



Service Excellence Standards of Behavior

Employee Reference Guide



JOHNS HOPKINS
MEDICINE

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- Listens to customer needs and responds in a courteous, tactful manner.
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- Uses professional judgment in providing information based on the situation and is sensitive to individual and organizational concerns.
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- Treats customers' property and Johns Hopkins' property with care and respect.
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- Contributes to the safety and security of the Johns Hopkins environment through personal actions.

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- Effectively and efficiently fulfills responsibilities to achieve the greatest benefit at an acceptable cost.
- Continually strives to suggest and implement ways to improve personal, departmental and institutional performance.

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Dear Colleague,

Johns Hopkins Medicine strives for excellence in all that we do. It is the hallmark of our research, teaching and patient care. And throughout our entire enterprise, excellence is at the very core of our service.

It is imperative that the way in which we deliver services to our patients and others is nothing less than superior.

Service Excellence is vital to our success. We must strive for it every single day. Outstanding service must be demonstrated in all we do, internally and externally.

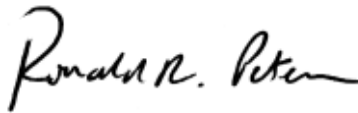
This guide book, *Service Excellence—Standards of Behavior*, is designed to show how we define excellent service, safe practice and quality care. In it, you will find definitions of service standards, supported by examples that show how you can incorporate these standards into your day-to-day work.

We encourage you to use this guide as a tool to measure the level of service you deliver every day.

Thank you for your continued commitment to upholding our stellar reputation and to the Service Excellence effort.



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Introduction/Service Excellence Overview

Service Excellence at Johns Hopkins Medicine is a way of working, a way of interacting, and a way of thinking about our jobs as we work together with others. Service Excellence is not just a good attitude; it's a great one. It's our culture.

Although we have different roles within Johns Hopkins Medicine, we all have customers. In this guide book, we use the term customer to refer to those who receive our services. That might mean patients and other employees inside the organization, or it could refer to those from outside Hopkins Medicine, such as members of our managed care plans or other clients. All customers—patients and their families, members, clients, as well as our fellow employees—have similar needs. They all want to be understood; they want to feel comfortable, welcome, important and safe.

Service standard categories—particularly “Teamwork” and “Communication”—are critical elements in creating a culture of safety in our organization. Research has demonstrated this, and we can describe this relationship with anecdotes about care. Service is not just “nice to do.” It is imperative in creating the caring, safe environment that we need for all our customers and for each other.

Service Excellence is divided into six service standard categories:

- 1. Customer Relations**
- 2. Self Management**
- 3. Teamwork**
- 4. Communication**
- 5. Ownership / Accountability**
- 6. Continuous Performance Improvement**

Each category is defined by several service standards. The standards describe what we as providers of service must do in order to meet customer needs. They are not in addition to, or separate from, the individual aspects of our jobs; they are an integral part. You make Service Excellence come alive. You are the piece of the puzzle that makes it all fit.

How to Use this Guide

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How to Use this Guide

This guide is designed to provide specific descriptions of what Service Excellence looks like. Here, for each service standard, you will find key service themes and behavioral descriptions. You'll also find many examples to help you envision how the behavior is exhibited in real life.

Each category is defined by two to four service standards. Each standard has key behavioral themes as well as specific behavior descriptions for the themes. Actual examples illustrate the behavior in action.

Category

Service Standard

Service Theme

Behavioral Description

Example

Many of the behavioral descriptions and examples illustrate not only excellent service, but also safe behaviors. Because they are particularly significant, they are highlighted just like these two sentences are.

The service standards, themes and descriptions are

- Required behaviors for all JHM staff
- A strategy for accountability
- Part of your performance review

They are not

- All inclusive—employees and departments are strongly encouraged to seek customized examples relevant to their particular jobs and roles.

1. Customer Relations

Treats patients and other customers with courtesy, respect and caring behaviors.

Welcome and greet patients and other customers immediately.

- Smile, make eye contact and be prepared to help. Don't allow anyone to be ignored. You only have seven seconds to make a first impression.
- Use courtesy words and phrases such as hello, good morning, thank you, please, excuse me, you're welcome.
- Use a friendly tone of voice, and don't speak too fast or too slow.
- Maintain an open and welcoming body posture. Sit or stand straight. Keep hands quiet—folded in lap/on desk if sitting, in front of you if standing. Focus on your customer—do not fidget, doodle, rub or scratch. Do not cross your arms in front of you.
- Address customers by Ms. or Mr. and last name (unless you get permission to use first names). Use your customer's name frequently during the interaction.
- Introduce yourself by name and role and tell your customer what you're going to do. *“Good morning, Mrs. Johnson. My name is Shirley. I'm a nursing assistant. I'm here this morning to take your vital signs.”*
- Make your environment warm and welcoming. Keep it neat and uncluttered. Make sure signage is readable and easily understood.

