

SOLUTION: Setting and Maintaining High Standards for Service



CREATING SERVICE STANDARDS

Your organization will have created a set of **behavioral standards**. Often, these standards for behavior will have safety and or service standards included. We will ask your team to oversee the service standards (assisting in their creation if you can, keeping them alive, and training employees how to act and react with high standards for service) The Employee Experience team will oversee the majority of the Behavioral Standards – however this subset belongs to you- the Patient Experience Team.

What if our Standards of Behavior and Service are already in place? How do we refresh them?

Glad you asked! As mentioned above, many times Standards of Behavior are already in place, but may be named something else. (Core Values, Code of Conduct, etc.). It is RARE that these behaviors are “alive” in your organization! Some examples of ALIVE behaviors:

- Employees know what they are, and where to find them.
- Employees point out poor service behavior to others in a positive and affirming manner (this is an advanced culture – you will get there!)
- The Service Standards and Positive Communication Standards are spoken of often and included in conversations of policy change.
- You hear people saying “This is how we **LEAD** around here, how we **TEAM** around here, how we **CARE** around here and how we **BEHAVE** around here. ”



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TIPS FOR UTILIZING BEHAVIOR AND SERVICE STANDARDS AS A KEY TOOL FOR SUCCESS

The Employee Experience team regularly provides educational reminders to employees regarding the Behavior Standards. This can be done in several ways.

First, make sure the team has a regular cadence of educational reminders about your standards of behavior. A calendar works very well ☺. However, there are times in an organization when certain behavior standards need help sooner than their planned month. For instance, maybe the members of your team begin to notice that Elevator Etiquette standards are not being followed. Move certain standards up on your “rollout” when you need to. Remember “current and relatable” is key to maintaining a high standard of behavior!

Delegate some of your standards to other employee driven teams. The **Patient Experience team** can sponsor an educational reminder of service standards. The **HRO team** can sponsor standards related to quality. Please make sure that you still develop a calendar for the training of the behavioral standards. If MANY teams are trying to train standards and get them to “stick” – none of them will! Communication across teams is key.

(See the Employee Experience Team **Tool for Behavior Standards and Positive Communication Standards – Keeping Them Alive**)

Training Ideas

The Patient Experience team initiates campaigns for standards that require more effort to reach a high level of compliance, such as a Positivity Campaign or a “Hi in the Hallway” Campaign. A campaign differs from regular communication and training in that some behavioral standards will simply be an email reminder and a flyer for the communication boards. Those standards that require more effort and validation by the team may be rolled out or trained during a LIVE event, or perhaps a video is made by a team for their standard.

Celebrate People

What is recognized gets repeated. The focus is to bring the Positive Communication Standards “alive” in a positive way in the culture. The “Compliments to Criticism Ratio” of 3:1 applies to communication with employees regarding the Standards. Therefore, be mindful to provide three times as much recognition as you do coaching. **This is vital to maintaining high standards of service and making sure the standards are “lived” across the organization!** This stresses their importance, but equally important is to celebrate great behaviors whenever they are seen across the organization!



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A great tactic for the Patient Experience Team is to write thank you notes as a team to those employees who demonstrate great service and use of the positive communication standards. **Remember- what you recognize gets repeated!** Spend some time (10-15 minutes) writing thank you notes at each of your meetings.

Organizations often have service awards for those employees who are recognized by patients for their great service or are nominated by leaders who have noted them to be high achievers for their service aptitude. Make sure that the Patient Experience Team has a voice in this form of recognition! You OWN the Service Standards for your organization and want to make sure that you can “connect the dots” for employees between their adoption of the positive communication standards, and the great recognition celebrations that happen when employees adopt high standards for service.

Huddle, huddle, huddle, and huddle some more.

(see the High Reliability Team **Solution for Daily Safety Briefs and Daily Departmental Huddles**). Both can be useful and effective places to bring up the positive communication standards for service as the “standard reminder of the day”. Be sure to write the standard on a communication board if you use this great tactic. That assists with memory compliance for employees throughout the day.

