

The Truth About Customer Service

People ask us all the time, “Do you offer customer service training?” I say, “Yes, why do you ask?” The reality is their answer varies greatly depending on the specific pain a client is currently experiencing. In the last week I’ve had 5 separate people ask me about our “The Ultimate Customer Experience” workshop. What I’ve recently discovered is “customer service” tends to be this overarching term used to describe employee behavior. When I scratch just below the surface I hear things like “treating the residents well,” “showing respect,” “it’s when someone calls and they are rude on the phone,” “they lose their patience,” “they don’t follow through,” “they have the technical skills but their heart isn’t in it.”

Our job is to dig deeper and typically what we find is that customer service training isn’t the real problem. Most times the employees have already sat through customer service training. What they really need is to be reached emotionally. Our training not only focuses on the do’s and don’ts, but it also focuses on connecting to the employees, which leads to improving employee morale, increasing self-awareness and showing empathy for others. Through our training we can focus on showing appreciation for one another and the value of positive thinking.

Here are five simple tips that you can do to improve “customer service” so that residents and team members *both* feel appreciated!

1. **Smile.** Often people describe “smiling” as an act of customer service, but isn’t it so much more? Smiling is contagious and is a way of validating someone’s presence – a smile says you are not invisible to me. It says I care.
2. **Help people feel that they are listened to and their feelings validated.** Remember to make eye contact, learn more about a situation with phrases like, “tell me more” or “what I think I heard was...” Have them be a part of the solution by asking, “what do you think we should do next?”
3. **Deliver an element of choice to everything you do.** We all understand the importance of offering our residents choice, but are you remembering to embrace this very concept for your team members? Not only ask your team members for their input, but try to be flexible with how they approach their work.
4. **Practice positivity.** Clients share with me that team members pull together during survey, or for summer barbecues or holiday parties, but they don’t work together on the “everyday stuff.” They focus too much on the negative. Try celebrating small wins, such as no call outs or 100% participation in a program. Help your team practice seeing the positive rather than focusing on their frustrations.
5. **Empathize.** Here are two of our favorite empathy videos. They were created by the Cleveland Clinic and are a great educational tool to evoke emotion and create the opportunity for open dialogue. [Empathy video #1](#) and [Empathy video #2](#). Get the tissues ready! You will need them. Empathy videos are also a great way to approach a topic of compassion or situation that you want to avoid, such as, “how would it make you feel if”

For more information on our workshops give us a call 732.722.8417

This article was written by team member, Allison Duda.