

“I am sorry to hear that....”

A Service Recovery Program

Jane McLeod, RN, MSN

4-30-09



Service Recovery

- No Matter how good your organization is-- situations arise resulting in unmet expectations on the part of our patients. The response of your organization to these unmet expectations needs to be hardwired throughout every layer of the organization.

Press Ganey says....

- “To improve OVERALL patient satisfaction, hospitals should focus on hourly rounding, more time at the bedside, scripting of conversations with patients, clear goals and standards for performance, and developing a service recovery program to address patient or visitor complaints IMMEDIATELY.”

Press Ganey Says....

- The **Service Recovery Program** details how to communicate during complaint resolution- including listening, re-stating the problem, showing empathy, describing the resolution, and following up, as well as perks that can be given to a patient's family to make amends for service failure.

Where does... Service Recovery start??

- Every employee is a listening post to LISTEN to customers.....
- THEY are there and present with the customer
- Disney keys to excellence, Disney Institute

Service Recovery = Loyal Patients

- A good service experience has the patient telling 3-4 people
- A bad service experience has the patient telling 10-12 people.
- Need to recognize when a bad service experience is happening and do something immediately, OR pro-actively know when bad service experience is happening.

Currently at WMH

Service Recovery

versus

Complaint Department

Loyalty

- Research has shown that customers who have had a service failure resolved quickly and properly are MORE LOYAL to a company than customers that have never had a service failure- significantly more loyal

– Great Brook Service Practices

Service Recovery is.....

- Recognize.....Apologize.... Fix it
....PROMPTLY!

Or: ACT

- ***A**cknowledge and **A**pologize
- ***C**orrect
- ***T**ake action!

A case study

- The Park Ridge staff put their service recovery program in place in just one department to track effectiveness of it's employee owned program
- “Our data has shown that it costs far less money and time for us to give a small gift than to lose a customer.”

Project Empowerment

- Employees then become VERY ENGAGED to do the right thing when they are responsible for stopping bad service in it's tracks (and have the tools and equipment to do so)!
- Policies and procedures that support and reinforce service recovery must be in place.
- Employee training (and leaders!) is a must as well.

Employee Empowerment- A Case Study

- Park Ridge Hospital adopted a program of Service Recovery from the Ritz Carlton.
- Mission Statement – “Caring, compassionate employees with the ability to provide assistance and make informed decisions in the pursuit of total customer loyalty.”

What can we do today.....

- Solution shorts tool from Press Ganey...

PRESS GANEY Inpatient

"Response to concerns/complaints made during your stay"

Question Definition:
The question measures the patient's perceptions of the appropriateness of actions that resulted when the patient mentioned something that troubled or worried him/her or when the patient expressed dissatisfaction with something that happened (or failed to happen).
A complaint occurs because actions don't meet expectation.
A concern may reflect anxiety, fear, and uncertainty, which is independent of expectation. In either case, the patient hopes that the caregivers in the facility will do something to handle the disquiet or dissatisfaction that has been voiced.
The patient will rate what is done (and not done) when responding to this question.

Voice of the Customer:

- "If I tell you I have a problem, I want you to help me."
- "The least he could have done is say, 'I'm sorry that happened to you.'"

Improvement Tips:

