

ACHIEVING STANDARDS: BEHAVIORS

*When it comes to standards,
What we accept is what we teach.
What we permit, we promote.
What we allow will continue.*

What

Standards are agreed upon or established means of determining what something should be. To achieve standards involves intentional and deliberate efforts by everyone in the organization. Over time, these efforts become more natural or unconscious (e.g., "this is how we lead around here...this is how we team around here").

Why

Setting and upholding standards of conduct is essential because they serve as the cornerstone for a functional, productive workplace. Without clear boundaries, chaos, shoddiness, and despair can pervade, undermining the organization's mission and the department's reputation. By actively reinforcing outstanding performance and holding everyone accountable, managers not only preserve credibility but also cultivate a culture of excellence, where destructive behaviors are not tolerated. Standards are not just rules; they are the guiding principles that shape the environment we work in and the outcomes we achieve

Standards can help to shape:

- how we behave towards each other, patients, and visitors (e.g., standards of behavior)
- how we communicate (e.g., positive communication standards)
- how we complete our work (e.g., policies, procedures, standard work)
- how our leaders lead (e.g., Leadership Bundle)

Research supports that when organizations clearly define high standards, people feel more valued and engaged, and that leads to better outcomes for patients, employees, and our organization.

Activity

Before we launch into the how, I want you to form groups of 3-4 and reflect on these two questions.

1. What does Healthcare Utopia look like?
2. What do you believe it takes to get there?

Assign a speaker for your group as each group will share their takeaways when we come back together.

When we collectively embrace clear expectations, we empower ourselves to proactively monitor our conduct, fostering a culture of accountability and integrity. By upholding these standards, we not only cultivate a workplace characterized by civility, respect, and support, but also inspire and uplift one another towards excellence.

-McLeod/Tetzlaff

Introduction to Standards of Behavior

"Behavior is the mirror in which everyone shows their image."

--Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

Standards of Behavior are a set of standards that clearly describe the behavior expectations as to how to conduct ourselves and treat others. The standards demonstrate a balanced approach for behaviors related to quality and safety, customer service, people, growth, finance, and community are aligned with the organization's values.

An organization's Standards of Behavior could be referenced, labeled, or branded with another name (e.g., "Vernon Virtues" "I-CARE Standards, DRIVE Standards).

Creating or Updating Standards

The creation and upkeep of standards should involve a representative group of employees, led by the Employee Experience Team (with input from the Patient Experience Team for patient-related standards). This collaborative process not only ensures relevance but also fosters team cohesion and ownership.

- Gain leadership approval before finalizing standards.
- Ensure standards are clear, specific, and accountable, focusing on desired behaviors. Organize them into categories or label them to enhance recognition and adoption.
- Standards define positive behaviors for all, distinct from work rules, which outline unacceptable conduct. Leadership and provider-specific standards may also be necessary to uphold organizational excellence.

Commitment and Re-Commitment Activities

After developing the standards, an organization-wide commitment event marks the beginning of a new culture where everyone commits to upholding high standards. Leaders, employees, and providers come together to pledge their commitment, often with symbolic gestures like signing banners or receiving special badges. Consider periodic re-commitment events, especially after major revisions or at regular intervals.

Department-specific commitment events can address targeted standards, while new employee orientations can incorporate commitment ceremonies. Standards may also be integrated into union contracts, annual evaluations, and provider re-privileging processes to ensure ongoing adherence and accountability.

Training and Campaigning

The Employee Experience team throughout the years ahead will provide “top of mind” reminders regarding the standards through awareness/reminder campaigns in keeping with the communication/training methods organized by the Employee Training & Communication Team.

Selecting one standard, a small sub-set of standards, or an entire category of standards each month to emphasize organization-wide is recommended. Leaders can also do the same in their department(s), selecting those standards that are most important to emphasize or elevate in their specific unit.

Training and campaigning are “forever” tactics when it comes to elevating behaviors. Don’t ever go quiet on standards by declaring victory too soon or considering it a “one and done” tactic. Behavior change is the hardest change of all. And behaviors matter most when it comes to a great culture and great results.

Keeping Alive – Strategies for Sustained Engagement

Maintaining high standards of behavior within an organization is an ongoing effort that requires continuous reinforcement and inspiration. The following strategies can help keep standards alive and thriving:

Standard of the Month - Refresh/Re-Inspire

- Choose a different standard each month to highlight and reinforce. This helps keep the standards top-of-mind for all employees and encourages continuous improvement.
- Use various communication channels such as newsletters, emails, posters, and meetings to announce and discuss the standard of the month.

Opportunities for Recognition:

- Align recognition programs with the standard of the month. Recognize and reward employees who exemplify the chosen standard through shout-outs, awards, and public acknowledgments.
- Use team meetings to share stories and examples of employees living out the standard of the month.

Thank-You Cards Aligned with Standards:

- Send thank-you cards to employees who demonstrate the standards in their daily work. Personalize the messages to highlight specific behaviors and their positive impact.
- Encourage leaders and peers to write thank-you cards, fostering a culture of appreciation and recognition.

