

Customer Relations



Office of Healthcare Facilities Licensure and Certification

The mission of the South Dakota Department of Health, Office of Health Facilities Licensure and Certification is to partner with consumers, families, healthcare providers, healthcare organizations, and other regulatory agencies to ensure the health, safety, and appropriate care of patients and residents in South Dakota.



SOUTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Welcome



This training was developed by the Office of Healthcare Facilities Licensure and Certification to assist healthcare providers to successfully manage complaints received from the health care consumer.

Why an educational session on Customer Relations?



- The South Dakota Department of Health has had an exponential increase in health care complaints.
- When complaints are managed at the facility level there is:
 - A better resident/patient outcome.
 - Satisfied resident/patient/family members.
 - Less likelihood of a complaint survey.
- In reviewing those complaints:
 - ✦ Customer relations is the common theme.

Learning Objectives



The participant will learn:

1. How to use satisfaction surveys and complaints to improve customer relations/communication.
2. The positive aspects of a complaint.
3. How a complaint should be recognized.

Complaints



“A Columbia business professor wrote 240 upper-class New York restaurants to complain that he developed food poisoning after eating at their businesses.

He alluded to reporting the incident to the Better Business Bureau, but wanted the restaurateurs to have the chance to “respond accordingly.”

Ordinarily, restaurants take food poisoning scares very seriously and a few began investigating.

The restaurateurs found it was all part of an ill-conceived research project, designed to measure vendor response to customer complaints. (Carder & Gunter)”

Results



- In the Carder and Gunter complaint study:
 - Only 25% (60 of the 240) restaurants responded.
- The conclusion the restaurateur's attitudes were to:
 - Ignore what they don't want to deal with.
 - ✦ FYI:
 - Ignoring doesn't change things.
 - It doesn't make the complaints/concerns go away.

Complaints/Concerns are in every business.



- The consumer's voice has been increasingly accepted as **an essential** for improving systems.
- S. Hsieh 2012 states, "Most organizations tended to view complaints/concerns as failures."

"There are three positive aspects of a complaint/concern:

1. It is a call for help.
2. It is a gift for improving service quality and,
3. It is a warning about what could go wrong."

Complaint/Concerns (cont.)



- A patient/family complaint reflects health service deficiencies and/or failures.
 - Thus providing health-care workers an opportunity to search out the root causes.
 - ✦ To improve services and then to reduce their recurrences.
 - It has been noted the root cause is usually:
 - ✦ Lack of care/treatment or humaneness (treated with respect).
- Most staff are more concerned with **building relationships** with complainants rather than dealing with the **service quality** issues through complaint handling processes.

Customers will be understanding if you can assist them with their problem.



- 85% of customers who stop buying from a company do so because they believe the company does not care about them (Carder & Gunter).
- When customers call, email, or send messages, they are seeking your assistance to find a solution.

Complainants provide **FREE** information on quality of care/treatment.



- Customer initiated complaints are one of the cheapest marketing research strategies.
 - Plus these complaints offer a business the opportunity to increase satisfaction.
 - It will also make the customer more loyal to the business.
- Only 4% of disgruntled customers report their complaints to the company.
 - The other 96% simply take their business elsewhere.

Free information (cont.)



- Again, if only 4 - 5 % of dissatisfied consumers complain to management, some companies may assume they are doing a great job.
 - Remember, this is only the tip of the iceberg.
- The other 45% of dissatisfied customers complain to the front line staff.
 - Front line staff keep the complaint from reaching the decision-makers which does not assist in resolving the situation.
- The final 50% encounter a problem but don't complain.

Times, technology, and best practices have changed,
we must also.



- Pay attention to the **casual/off the cuff** remarks made from the customers.
- Lack of protocols to assist staff/managers handle complaints have not kept up with the changes occurring in the healthcare areas.
- Pre-Internet, unhappy customers told, on average, eight to sixteen people about their negative experience.
 - With today's free web sites and internet chat rooms, the number of people that unhappy customers contact is likely to be much higher (Carder & Gunter).

Positive Experiences



- Customers who have a positive experience tell, on average, five people about their experience.
- It is 5 times more costly to acquire new customers than to keep the current ones.
- Providers of **all types** must focus on transforming behavior to ensure future success.
 - Especially the front line staff.
- “**Quality care** no longer means simply doing well on the annual survey (Rak).”

Education



- Education is of utmost importance.
- Improve customer interactions by:
 1. Actively listening.

Active listening is fully concentrating on what is **being said** rather than just passively “hearing” the message of the speaker. *Active listening* involves *listening with all senses*.
 2. Follow-up after the problem is solved.
 3. Get personal-be real.
 4. Offer more than automated email responses.
 5. Be available-the personal touch is being able to see you.

Education



- “The most important person in the healthcare structure is the person who interacts with the customers and the prospective new customers; they are what the public remembers the most (Fluss).”
 - They can be the front line staff also.
- Engaging employees may be the most important goal, because the patient experience cannot improve unless both front line employees and management buy into **and** consistently deliver on the promise.

