Statistics

McLaren–Bay Region treats thousands of patients a year. Forty-four thousand in the ED, 16,000 EMS runs, about 300,000 outpatient visits, 17,000 inpatients.... the numbers add up to the population of all of our markets combined. All of these patient and customer contacts are opportunities for us to do things the right way. The good news is that most often, we do get it right. Our "moments of truth" are managed successfully; however, occasionally, patients, families and other customers become upset for one reason or another, creating an opportunity (yes, opportunity) for us to use service recovery tools.

About Service Recovery

Service recovery is the process of regaining customer confidence after a service failure. The goal of the service recovery process improvement team is to empower all employees through training and support with the tools and techniques to handle complaints. When we become aware of a complaint or a dissatisfied customer, our goal is to make sure the complaint is heard within ten minutes. Research tells us that dissatisfied customers will return for service if we respond quickly. It's also crucial to understand a couple of key points about handling complaints.

1) It is not a personal attack on you or your department. Do not take it personally nor act defensive.
2) We should all feel comfortable saying, "I'm sorry." This is not an admission of guilt, as in "I'm sorry we lost your chart," but rather, "I'm sorry this happened to you, and I'm going to do everything I can to make it right."

Service Recovery Tools

In order to remedy customer and patient relation problems, the following tools can be used.

- **1. Service Recovery Care Kits** - Each unit/department has a Service Recovery Care Kit which includes all the tools required for service recovery. It includes policies and procedures, Service Recovery Note Cards, gray chart stickers, "We're Listening" forms, meal tickets, Caught in the Act certificates and other information.
- **2. Service Recovery Note Cards** - Can be used to apologize for a service failure. They can be used along with meal tickets, reimbursement of lost items or other gestures.
- **3. Lost Belongings** - Employees are authorized to reimburse a customer up to $150 for lost belongings. Refer to Security policy #9 - Lost and Found.
- **4. Gray Chart Process** - If there is a service failure and a customer is dissatisfied, the nurse is authorized to initiate a gray chart. An orange "Reasons for Gray Chart" sticker (NS6489D) will be placed in the inside cover of the chart. The nurse will document the reasons for the gray chart. The gray chart alerts staff that there was a service failure. This is an opportunity to turn a potentially negative situation into a positive one.
- **5. Meal Tickets** - If a customer or family member is inconvenienced or a procedure is delayed, employees may offer a meal ticket as a means of atonement. Meal tickets can also be used in other situations as needed.
- **6. Patient Representative** - If the employee needs additional assistance, the Patient Representative can be contacted at 894-3828.
- **7. Cab Voucher** - For use with late discharges when the Courtesy Van and bus system are not available. Can be obtained from the supervisor/manager on duty.

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Recovery's Not Just for Post Op

A Guide to Service Recovery

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Service Recovery

Definition—Service recovery is the process of regaining customer confidence after a service breakdown.

Goal—To empower all employees through training and support with the tools and techniques to handle complaints.

Protocols

- An in-person complaint will be heard by someone within ten minutes.
- Employees can and should feel comfortable saying "I'm sorry" and apologize for any inconvenience.
- Employees can offer resolution to the problem or summon the appropriate person for intervention.
- A formal system recognizes and rewards outstanding customer service performance.

Customers

- Patients
- Families
- Guests
- Physicians
- Fellow Employees and Volunteers

Service Recovery Process

The simple acronym **H.E.A.R.T.** says it all — **H**ear, **E**mpathize, **A**pologize, **R**espond, **T**hank

H.E.A.R.T.

H - Hear

- Listen without interrupting
- Ask questions to clarify
- Restate the information provided ("What I'm hearing you say is...")
- Use positive nonverbal cues and body language

E - Empathize

- Be sensitive to the customer's experience
- Be understanding
- Treat the customer with respect

A - Apologize

- Don't become defensive or shift blame to another
- An apology is not an admission of guilt. It's a way of showing concern.
- It is most effective when delivered in the first person, as in "I am sorry this happened to you. I want to help if I can."
- Customer satisfaction increases 10-15% when the apology is genuine, and sounds like it.

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R - Respond

- Take ownership of the problem
- Explain why the problem occurred (if appropriate)
- Outline what you will do to fix the problem, and provide a timeline.
- If possible, list options for the customer on how to best resolve the issue.
- If needed, provide atonement (meal tickets, reimbursement of lost items, etc.)

T - Thank

- Always end by thanking the customer for sharing his or her concern. (After all, if we don't know about it, we can't fix it, and the customer walks away angry.)