Make everyone feel important.

- Give patients and other customers your full attention with your eyes, words and body language. Avoid distractions. *“Let me put this work aside so that we can talk.”* Or, *“Let me shut the door so we're not interrupted.”*
- Avoid using short, curt answers or ignoring someone who is speaking to you. Rudeness is never acceptable.
- Use clear and concise language that your customer can understand. Avoid jargon and abbreviations unless you know your customer will understand them. Use correct grammar. Remember to check your spelling in all written communications.
- Sit down with patients and other customers while talking with them if you can. Doing so says, “I have time for you.”
- End every interaction by asking the customer if there is anything else you can do. *“Mr. Wong, it was a pleasure talking with you. Is there anything else I can do for you right now?”*
- Engage patients and their families as active participants in care. Remember that they are a very important part of the care team. *“Please use this note pad to write down any questions you might have. That way,*

you will have them ready when the doctor comes by later today.” Or, “Please remember to wear a gown and mask when visiting with your mother while she is on isolation precautions.”

- Demonstrate empathy by using words and actions that show you care about the customer. *“I understand how frustrating that must be. I’ll help you with it right away.”*
- Be aware of the power of conversation and kind words. Customers and co-workers appreciate it when you ask them about important events in their lives. *“Did you have a nice visit with your grandchildren, Mr. Woods? Do you have any pictures of them that I could look at?”*

Maintain dignity and privacy.

- Let patients know you’re concerned about their comfort and privacy by closing doors and using blankets, screens or curtains for privacy. Don’t speak so loudly that you can be overheard by others who don’t need to hear your conversation.
- Knock, announce yourself and ask permission before entering someone’s room or office. Don’t barge in. *“So sorry to interrupt you, but do you have a minute to talk about the new safety policy?”*
- Give the patient the option of having all visitors leave the room while performing any procedure before discussing personal health information.

Demonstrate sensitivity to any inconvenience, delay or wait.

- Be aware of inconveniences your customers experience, especially a delay, and acknowledge it. Everyone’s time is valuable. *“I know you’ve been waiting a long time. I haven’t forgotten about you. Is there anything you need right now?”*
- Offer amenities to customers if they’re available. Let customers know about resources that can make their lives a little easier. *“I know you need to have this document notarized. Let me help. I know you’ll feel better once that is done.”*
- Apologize for and explain any delay or inconvenience, even if it’s not your fault. Be specific about how long the delay will be if you know; be honest about it if you don’t. *“Thank you for your patience and understanding, Mr. Washington. The trauma team is working very hard to stabilize a critical trauma patient who just arrived by ambulance. When we have stabilized this patient, I will come right out to see you.”* Or, *“Hello, Mrs. Kennedy. My name is Dionne and I’m from Radiology. I stopped by to let you know that your CAT scan will be delayed. I expect the delay to be 10 minutes. Is there anything I can do for you in the meantime?”* Or, *“Mrs. Javed, thank you for holding while I looked up that information.”*
- Check in frequently with patients and other customers who are waiting. Acknowledge their wait or discuss alternatives with them such as rescheduling an appointment or calling back at a later time.

“Hello, Mr. Luiz. I apologize for the continued delay. Thank you for being patient. Is there anything I can do for you? Do you have time to wait or would you like us to reschedule your appointment?” Or, “Thank you for holding. Would you like to keep holding while I get the information you requested, or would you like me to call you back at another time?”

Responds quickly and appropriately to customer requests.

Manage your time and help others manage theirs.

- Be punctual with appointments and deadlines.
- Recognize that everyone’s time is valuable. Never be too busy to assist.
- Let your customer know if you’re going to be late or miss a deadline. Remember that if you’re running behind, you could affect the work of others.
- Eliminate excuses for service problems such as staff shortages, inadequate supplies and equipment. Your customers don’t care—they just want you to help them. Never point fingers. And don’t blame the customer.

Hold yourself and others accountable for customer requests.

- Take personal responsibility for the customer’s request or need and follow through. If you say you’re going to do something, do it. Honor prior commitments. *“Jane, would you mind waiting while I check in with Larry? I promised him I’d help him with his project, and I want to see if he’s ready to start.”*
- Take steps to find someone else to meet customers’ needs or resolve concerns if you are not able to do it yourself. Follow up with the customer. Let him know that the appropriate person has been notified and what to expect next. *“Mr. Chin, I understand that your pain has increased. I will notify your nurse immediately, and I will be back to check on you in five minutes.” Or, “Patti, I am sorry that I’m not able to help you with that, but I’ve made my supervisor aware, and he is on his way to assist.”*
- Evaluate the urgency and priority of customers’ needs. A safety or quality problem may require you to elevate customers’ concerns to the highest level possible. Listen to others who express concerns about customers’ needs. *“Dr. Santos, Mrs. Carson is complaining of a new pain. I recommend that you re-evaluate her.” Or, “Mary [charge nurse], will you help me reach Mrs. Packard’s doctor? I’ve been unable to reach him by pager.”*

Anticipates customer needs and initiates action to meet those needs.