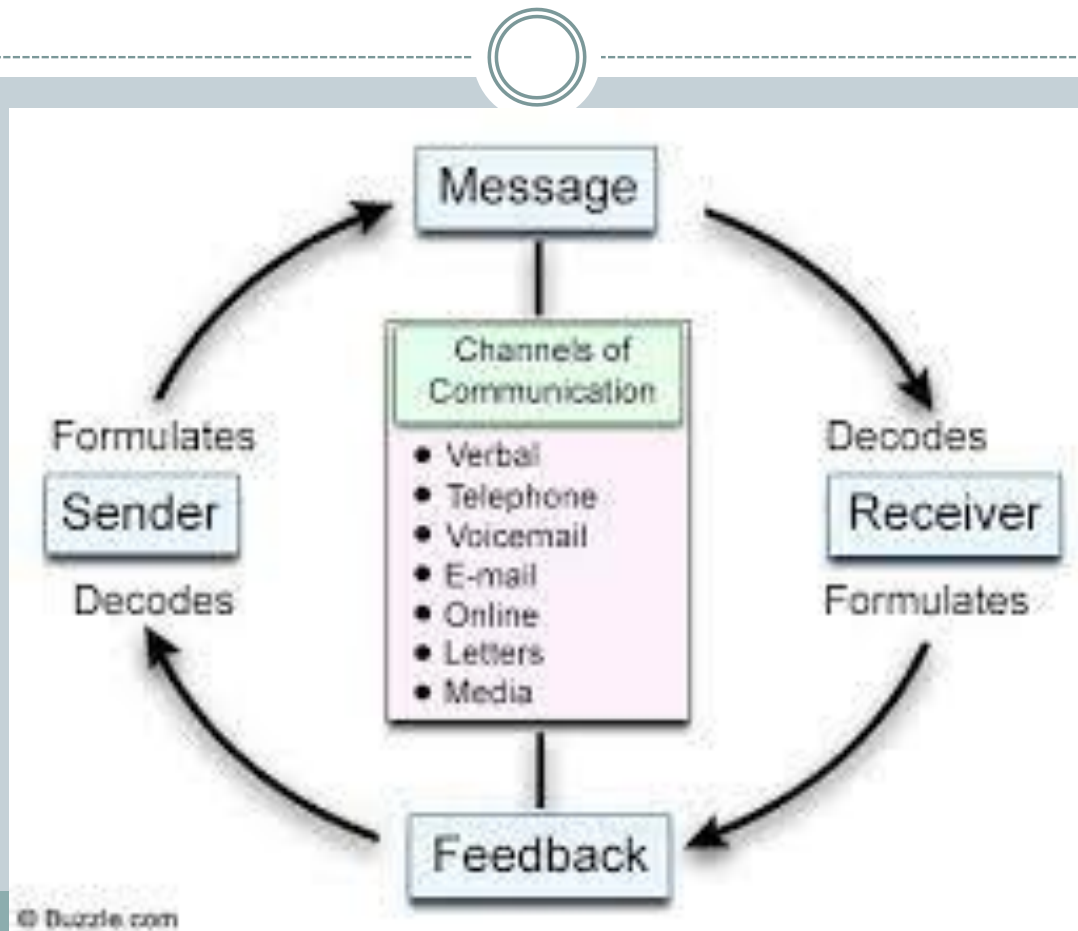
Satisfaction Surveys



- “Patient satisfaction surveys tend to passively report a patient’s view.
 - Which often do not capture their voice in full.
 - A good analogy is, just as thermometer measures temperature but does not reveal the disease that causes a fever, patient satisfaction scores record only symptoms, **NOT** the underlying causes (Hsieh).”
 - Refer to the Power Point presentation *How to conduct an Investigation*.
- Surveys show healthcare consumers want more communication and coordination between their providers.
 - Close the communication loop and talk to the consumer about the results of the satisfaction surveys and the investigation that has been completed.
 - Are the results of the satisfaction surveys taken to the QA committee for continued monitoring?
 - ✦ Tell the consumer, you are continuing to monitor the situation with the internal quality committee.

Communication Circle

The circle needs to be completed for communication to occur.



Satisfaction Surveys (cont.)



- Studies show a correlation between resident/patient satisfaction and employee buy in of the organizations goals.
 - This point **cannot** be overlooked by any organization.
- **All** employees play an important role in the experience a resident/patient has within the healthcare system.
- Staff members are the best suited to improve the patient experience.
 - No one knows the consumer better than those who frequently interact with him/her.
 - So it is vitally important, employees at **all levels** of the organization feel empowered to do what they think is best for the resident/patient.

Satisfaction Surveys (cont.)



- Administrators need to personalize the delivery of services to the patient.
 - Use the satisfaction surveys results.
 - ✦ To promote communication at:
 - Care conferences.
 - Discharge planning.
 - Other meetings (formal or informal) with the healthcare consumer.
- Residents/Patients who are involved in their own healthcare decisions experience better outcomes through adhering to plans for improved health.
 - They also are less likely to think negatively of a health care provider if adverse events do occur.

Satisfaction Surveys (cont.)



- The resident/patient experience lies in the organization's ability to **energize** the unique employees, relationships, and services it offers.
 - And to purposefully shape a positive experience that delivers on the promise.
- Improving employee engagement is another way to make sure customers have a great experience.
 - Dissatisfied employees are unlikely to come forward with their problems.
 - Remember feedback is important with customer satisfaction.

Sources



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This is the end of Customer Relations.

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