

UNIT 3: LEARNING FROM CUSTOMER CARE (Day 1)

3.1 Introduction to the session

"Customer care" has been increasingly seen as of great relevance to the work of providing high quality healthcare. The people who come through the hospital doors as patients aren't looking for a good service from a shop assistant or a store manager, but quality care from health professionals who are clearly putting the person's needs first. How individuals experience quality and care is a decision measured using personal experience and not clinical outcomes.

HCA's now deliver the majority of the direct face-to-face care for older people in hospital. HCA's are therefore the health professionals with potentially the greatest influence on how older people experience the care they receive while in hospital. HCA's' customer facing skills, the first impressions they make, their connections with patients and their visitors will likely decide the lasting experience of each person.

The retail environment is clearly a very different one to the healthcare setting. For starters people don't generally spend days at a time in retail environments without leaving. Clearly, patients are far less free than typical customers to leave and walk out the hospital doors if they are unhappy with their experience of "customer care". The typical patient seeking good quality care is more powerless than the typical customer simply seeking good service in a shop or a hotel. Each and every interaction a patient or their visitor experiences matters to him/her. Care that is seen as poor is likely to last much longer in their mind than care that is seen as good.



3.1.1 Learning goals

By the end of the section we hope you will:

- Understand what is meant by customer care;
- Understand the impact of good and bad practices of customer care;
- Appreciate how customer care may be used in a healthcare setting.

3.2 What is "customer care"?

We all experience "customer care" whenever we enter a shop, ask a question or enquiry, or make a purchase, either online or in person. "Customer care" is the experience which defines how we feel we have been treated and can't necessarily be easily described.

We are all naturally quick to make judgements when the care we receive is poor or just doesn't meet our expectations. Poor experiences potentially affect our decision to go back and make a repeated purchase, or recommend them to our family and friends.

We are far less likely to notice care which we see as satisfactory within a shop or report it later to our friends. If it exceeds our expectations, however, we may be particularly pleased by it and make a point of it. It will positively affect our decision to return and recommend them.



Think about the "customer care" you've experienced recently.



- What comes to mind?
- What was it about this experience which makes it so memorable?
- What would have changed your experience?
- How many examples of good and poor customer care can you remember?
- Could any of the elements which made your experiences most memorable be possible within the hospital?



KEY MESSAGE

'How' we get something is an important and memorable part of our experience as a "customer".