- The response to concerns/complaints is an indicator of efficacy of service recovery when processes don't match need or when mistakes are made.
- Thank customers passionately for bringing the complaint/concern to your attention.
- Train all front-line staff in service recovery, communication skills and emotions management.
- Learn and practice service recovery steps: Acknowledge, Apologize, and Act to Amend.
- Have a service recovery fund which all staff can utilize immediately, without seeking approval to make compensatory amends when a customer experiences a service failure.
- Build structures to hold staff accountable for resolving patient concerns/complaints and taking action to ensure that the problem does not occur again.
- Track complaints over time for patterns.
- Anticipate and address common concerns without the patient having to raise them explicitly.
- Respond empathically to patient expressions of emotion.
- Staff should be trained at hire and then on an ongoing basis about how to engage the dissatisfied customer and how to determine an effective and agreeable resolution.
- Select a multidisciplinary group of excited people who have a passion for service excellence. Forming a powerful and dynamic group as your steering committee is the first step to a successful service recovery program since this team will spearhead the change-management business. Instituting a large-scale cultural change of this nature requires passion and desire throughout the entire organization.
- Set specific goals for your service recovery program. Goals should be measurable, have specific realistic time frames, and be fully utilized in order to set priorities in the service recovery process.
- Utilize a theme/acronym that fully describes your service recovery program. Themes such as "ACT-acknowledge and apologize, correct, and take action" help employees remember the importance of service recovery and the practical steps of the process.
- Create an admission letter signed by the CEO encouraging patients to hold staff members accountable. Providing a hotline to report concerns and complaints during or after their visit helps make sure problems are resolved quickly.
- Establish a 24-hour hotline for patients and staff to report service issues.
- If you have a 24-hour service hotline, create a triage system. Complaints that occur while the patient is still in the facility need to be responded to immediately. Have specific administrators on call and empower the responding staff to meet the need immediately.
- Host a house-wide introduction ceremony for your service recovery program. Make it a great kickoff with posters hung up around the facility, stories in newsletters, and contests to generate interest. Ceremonies provide visible proof that the organization is making a commitment. Introducing a service recovery program in this manner means that those involved share a common vision of taking care of their patients.
- Host training programs specifically designed for the different levels of staff members. The responsibilities of a frontline staff person will vary from those of a nurse manager. Employees of the same station should be trained together.

PRESS GANEY Inpatient

**"Response to concerns/complaints made during your stay"
(Continued)**

Improvement Tips: (Continued)

- Develop a tracking form that has space to gather the "who", "what", and "why" of each service recovery action. Staff at the facility can use a duplicate tracking form to record the information, with one copy to be given to the customer for redemption for items offered at the cafeteria or gift shop, and the other to be used for tracking and trending. Toolboxes for service recovery should be placed at all nursing stations. Toolboxes hold meal vouchers and other service recovery items that any staff member is empowered to distribute when they identify a service recovery opportunity. Items often included are gift certificates, taxi vouchers, meal vouchers, small toys for children, and so on. Nothing in the toolbox should require a manager's approval.

Resources:

1. Malone MP, Ryan J. Best Practices: After the "Oops" - Part 1. The Satisfaction Monitor, Jan/Feb 2002.
Available from: <http://www.pressganey.com/galleries/satisfaction-monitor-issues/janfeb02.pdf>
2. Malone MP, Ryan J. Best Practices: After the "Oops" - Part 2. The Satisfaction Monitor, Mar/Apr 2002.
Available from: <http://www.pressganey.com/galleries/satisfaction-monitor-issues/marap02.pdf>
3. Truax TO. Surprises, Humility and Rising Rankings. The Satisfaction Monitor, Mar/Apr 2001.
Available from: <http://www.pressganey.com/galleries/satisfaction-monitor-issues/marap01.pdf>
4. "Making it Right: Healthcare Service Recovery Tools, Techniques, and Best Practices," Paul Clark, (Marblehead, Mass.: HCFPro, 2005).
Available from: http://www.honoreestepson.com/prog_dtm?id=3773
5. Jane Garbutt, Diana Bose, Beth A. McCawley, Tom Burroughs, and Gerald Medoff, "Soliciting patient complaints to improve performance," Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety 29, no. 3 (March 2003): 103-12.
Available from: <http://www.hqertconnect.com/content/jcno/loqs/2003/00000029/00000003/jar00001>

Next steps

- Service Recovery “Fire Starters!”
- Policy/Program Development

Recommended Readings

- “I’m sorry to hear that”. Real-life responses to patients’ 101 most common complaints about healthcare. Susan Keane Baker & Leslie Bank (recommended by both Press Ganey and the Studer Group)
- Practicing Excellence. A physician’s manual to exceptional healthcare. Stephen Beeson, MD.
- Loyal for Life. How to take unhappy customers from hell to heaven in 60 seconds or less. John Tschohl.

QUESTIONS? Please contact :
Jane McLeod MSN RN
jmcleod@wmhos.org