Create Peer Champions!

The Patient Experience team is already the peer champions of great service behaviors throughout the organization. However, each department will have role model employees. They can be your go-to champions when needing advice to make the positive communication standards current and relatable.

Communication Boards

These are a great place to put up to date and current work on the positive communication standards. It can also be used as a “why” board for behaviors. It seems odd to have to state the WHY behind great customer service, but not everyone is alike when it comes to how they view great service, and some employees can benefit from a gentle reminder!

Employee-to-Employee accountability



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(vs. just Leader-to-Employee accountability) regarding the Positive Communication Standards will develop over time. You know that your culture is changing in a positive way when employees will recognize each other for upholding the standards and/or “call each other out” when they see poor service happening.



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BRANDING/MARKETING YOUR POSITIVE COMMUNICATION STANDARDS.

A key tactic to making them come alive in your organization is to “brand” your Positive Communication Standards. This is a common marketing tool, and a great reminder for all to elevate service to their internal and external customers when they see the infographic/chart/diagram you have chosen for your service standards.



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September Positive Communication Principle



Say This...Not That/Banned Words

- Words are powerful, choose them wisely
- Respond to the situation rather than react
- Say This...Not That: Rather than saying "I don't know" say "Let me find someone who can help."
- Banned Words/phrases: "That's not my job," "We're short staffed," "Not my problem," and "That's how we have always done it."

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Anything else I can do for you?

Why?

How?

Telephone Etiquette

Why? Telephone interactions are often a first impression of your facility's customer service. Other phone interactions are an extension of the service you provide your patients.

How? Set standards for phone greetings, call transfers, messages, key words (managing up, etc.)

Example: I will find out the answer and call you back.

Service Recovery

Why?

How?

Example:

Say This - Not That (Banned Words)

Why? There are certain words and phrases that, when said to a patient, visitor, co-worker or physician is going to elicit a negative feeling and/or response. There are words & phrases that can garner a more positive interaction.

How? Determining which words/phrases might be heard around the office that are never appropriate to be said. Then, eliminate them.

Example: We are not staffed today.

performing partners!

Some examples below from our high

ication Principles

es, Inc. • Northwest Wisconsin Cancer Center

Managing Up

Why? To communicate positive information about caregivers or services. Transfers trust from a caregiver to another caregiver to decrease anxiety.

June Positive Communication Principle

"Is There Anything Else I Can Do for You?"

- Close out any encounter with this straight forward question.
- Asking this question to your patients, family members, visitors and co-workers gives them the opportunity to ask questions and work through any concerns.
- You are making a personal connection with your customer.
- Patients, family members and co-workers feel better understood and heard.
- Studies show this saves time in the long run.

Active Listening

Why? Being a great listener is a great way to create empathy and trust in a relationship.

How? Make eye contact, ask active listening questions, pause, and take notes.

Example of Paraphrasing: "If I understand you correctly, you said..."

Example of Active Listening Questions: "Could you tell me more about..."

August Positive Communication Principle

Service Recovery

- The issue should be taken care of **as soon as possible** by the **first person who hears it**.
- Implement the 4 As of service recovery.
 - **Anticipate** the needs of your customer - whether that is a patient, family member, co-worker, visitor or provider.
 - **Acknowledge** that their concern is legitimate and important.
 - **Apologize** by saying, "I am sorry this happened to you."
 - **Amend** by asking, "How can I make it better?"

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July Positive Communication Principle

Telephone Etiquette



- Answer as quickly as possible and identify yourself and your department.
- Speak clearly. Remain cheerful, patient and helpful.
- Be honest if you don't know the answer. Find someone who does know the answer.
- Actively listen. Being a great listener builds empathy and trust.
- Address caller respectfully - "Good morning Mr. Smith, how may I help you?"
- Ask before putting someone on hold or transferring them. Say, "I will connect you..." instead of "transfer you". It sounds friendlier.



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