



# RESPECTING OUR PATIENTS & EACH OTHER

## ...A CUSTOMER SERVICE APPROACH

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# A Customer Service Approach



## *Overview*

- Our Story
- Goal of Customer Service
- Managing Concerns & Complaints
  - ▣ Roles & Responsibilities
- Do's & Don'ts in Responding to Customers
- Lessons Learned

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*Our Story* → *Policy*

- New teaching unit
- Rapid growth of patients
- ..And staff 
- 1-2 incidents → our search
- Need for customer service approach that...
  - ▣ Respects both  and 
  - ▣ Encourages staff to maintain consistent response when disrupted by customer concerns or complaints

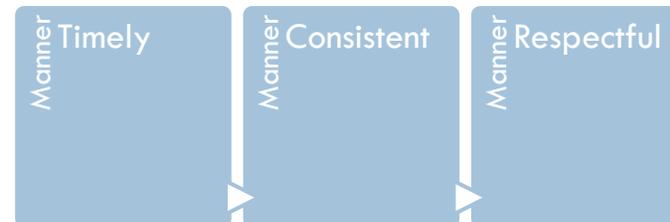


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## *Goal of Customer Service*

- Treat patients & staff as “customers”!
- Recognize professional & regulatory obligations of staff
- Ensure staff responds to patients:



- Ensure staff responds to each other:



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## *Managing Concerns & Complaints*

Complaint defined as...

*Communication that involves interaction between staff and patient, family member or another staff person and that may imply adverse outcomes with legal, medico-legal, malpractice, employment standards or other significant socio-cultural consequences.*

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*Recognize most concerns & complaints*

$\neq$  Formal or defined response

$=$  Good communication & interaction

*Situation “in the moment”  $\longrightarrow$  progresses to complaint*

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## *Rational Process*

Response to concern or complaint can be:

- ❑ Reactive - may be acceptable where staff does not lose control or display dominant emotions
- ❑ Proactive - preferred but not always possible
  - ❑ Goals of conversation or interaction better understood...
  - ❑ Knowledge, not emotion, is dominant



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## *Rational Process*

### Roles & Responsibilities

- Staff
  - ▣ Complaint Form – for patients / maybe staff
- Physicians
  - ▣ Same process / support for patients & staff
- Administrative Lead
  - ▣ Oversee process / recommend suitable outcome / ensure satisfactory resolution

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## *Rational Process*

Following resolution, involved staff & physicians debrief:

- ❑ Discuss: What – so what – now what
- ❑ Connect back quickly to evaluate situation & outcome, including how staff & physicians supported each other
- ❑ If leftover harmful feelings, de-personalize situation & use history as context to lead to more comfortable resolution



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## *Do's & Don'ts in Responding to Customers\**

### *Do*

- ❑ Remove **"I"** from statements & replace them with **"We"**
- ❑ Show empathy
- ❑ Practice responsive listening
- ❑ Validate customer's point of view
- ❑ Apologize for their "experience"
- ❑ Commit to resolution on their behalf

### *Don't*

- ❑ Create power struggle
- ❑ Become personal
- ❑ Lose control
- ❑ Leave complainant feeling their concern is useless

\*Adapted from Doug Dunlop, CORE Training & Consulting

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*Comments & Questions?*

