

10 Best Practices in Service Excellence

Healthcare Edition

1. MAKE A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION

The first thing a patient will notice about you is your attitude. They immediately ask themselves, "Is this person for me?" Be warm, cheerful and friendly.

2. RELATIONSHIP BEFORE TASK

Every business is a relationship business. Whether you are buying a car or receiving healthcare, you want to do business with someone you like. The same is true for patients. Take time to make a connection. There is a difference between 'caring for' and 'caring about.' Do both.

3. POSITION OTHERS WELL

Always speak well of your co-workers, other departments and your organization. This gives the patient confidence and let's them know everyone is working together to provide a positive experience and care well for them.

4. SPEAK IN THE POSITIVE

Emphasize what you can do for the patient not what you can't do. "You can have your medication at 10am" sounds much better than "You can't have your medication until 10 am."

5. NARRATE THE CARE

Think of yourself as a teacher and communicator. Always explain what you are doing and why. Be clear and concise in your communication. Use easy to understand terms, not clinical jargon. Be a good listener. Ask open ended questions. "What questions/concerns do you have?"

6. DO SOMETHING EXTRA

Think of something beyond the ordinary that you can do for the patient. It could be offering them a warm blanket, helping them open their milk carton or changing the TV channel.

7. ELEVATE YOUR LANGUAGE

Avoid the phrase "no problem." Neither of those two words are positive. If a patient makes a request, "absolutely" or "I would be happy to" works well. If a patient thanks you, "you are very welcome" or "it is my pleasure," conveys your desire to delight.

8. RECOVER WELL

When things don't go as planned, follow a simple three step process. First, let the patient express themselves so they feel heard. Second, apologize without blaming anyone. Third, ask how to make it right. If you handle service recovery well, you could leave a more favorable impression than if nothing bad happened.

9. UNDERSTAND YOUR PURPOSE

Always remember that your mission is to serve and care for the patient. The patient is the reason your organization exists and the reason you are paid. Make sure that attitude is conveyed to each and every patient.

10. LEAVE A LASTING IMPRESSION

Tie a nice bow around the whole interaction. Let them know that it is a pleasure to see them and a privilege to care for them.