The Dental Fears Research Clinic (DFRC), which was established in the University of Washington's School of Dentistry in April 1982 by Dr. Peter Milgrom (a dentist) and Dr. Philip Weinstein (a psychologist), is currently the only university-based dental fears clinic in the United States and is one of the oldest clinics of its kind in the world.

It is a multidisciplinary clinic, with a staff that includes dentists, psychologists, anesthesiologists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, and administrative professionals. Every member of the staff shares these common goals:

- To offer patients evidence-based and innovative treatment options.
- To enrich the fields of dentistry and dental fear through education, scholarly research, and collaboration.
- To contribute to the community through service that helps ensure that those who are in need of dental care receive it.
- To provide individualized care that takes into account each patient's experiences, preferences, concerns, and needs.

Most patients come to the DFRC with a common goal of "facing their fears" about dentistry. The staff recognizes, however, that each person has unique experiences, concerns, and needs related to their oral health. The aim of the clinic is not just to "fix teeth," but also to understand how oral health affects each person's life, and the DFRC strives to treat the whole person, not only a person's dental needs. Staff members work individually with each patient to develop a flexible treatment plan that addresses the patient's dental needs at a comfortable pace. The DFRC's dental and psychological treatment methods are based on years of research and experience and have allowed patients to successfully receive dental treatment, improve their oral health, and feel more confident in their abilities to cope with situations that previously seemed too difficult to manage.

In addition to working with patients, the DFRC is continually involved in research related to dental fear, improving access to dental care, and methods for enhancing oral health. Staff members have published more than 250 peer-reviewed journal articles, 10 books, and given more than 300 presentations at conferences around the world. Collaborative projects include colleagues throughout the United States and in Japan, Scandinavia, Micronesia, Singapore, Canada and the United Kingdom. In addition, members of DFRC staff have completed fifty-four sponsored research-grant projects and are currently involved in twelve NIH-sponsored grant projects, including the Northwest/Alaska Center to Reduce Oral Health Disparities. Staff members have also been invited to serve as reviewers for numerous professional journals, including the Journal of the American Dental Association, the Journal of Dental Research, and Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology.

The DFRC provides numerous educational opportunities at various levels. Faculty members teach several undergraduate dental courses, including Historical and Social Perspectives in Dentistry, Ethics in Dentistry, and Treatment of Fearful Dental Patients. In addition, faculty have supervised thirty post-doctoral fellows and served on 35 Master's thesis and Doctoral dissertation committees. DFRC faculty members also teach several Continuing Dental Education courses in the community. Pre-dental undergraduates have the opportunity to volunteer in the DFRC, which allows them to observe a working dental practice and gain a better understanding of the skills and knowledge required for a career in dentistry.

As well as serving the UW community through participation in several School of Dentistry and University-wide committees and organizations, members of the DFRC staff are also involved in many community-based service projects. For example, several members of the DFRC staff, along with UW dental students, provide care four times per year to southeastern Washington children and adults who would otherwise be unable to receive dental care. The faculty members of the DFRC regularly encourage dental students to participate in community outreach, and UW projects such as "Husky Smiles," a program that provides free dental care at ten Women, Infants and Children (WIC) sites in King County and eastern Washington, have been developed by UW dental students through such work with DFRC faculty.

The staff members of the DFRC are committed to providing outstanding care to patients, quality research and collaboration, and exceptional educational opportunities from the pre-dental to post-doctoral level. The Dental Fears Research Clinic continually strives to provide a unique and outstanding service to the University and the entire state of Washington.

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