

How This Dental Study Club Unified a Residency Program



Dr. James Sconzo

See how Dr. James Sconzo used a Spear dental study club to support collaboration, residency education, and lifelong learning.

The Problem

After more than 40 years in dentistry, Dr. James Sconzo had seen CE trends come and go. But as chief of a dental residency program in Brooklyn, he faced a larger challenge: creating more consistency among attending dentists while helping younger clinicians learn a more comprehensive approach to diagnosis and patient communication.

Like many experienced dentists, he also understood how isolating dentistry can become. Full schedules, patient demands, and practice pressures often leave little room for collaboration or growth.

"We needed a collaborative project at the hospital," Dr. Sconzo says. "I thought a Spear Study Club would fit in perfectly."

At the same time, traditional evening meetings were becoming harder to sustain. Long clinical days and difficult commutes made consistent learning more challenging.

Dr. Sconzo wanted a better system for continuous learning, professional connection, and practical clinical growth without adding complexity.

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The Solution: A study club for collaborative learning

Dr. Sconzo first discovered Spear Education in the early 1990s through a colleague. After attending his first course, the impact was immediate. "Since taking my first course, I have never looked back," he says.

That experience eventually led him to become a Spear Study Club Leader, a role he has held for more than 12 years. What began as a small group of residency attendings became a trusted environment for collaboration, case discussion, and shared growth.

Using Spear Online, members review educational modules before meetings, creating a shared clinical foundation for discussion and case collaboration. Instead of starting from scratch each session, the group can spend more time applying concepts to real patient situations and learning from each other's experiences.

"It's a way for all of us to connect as individuals and friends for the first half hour and then to connect professionally for the rest of the meeting," Dr. Sconzo explains.

As schedules became more demanding, the group moved to a virtual format, making participation easier and more sustainable. "This is a convenient avenue for all of us," he says.

Beyond the study club, Spear became integrated into both Dr. Sconzo's practice and residency program. Residents complete monthly Spear modules and reflections, helping standardize learning while introducing younger dentists to comprehensive care philosophies early in their careers.

"This is monumental for us," he says.

Clinically, Spear also transformed how Dr. Sconzo approaches treatment planning and patient communication.

"It has changed my treatment planning and patient presentation completely," he says. "Simply presenting with photos has made the most difference."

The Result

Today, Dr. Sconzo's study club continues to support clinical growth, mentorship, and long-term professional connections. "It's a great sounding board for both simple and difficult cases," he says.

More importantly, Spear helped create a sustainable system for lifelong learning across both private practice and residency education.

After four decades in practice, Dr. Sconzo still sees education as one of the most valuable investments a dentist can make.

"You might as well get the best bang for your buck," he says. "I feel that Spear delivers on that." The learning Dr. Sconzo built does not happen in isolation.

As a Spear Practice member, dentists gain access to a community for sharing cases, collaboration, and real clinical conversations, including opportunities to join or lead a Spear Study Club.

Because when dentists stay connected, learning becomes more consistent, teams become more aligned, and the work remains fulfilling.

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