Peer-to-Peer Feedback:

- Encourage employees to provide constructive feedback to each other, holding peers accountable to the standards.
- Create a safe environment where peer-to-peer feedback is welcomed and valued, promoting mutual respect and continuous improvement.

Regular Training and Campaigning:

- Conduct regular training sessions and workshops to reinforce the importance of standards. Use real-life scenarios and role-playing exercises to make the training engaging and practical.
- Launch periodic campaigns to remind employees of the standards and their significance in achieving organizational goals.

Visible Reminders and Celebrations:

- Use visual aids such as posters, digital displays, and bulletin boards to keep the standards visible throughout the workplace.
- Celebrate milestones and achievements related to the standards with events, certificates, and other forms of recognition.

Leadership Involvement:

- Leaders should consistently model the standards in their behavior and interactions. Their commitment sets the tone for the entire organization.
- Involve leaders in recognizing employees, conducting training sessions, and participating in standard-related activities.

By implementing these strategies, organizations can create a dynamic and supportive environment where high standards of behavior are continuously maintained and celebrated.

Standards of Behavior Check-In

Instructions: Reflect on the standards within your organization. Think about the great behaviors to be celebrated (those consistently adhered to) as well as those specific standards that should be prioritized for improvement for the defined individuals/groups below.

	ME	MY DEPARTMENT
Great behaviors that always happen	1. 2.	1. 2.
Behaviors that need to be prioritized for improvement	1. 2.	1. 2.

ACHIEVING STANDARDS: COMMUNICATION

Introduction to Positive Communication Standards

*Breakdown in communication is not just a hurdle;
it's the fertile ground where errors take root and grow.*

Imagine a place where every interaction, whether with employees, patients, or community members, exudes warmth and excellence. This isn't just a dream—it's the power of service expectations and standards. Just as employees adhere to basic expectations like clocking in, **setting standards for communication empowers everyone to excel.**

Common sense is not always common practice. - Stephen R. Covey

Positive Communication Standards

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Hallway Hospitality |  Body Language |
|  Telephone Etiquette |  Banned Words/Phrases |
|  Managing Up |  Attitude of Gratitude |
|  Service Recovery |  Narrating |
|  Listening |  Teach Back |
|  Banning Blame & "We-They" |  Handoff |

Positive Communication Standards Snapshot (page 1 of 2)

<p style="text-align: center;">Hallway Hospitality</p> <p>What? The way we greet others when passing them in the hallway.</p> <p>Why? Creates the atmosphere of a "friendly and caring" place. This sets a positive tone when the patient reaches their destination.</p> <p>How? Everyone makes eye contact and greets others (patients, visitors, co-workers, physicians, etc.) they pass in the hallway or common areas. Can be expanded to "take people where they need to go." (vs. pointing or stating directions).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Service Recovery</p> <p>What? The way we respond promptly to a dissatisfied patient.</p> <p>Why? Service recovery is about restoring trust and confidence in our ability as an organization to "get it right" through actions designed to alter or overcome the negative perceptions of dissatisfied patients, future patients, family members, or visitors.</p> <p>How? Empowering a front line ("first responder") approach to Acknowledge, Apologize, Amend/Act, Communicate in response to anticipating or observing signs of dissatisfaction.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Telephone Etiquette</p> <p>What? Standards for telephone interactions.</p> <p>Why? Telephone interactions are often a first impression of your clinic's customer service. Other phone interactions are an extension of the service you provide your patients.</p> <p>How? Set standards for phone greetings, call transfers, messages, key words (managing up, etc.).</p> <p>Example: I will seek out the answer and call you back.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Listening</p> <p>What? Active engagement in understanding others.</p> <p>Why? Creates empathy and trust in a relationship.</p> <p>How? Make eye contact, ask active listening questions, paraphrase, and/or take notes.</p> <p>Example "If I understand you correctly, you said..." or "Could you tell me more about..."</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Managing Up</p> <p>What? To communicate positive information about other caregivers or services.</p> <p>Why? Transfers trust from a caregiver to another caregiver to decrease anxiety.</p> <p>How? "Managing Up" is simply positioning others in a positive light.</p> <p>Example: Your mammography is scheduled at XYZ Hospital. The team of technicians there are all certified though special training to provide you with a high quality exam.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Banning Blame/"We-They"</p> <p>What? Eliminating negative communication patterns about others.</p> <p>Why? Banning negative communication will help to create a more positive employee and patient experience.</p> <p>How? Avoid communications that are negative about others. In particular, eliminate the blaming of others and the "hero"-type statements (e.g., I'm good and they are not).</p> <p>Example: I really wanted to schedule your follow up appointment on that day, but the scheduler wouldn't work with me to make that happen (aka "We-They" - "WE wanted to do something good, but THEY wouldn't let us)</p>

Positive Communication Standards Snapshot (page 2 of 2)

