

October 31, 2021

Applicant: Lisa Le

Dental hygienist name: Phonsuda Anna Chanthavisouk

(So for some reason the video recording does not have audio, but the interview was recorded and I was still able to provide a summary of the interview due to notes that were taken.)

Phonsuda Chanthavisouk was awarded her Bachelors of Dental Hygiene and Masters of Dental Therapy from the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry, in May of 2020.

Phonsuda stated that she did private practice for hygiene for about a few months after graduating.

Then she went on to focus on working more as a dental therapist with lower income families.

She mainly works with children and is able to do cleaning and restorative work for them. She

also stated that she is able to do extractions if needed. Phonsuda is a hygienist and a dental

therapist part-time and also works for the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry full-time.

She is a faculty member in the dental therapy division. She mainly does research for the school,

and next semester, she will be working with the dental hygiene students in their clinical rotations.

When asked about what she thought is most important to be successful in dental hygiene school,

Phonsuda stated that having motivation. She also stated that remembering why you wanted to be

a part of the dental hygiene program is also important. For her, it was the want to help others and

this is a way to give back to the community. In the interview, she was asked what some of her

biggest barriers and/or obstacles that she faced before and during dental school. Phonsuda replied

that a huge barrier/obstacle for her would be the lack of knowledge about dentistry. She stated

that she did not know that there was a shortage for all positions in the dental field. She also stated

that the curriculum was really hard too because of her lack of knowledge. She was attending

school during Covid, and they were out of the clinic for about 3 months. That made it hard since

she felt she was out of practice and it made it hard to retain information that was learned in lecture. She said especially for the dental therapy aspect, being out of practice for 3 months made it hard since then she did not have as much confidence in her dexterity with the high- and slow-speed handpieces. She then concluded that answer saying that Covid and finances were the biggest obstacles for her in school. When asked what the most challenging part for her in her career as a dental hygienist and therapist, she stated that communication with patients can be pretty challenging at times. A lot of her patients have to rely on their parents financially and many of the families are not well off financially. She said that makes it a lot harder because sometimes they are not able to get transportation to appointments. Phonsuda also stated that communicating to patients about treatment plans can be difficult too because a lot of these families think about the financial aspect of it first before hearing the whole treatment plan. She stated it is important to educate them and give them the knowledge about their treatment plans so that they can make that decision on their own. She emphasized on the fact that being able to communicate that you have empathy for them, and to also understand where the patient is coming from is really important. Many of the people she works with just do not have the resources to make those decisions. Some are even just turning into legal adults so the transition of being able to make their own decisions and being responsible for themselves can be difficult for them. To conclude the interview, I asked Phonsuda on what advice she would give me before starting dental hygiene school. She stated that hygiene school is really hard, but remember to not be so difficult on yourself. Remember that you are also human and sometimes things do not go as planned. She said the best advice she could give is be patient with yourself. Learn to take care of yourself, and appreciate the time that you have with your hygiene classmates/friends. Once

you graduate and start working, everyone goes on their own path and you rarely see them.

However, patience is key, she concluded.