method to assure myself that what I was saying was getting across. The method proved very useful in making sure what I was relaying to the students was being properly received. However, Amalgam restorations are very typically very quick procedures, often being finished in about 10 minutes there were many times where there was ample opportunity to just sit and hold a conversation with the attendees. This was my favorite part of the volunteering experience, not only did it help in building communication skills it also reignited my passion for dentistry, which can often be forgotten amongst the rigorous curriculum we, as students, must go through.

Once the amalgam restoration had been completed the individuals took every opportunity to explore the life of a dental student by asking questions about Tufts, applications, classes, and countless other topics. It was a great feeling to be able to use the knowledge gained throughout the two semesters at Tufts to help the future dental candidates in achieving their own goals in attending a dental school and becoming dentists. I was able to help and relate to the students by talking about my own experiences when applying to dental school. I believe by speaking about my time in dental school and my application process, I was definitely able to support the students and possibly reduce the stress that comes alongside applying to graduate schools.

Overall, I thought Pre-dental day was an amazing experience, I would definitely participate again and would recommend anyone else do the same. Having the opportunity to build vital communication skills while talking about something you are passionate about is not a choice anyone should pass up. The experience went so well at Pre-dental day, that I have begun to think about possibly volunteering for orientation for the next incoming class; seeing new faces, that are not only excited about dentistry but also about Tufts School of Dental medicine, sounds like it would be a truly rewarding experience.