<p style="text-align: center;">Body Language</p> <p>What? Aligning nonverbal cues with verbal messages. Why? The 7-38-55 concept states that 7 percent of meaning is communicated through spoken word, 38 percent through tone of voice, and 55 percent through body language. How? For sincere, genuine, and trusting communication, strive for more self-awareness about the "match" between feelings/emotions and your nonverbal and verbal messages. Example: Smiling and making eye contact while thanking someone. Look/tone of concern when asking someone if they are in pain.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Handoff</p> <p>What? Standardizing communication during transfer of care. Why? Review of over 4800 events by the Joint Commission identified communication as the top contributing factor to medical error, with handoffs playing a "role in an estimated 80% of serious preventable adverse events." How? The consistent use of a standardized handoff protocol/acronym to guide the thoroughness of each handoff, optimally face-to-face (& can be adopted for non-clinical use) Example: I = Introduce S = Situation B = Background A = Assessment R = Recommendation Q = Questions</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Banned Words/Phrases</p> <p>What? Identifying and eliminating language that does not align with the culture. 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 impression & interaction. How? Determine which words/phrases might be heard around the organization that are never appropriate to be said. Then, strive to eliminate them. Example: No longer saying "We are short staffed today" to patients or families.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Teach Back</p> <p>What? Confirming understanding through patient explanation. Why? Studies have shown that 40-80% of medical information patients receive is forgotten immediately and nearly 50% of the information is retained incorrectly. How? Make eye contact, ask active listening questions, paraphrase, and take notes. Example: Ask to assess current knowledge or understanding, Teach to fill the gaps, Ask for them to repeat back in their own words the instructions or to demonstrate what to do.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Attitude of Gratitude</p> <p>What? Expressing appreciation and recognition to others. Why? Patients have a choice (usually) where they seek care. How? At the end of a shift/encounter, thank the patient for choosing to receive care here. Example: It was a pleasure taking care of you today. We know you had a choice of where to have your surgery, and we are thankful you entrusted us with your care.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Narrating</p> <p>What? Standardized explanations during activities or procedures. Why? To decrease confusion & increase compliance. How? Provide the explanation behind our activities. Narration or scripts are not memorized but serve to be incorporated into a personalized and natural part of how we "communicate while doing." Example: For your safety, we ask that you stay for a minimum of 30 minutes after the procedure to monitor for reactions.</p>

How

To deliver on your organization's promise of excellence requires you to always be taking steps to define, teach, role model - and achieve - high standards.

A 5-Step Plan to Achieving Standards

1. STEP 1 - Empower Teams and Leaders

High standards are best achieved when those affected are involved. Empower employee-driven teams for steps 2-5. Leaders also play a crucial role in supporting and facilitating these efforts.

2. STEP 2 - Establish Standards

Set clear and high standards organization-wide. Focus on behavior, communication, and leadership. Ensure simplicity and specificity in standards creation.

Do we really need to remind each other to say "hi"? ABSOLUTELY!

3. STEP 3 - Introduce Standards

Introduce new or revised standards to the workforce through organization-wide training and commitment events. Leaders play a key role in localizing and personalizing standards for their teams.

4. STEP 4 - Promote Diffusion

Continuously promote and reinforce standards through campaigns, visual cues, and validation-feedback loops. Encourage ongoing adoption and spread of standards throughout the organization.

5. STEP 5 - Study and Adjust

Periodically study the consistency and impact of standards. Adjust standards or efforts as needed based on evaluation results. Share success stories and address challenges to further promote adoption.

How can leaders bring and keep standards alive in their units?

- **Grateful Leadership & Feedback:** Leaders recognize adherence to standards, fostering a culture of repetition. Maintain a 3:1 ratio of compliments to corrections and mentor omni-directional feedback.
- **Communication:** Discuss standards in huddles, meetings, and on boards, emphasizing what and why they matter.
- **Rounding:** Pose custom questions on standards to encourage reflection and recognition.
- **Effective Hiring & Onboarding:** Use behavior-based interviews and emphasize organization-wide standards in orientation.
- **Setting & Achieving Goals:** Align goals with standards to impact safety, quality, and satisfaction metrics.
- **Giving & Receiving Feedback:** Use performance appraisals to assess adherence to standards and areas for improvement.
- **Leading Change:** Master the Validation-Feedback Loop for effective leadership.

Activity

Individual Exercise and Reflection “Where do I start?”

Consider the 12 Positive Communication Standards, which 2 would be most impactful to start within your department or organization? Why?

Closing

As we wrap up this topic, let us remember that what we accept is what we teach, what we permit, we promote, and what we allow will continue. But within each of us lies the power to shape a future of excellence, one standard at a time.

QR CODES/LINKS FOR RESOURCES:



[eLearning Course: CapstoneEDU – Achieving Standards](#)

Leaders in Partner Organizations – contact your Initiative Champion

Leaders in Non-Partner Organizations – access more information on course details and pricing via the QR Code/Link

Reflection/Notes: