

POLICY

CUSTOMER SERVICE

“The enthusiasm with which we care for our patients in the delivery of dental care determines our success.”

The importance of customer service cannot be overstated. Enhancing the level of customer satisfaction and effectively supporting them through their dental treatment are our focus.

A list of rules is not enough to achieve outstanding customer service. It is our attitude and mindset that will get us there. Develop your attitude to be enthusiastic, friendly and eager to help customers wherever possible. Outstanding customer service is built on a genuine desire to please and satisfy your customers.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Successful customer service is in essence effective relationship building. Customers will be satisfied and happy if they feel respected and if they feel they can place their trust in you to look after them. Every communication whether it be when a patient attends for treatment, telephone calls, mail-outs or even smiling when you walk by them in the waiting room, all are opportunities to add to that positive relationship. Many positive impacts will quickly grow strong connections.

SOLUTIONS PROVIDER

Great customer service is on many occasions you providing great solutions to patients. Sometimes workplaces are restricted by the lack of authority that bosses give staff to provide solutions to customers. That is not the case here. We trust all team members have the talent to assess a situation and develop highly effective solutions for patients. So go the extra mile when contemplating how you can delight our customers!

CARING SUPPORT

People are often anxious when attending the dentist. This anxiety results in a number of barriers that we then are required to manoeuvre around.



CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY CONT...

Poor Listening: Patients are often distracted by their anxiety and surroundings and do not absorb information as readily as they normally would. Therefore writing key points down, drawing explanatory diagrams, showing them images and display models and issuing them with take-home information is important.

Aggression: When patients are anxious they can feel vulnerable and defensive. Recognise that these tendencies are a result of them feeling uneasy and take steps to reassure them and allow them to see that we are here to help them. Don't ever retaliate with hostility; it will only make the situation worse. Instead react with calmness and friendliness.

Emotional Upset: Some patient's anxiety extends to an actual phobic response. If these patients are not treated tenderly and in a calm, controlled environment, they can become quite emotionally upset. Be aware that what phobic patients are experiencing is worse than what is actually happening to them. That is what a phobia is: a disproportionate fear. Acknowledge the fear to the patient through your gentle communication while progressing steadily through the treatment.

COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

If you are faced with an unhappy patient, you have 3 steps to your response.

1. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.** Repeat the patient's version back to them, stating "I understand this is what you are finding upsetting". People will maintain and increase their level of upset until such a time that they feel understood. Repeating the issue back to the patient also provides clarity.
2. **INVESTIGATION:** Tell the patient to leave the situation in your hands for you to investigate further with the view to resolve so the patient is happy. The purpose is to encourage the patient to have trust that the issue will be managed as best as possible. This way they can reduce their upset as they have transferred their responsibility over fixing the problem over to you. As a result they normally feel much calmer.
3. **FOLLOW-UP:** After investigating the issue with relevant staff and discussing the appropriate resolution, contact the patient by phone (or face-to-face) and recap the issue then offer the resolution. Direct one-on-one conversation is ideal so you have rapport. It is important that there is a resolution that suits both the business and the patient. A poor attempt to appease the patient will bring their aggression back up again and it will be difficult to repair the situation.

Don't be afraid of unhappy customers. Your successful management of these situations will deepen your positive relationship with them.