



CLOWNSELLORS: A NOVEL APPROACH IN BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

*“The arrival of a good clown exercises a more beneficial influence upon the health of a town than of twenty asses laden with drugs”
– Thomas Sydenham, 1660*

Hospital clowning is also known as ‘Clown Care’. It is a program in health care facilities involving visits of specially trained clowns

- Reduced pre-operative anxiety and management of symptom clusters such as:[^]
- Reduction in anxiety (100%)
 - Reduction in stress (75%)
 - Pain reduction (44%)
 - Improved emotional wellbeing (50%)
 - Cancer-related fatigue (67%)
- [^](Luis et al 2020)

ADVANTAGES

Green et al., 1997: White clown, or clown blanc can help a child to fight the cavitated tooth with a simple restoration or make him/her feel happy about the healthy teeth

Alcantara et al., 2016: Children’s contact with a clown has a strongly positive effect on decreasing anxiety before invasive procedures

Tevatia et al., 2017: Whiteface clown can be helpful in school camps for teaching children about the dental aids, types of brushing and measures to adopt for healthy teeth and gums

Achmad et al., 2021: Clowns are used to overcome white coat syndrome in paediatric patients

Cosi et al., 2022: Clowns can reduce preoperative anxiety in children undergoing dental treatment

EVIDENCE

THEORIES & MECHANISMS SUPPORTING CLOWN THERAPY

YEAR	AUTHOR(S)	MODE	EFFECT
1920s	John B Watson & Joseph Wolpe	Cognitive Behavior Therapy	Anxiety Reduction
1970s	Various	Complementary & Alternative Medicine	Humor-based distraction
1985	James Coyne	Therapeutic Reframing	Reconstruction of a person’s sense of reality
1986	Herbert Lefcourt	Psychoanalytic theory of Humor	Anxiety Reduction
1990	Don Handelman	Drama Therapy	Positive mental attitude

- Jahanimoghadam, F. et al. (2022) ‘Impact of laughter therapy on anxiety and pain in pediatric dentistry: A double-blinded randomized, controlled clinical trial’, Pesquisa Brasileira em Odontopediatria e Clínica Integrada, 22. doi:10.1590/pboci.2022.069.

- Lopes-Júnior LC, Bomfim E, Olson K, et al. Effectiveness of hospital clowns for symptom management in paediatrics: systematic review of randomised and non-randomised controlled trials. BMJ. 2020;371:m4290. Published 2020 Dec 16. doi:10.1136/bmj.m4290

REFERENCES

Dr Vaidehi Patel, Post-Graduate, Department of Pediatric and Preventive Dentistry, College of Dental Sciences and Research Centre, Ahmedabad, India



HISTORY

~400 B.C.: Clowns are probably working since the time of Hippocrates

1976: Patch Adams introduced the first hospital clown

1986: Michael Christensen sets up the “Big Apple Care Unit” with 90 clowns in New York

2008: Therapeutic Clown/Child Life Model describes clowns as “therapeutic vessels” (Koller and Gryski)

2013: Saveetha Medical College in Chennai becomes the first medical institute in India to introduce a fellowship program for medical clown training – Fellowship in the Art and Science of Medical Clowning (FASMC)