

Efficiency Versus Courtesy

- What happens when we put process before service?
 - It can have a negative impact on customer service
- What happens when we put courtesy before process?
 - It puts the patient first

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The bullet points below include some suggested talking points to help your discussion.

- Now that we have determined just how many impressions we can make, let's talk about how the process often affects how well we satisfy the customer. As we reflect on the revenue cycle process we just defined in the last exercise, think about how many times we became so involved in the process, we lost our ability to truly serve the patient.
- What happens when we put the process before the service?
It can have a negative impact on customer service.
- On the flip side, a patient-centric process puts the patient first.

Identifying Barriers

- Barriers to putting courtesy in front of efficiency
 - Competing values
 - Employees trained but not empowered
 - Process built to handle volume (efficiency) versus making them personal and unique (patient centric)

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The bullet points below include some suggested talking points to help your discussion.

- In the video you just watched, there were several examples of process steps that help move the patient from one point to the next but were not patient centric. Healthcare unfortunately is filled with examples of where we put process over customer courtesy. For example, we mentioned earlier that patients today want more information and answers to their questions. Patients often have questions for us, but we deflect these questions because we don't have time, or they "aren't our area."
- So what is it that makes it difficult to put courtesy first? There can be many barriers to putting courtesy in front of efficiency. There may be:
 - Competing values: when policy hinders the delivery of good customer service
 - We train our employees to follow policy but we don't empower them.
 - We don't build our process to be personal and unique.
- **What are some ways we can enrich the patient encounter?**
 - "Interview" the patient, personalize the experience—identify something unique about the patient and use that in your conversation.
 - Clearly communicate to patients what to expect during their encounter. For example, when discussing financial obligations, explain to the patient what the information we provide does and does not include. Explain that it might include the financial obligations for hospital and anesthesiologist services but not for the surgeon. In addition, we should be sure to tell patients that pre-service information regarding financial obligations is only an estimate and that we may need to provide additional information if necessary.
- **What are some other ideas?** (Ask the participants to share some of the barriers they encounter. Watch for comments related to management barriers and if necessary, remind the group that this is about what "they" can do to improve the customer service experience.) *2 minutes*
- **What are some elements of a patient-centric process?** *Timely communication, timely resolution of problems*
- **What are the benefits of doing this?** *Better communication and faster resolution reduce patient mistrust and improve satisfaction.*

Exercise 3 Developing a Patient Centric Process

- Process competes with customer service
- External customer service experience
 - Patient
- Internal customer service experience
 - Staff

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The bullet points below include some suggested talking points to help your discussion.

Exercise 3: Efficiency versus Courtesy *See page 47 in the Participant Workbook*

- We are now going to watch a video that provides an example of how the drive for efficiency can often have a negative impact on courtesy.
- **Exercise Instructions:** Please turn to Exercise 3 in your Participant Workbook. ✍ Take a few moments to review the questions before we watch the video.
 - Video #4: Daniel's Hospital Clinic Visit
 - This is an individual exercise
 - Answer each question based on what you saw in the video *5 minutes*
- **Group Debrief:** (Ask for responses and record them on the flipchart.) *5 minutes*
 - (Additional question to ask the group: If the patient in this situation was someone you cared for, what would you do differently?) *2 minutes*
 - (Remember to keep the participants focused on what they can control. Issues identified that are out of the control of the participants should either be recorded on a parking lot list for future review or asked to be brought to managements attention.)

Exercise 3: Efficiency versus Courtesy

Please complete the following questions after watching **Video #4: Daniel's Hospital Clinic Visit.**

Characters:

- Peggy, the office registrar for Dr. Jones
- Daniel, the patient
- John, a colleague of Peggy's
- Shelly, another colleague

What specific process failures occurred that prevented a positive patient customer service experience?

List the emotions you believe the patient was feeling during this encounter.

List the emotions you believe Peggy was feeling during this encounter.

If the patient in this situation was someone you cared for, what would you do differently?
(Name specific process changes you would initiate.)
