A comprehensive model for the formation of the patient-centered dental provider is proposed and is represented by the metaphor of a tree. The model is the fruit of interviews with dental patients, observation of dental professionals, and review of literature on patient-centered care, patient satisfaction and malpractice trends. Six core relational skills include: Introduce, Solicit, Listen, Empathize, Explain, and Power of the patient (ISLEEP) and are represented by the branches of the tree.

Discerning how to respond to a patient, how to apply the ISLEEP skills, moment by moment, requires being present with a kind intention, the definition of mindfulness. Mindfulness practices, represented by water, cultivate the roots of the tree which are the four aspects of mindfulness: Equanimity, Attentiveness, Self-awareness, and Empathy (E.A.S.E). Rooted in mindfulness, the dental care provider responds with intelligent and kind action, or whole person care, enriching both patient and provider.