

Dentist forms group to improve smiles



JESSICA MANN/THE ORLANDO SENTINEL

EUSTIS — Dentist Mark A. Falco's appreciation for art is nothing new.

By age 8, he was drawing free-hand and developing an understanding of colors, sizes and shapes.

Today he is using that eye for hue and symmetry to re-create his patients' smiles. He calls the technique "smile artistry."

Falco, who recently incorporated his practice with other dentists and specialists to create Tri-Dental

in Eustis, is applying the very latest in dental technology to his cosmetic, smile-improving work.

"I've always believed that a smile is a universal language, which gives someone tremendous value," Falco said.

Helping people maintain or improve the appearance of their teeth has become easier with advances in "polymer technology," Falco said.

Like a growing number American dentists, Falco has abandoned the use of silver fillings and metal crowns. Instead, more and more dentists like him are using bonding techniques, veneers and ceramics to color and reshape teeth. The materials can more closely match the shape and color of a person's real teeth.

The results can cause a mouth of smiling teeth to appear whiter, healthier and cleaner.

The cosmetic use of "dental adhesives" on teeth can make a person look 10 years younger, Falco said. Many of his patients are seniors, but he also sees middle-aged patients hoping to improve their smiles. Falco said improving one's smile can build confidence and even further a career.

"I would say everybody is pleased enough that there is confidence in their smiles. They're not afraid to smile," Falco said of his work. "It does make a big difference."

At his office, Falco has a "guide of smiles," which shows different types of smiles that Falco can try to re-create. He considers hair color and facial composition when helping patients determine the smiles they want to see on their faces.

Falco and his colleagues are dentists and dental specialists, however, not cosmetologists. Patients must have healthy mouths free of tooth and gum disease for the newest restoration techniques to work best. Falco screens his patients before improving their smiles.

Falco considers his "cosmetic dentistry" costs to be reasonable, but he acknowledges that the promise of the procedures, the time demanded to complete them and the fabrication of materials required all add some cost to the dental work.

Insurance coverage for the procedures depends on the carrier and the type of work the individual chooses to have done, Falco said.

Falco is certainly not the only dentist in the area using the new technology, but he is experienced with most of the materials used in smile and tooth restoration.



Anthony Colarossi and Kelly Bresington of the Sentinel staff contributed to this report.