

The Inmates are Running the Asylum: AAO Annual Session 2023

Alan Cooper coined the term “buyer personas” in his classic book, *The Inmates are Running the Asylum* (1999). However, when it comes to education, the “student personas” is important in terms of providing content that is relevant to a group with common interests. The better you understand your students, the better you will be at finding and connecting with groups of students. But that’s only possible if you take the time to get to know your students first. AAO Annual Session is the premier opportunity for continuing orthodontic education for orthodontists. In this educational setting our members are the students and a very effective way to provide relevant content is to determine “member personas”. Once these “member personas” were established, education content and member experiences have been developed to cater to the needs of these various groups.

Gone are the days of separate doctor and staff educational tracks at AAO Annual Session. In two short months (April 21-24, 2023), AAO Annual Session in Chicago will provide content based on AAO Member Personas tracks. To better get to know our members, we collected member data. This data allowed us to identify “member personas”, and content was developed for each group.

The personas include Clinical Techniques: wanting to learn new skills / techniques /tips and best practices; Scientific Advances: wanting access to the science and research; Business Success: seeking resources to run their practice; Inspiration and Well Being: wanting to improve interpersonal relationships and cultivate talent; Innovations and Tech Talk: looking to find what’s next; Visit with Suppliers focused on exhibit hall spending time connecting with suppliers and colleagues; and Engage and Connect: want to connect with peers/colleagues.

You can **Find your path** by logging into the AAO member website and visiting:

https://www2.aaoinfo.org/would-you-rather/?_gl=1*qn6rfb*_ga*NjQzMdA1MDg2LjE2MTAxMTQxNjM.*_ga_92Q35WMSKX*MTY3NjIxNjAwMS4xLjEuMTY3NjIxNjI5Ni4wLjAuMA..

This will allow you to take a short survey and then you will be provided with your suggested “member persona”. After completing the Find Your Path survey, I was identified as a member of the “Engage and Connect” member persona. How do you identify, from the perspective of member personas?

Once armed with this information, you can **Create your experience**. You can navigate/browse the educational content that is available for your specific member persona. Of course, no two orthodontists are the same, so you may wish to tweak your experience to include all the other areas of interest that you may have. With my Engage and Connect member persona, I would like to map my experience to include some lectures on innovation and technology and clinical skills, such as improving my finishing. This will allow me to have a great experience at AAO Annual Session and return to my practice recharged and with more knowledge so that I may deliver even higher quality orthodontic care to my patients.

The world continues to evolve and so do our members. One of the mantra’s at AAO is “Our Members come First”. With the changes in the way we provide members centric content at Annual Session, I think there is great value in allowing the “Inmates to Run the Asylum”. It will improve the experience and value provided to each member of AAO.

If you have any questions regarding AAO Annual Session 2023 or any specific questions regarding AAO. Please feel free to reach out to me.

-Michael Sherman, Trustee.