

# Service Recovery

*Customer Service is  
not a department.  
It's an attitude.*

# **When patients receive excellence care and service:**

- They are more likely to use our services again;
- They are more likely to recommend our services to other; and
- They are more likely to talk positively in the community about us.

# **The Challenges of Delivering Excellent Service**

- Not all patients and their families want the same things.
- It takes consistency. Everyone must have the attitude of “every patient, every encounter, every time, I will deliver excellent customer service”.
- There is a lack of an organized structure to make improvements in poor systems that lead to poor service.

# The Challenges of Delivering Excellent Service

- There is a lack of information, data and knowledge about what great service is and what it means to provide it.
- Some leaders feel that they “can’t ask already busy employees to do one more thing”.

No matter how good we become or how much we grow, situations will arise resulting in the unmet expectations of our patients.

The response of your organization to these unmet expectations needs to be standardized throughout every layer of the organization.

This response is termed  
**“Service Recovery”**

# What is a “complaint”?



- A statement about expectations that have not been met.

# A complaint is . . .



- An opportunity to create a partnership.
- An opportunity to advertise.
- An opportunity to improve service.
- A GIFT!

# Recognizing Dissatisfaction

Directly ask patients if their expectations are being met.

Patients/visitors might actually tell you of their dissatisfaction.

- Don't minimize it
- Don't ignore it

Look for signs of dissatisfaction.

Patient may not be forthright in verbalizing their concerns – look for signs (non-verbal)

# Recognizing Dissatisfaction

All Employees:

Radar On.

Antennae Up.

# Why Service Recovery is Important

- For every customer who complains 26 others remain silent
- 96% of unhappy customers never complain to you about the rude or discourteous treatment they receive
- The average “wronged” customer will tell 8 to 16 people

# What Service Recovery is not...

Pleading for  
Satisfaction Scores

Begging for Compliments

An Insincere Apology

# Service Recovery is...

Those actions  
designed to  
alter the  
negative  
perceptions of  
dissatisfied  
customers.



# Foundations of Service Recovery

- ✓ Employee Trust
- ✓ Employee Ownership
- ✓ Employee Empowerment



# Essentials of Service Recovery

- ❖ It must be fast
- ❖ It must be sincere
- ❖ It must be personal

*INTRODUCING.....*

**HEAT**

- H = Hear them Out
- E = Empathize
- A = Apologize
- T = Take Action

# H = Hear them out

- Listen carefully to the concern
- Rephrase what you heard
- Clarify as needed
- Do not be defensive

# E = Empathize

*Empathize: To be understanding of;*

- “That must have been very upsetting/frustrating experience for you”
- “I can see that you are upset.....”
- “This is not the way we like for things to be here at .....
- “We clearly did not meet your expectations.”

# A = Apologize

A sincere apology is a personal and professional acknowledgement that your patient was inconvenienced and disappointed. It does not mean that you were at fault.

If saying the words “I’m sorry” feels like taking on too much of the blame, try saying:

- “I’m sorry you had a long wait.”
- “I’m sorry this happened to you.”
- “I am sorry that you were inconvenienced.”

# T = Take Action.

- Learn what the specific unmet expectation is and remedy it
- “How can I make this better?” or “Is there anything else I can do?”

# T = Take Action.

- If it was a missed meal – arrange for it
- If their room is dirty – get it cleaned
- If it was a missed test – know who to call to schedule it
- If the patient is dissatisfied because they are required to return for a retake of an x-ray or a repeat blood draw, provide them a gas card
- If the family member is dissatisfied with a longer than expected wait, provide them with a free meal coupon for the cafeteria

# Take action to avoid a repeat occurrence

- Report Service Recovery efforts in hand-offs
- Document Service Recovery on Tracking Form
- Implement process improvement plans for common service issues

# Take ownership.

*A problem reported to you  
becomes yours.*

"That's not my area. You need to call ..."



# How do I do that?

- **Follow our new Service Recovery policy.**
- **Use the HEAT approach.**

Ask your leader about a Service Recovery Tool Kit!