Be proactive.

- Be prepared to respond to frequently asked questions. Better yet, provide information before someone asks. *“Mrs. Ford, this is your first visit to mammography. Let me go over a few things about what to expect.”* Or, *“I know this form can be confusing to fill out. Let me review it with you.”*
- Offer to help before being asked. When you see a customer who appears to be in need, offer to assist. *“Good afternoon, my name is Melanie. You look like you may have a question. May I be of assistance?”* Or, *“This place is big and can be overwhelming. I’d be happy to escort you to Dr. Martin’s office. I have the time.”*
- Plan ahead to address needs and prevent delays. *“I realized that the scale would need to be taken out of service today, so earlier this morning, I borrowed an extra one from the 4th floor.”* Or, *“I’m going to make copies for my presentation now so they’ll be ready in plenty of time for tomorrow’s meeting.”*
- Consider, in advance, your customers’ special needs, such as those pertaining to culture, religion or language, or to the hearing-impaired or physically disabled. You know your customers best. If you don’t know, find out. *“Mrs. Jackson, here is the number for our Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) service.”*
- Be prepared for repeat customers. Remember their names, something about them, any special needs they may have. *“Julie, I remember that you like to have a warm blanket over you during this procedure.”*
- Prevent errors by being observant and fixing them ahead of time. If you cannot fix the problem yourself, find someone who can. *“Anthony, this machine needs to be calibrated. I will take it to Clinical Engineering and bring back a replacement.”* Or, *“Kelly, the copy machine has a paper jam. Will you help me fix it? I don’t want to leave it like this.”*

Take action.

- Take time to look at situations from the customer’s perspective. What would it be like to walk in their shoes? *“Mr. Nasir, you don’t look very comfortable lying like that. Would you like me to help you change positions?”* Or, *“The meeting you are looking for is not being held on this floor. Is there someone we can call to get some more information?”*
- Keep customers informed. *“Mr. McCarty, a work crew will be installing a light fixture in the hallway. There will be some noise for about an hour. I am going to close your door temporarily to minimize the noise from the hall.”*

- Respond to all phone messages and e-mails in a timely manner, based on your customer's request. For most requests, a response within 12 to 24 working hours is appropriate. For some, a faster response is needed. Remember: It's common courtesy to acknowledge a customer's message and follow up.
- Educate patients and their families about treatments, such as side effects of medication or adverse reactions to procedures, so they can alert staff if there are any problems. *"Your eyes will be sensitive to light for the next two hours. I can provide you with sunglasses if you don't have them."* Or, *"The insulin I'm giving you will take effect in about four hours. If you don't have your meal tray by noon, please ask us for some food."*

2. Self-Management

Presents a positive image of Johns Hopkins through professional appearance and behavior.

Look the part.

- Adhere to your organization and department dress code. Make sure you understand the rules regarding uniform and clothing, jewelry, make-up, perfume, cologne, grooming, hygiene, body piercings, tattoos, etc. Your image should inspire confidence.
- Wear your ID badge above chest level with your name and picture facing forward so that others can easily see and read your name.

Act the part.

- Choose to think the best of people rather than the worst.
- Adopt a “no blaming” mentality. We’re all in this together. Don’t ignore problems, but address them behind the scenes, not in front of customers.
- Remain calm even when presented with a threatening interaction. Always seek to de-escalate stressful situations. *“Jocelyn, I understand that you are upset. I really want to discuss this with you so that we can resolve it.”*
- Project an air of calmness even when busy.
- Be patient when walking around the campus, office or unit. Allow others to enter and exit elevators first. Do not rush by people in the corridors.
- Avoid eating and drinking at your desk or workspace if you are in a public area. *“Alisha, I know this is not your regular work unit. Let me show you where our break room is so that you can eat your lunch there.”*
- Have a positive attitude every day with every interaction. Your patients and other customers don’t want to know you’re having a bad day. They want you at your best.

Say the right things.

- Keep private conversations private. Discuss sensitive issues or personal matters away from customers and co-workers.
- Use constructive language. The words you use set the tone for the interaction. A problem becomes a “challenge.” A weakness becomes an “opportunity;” a conflict, a “situation.”
- Commit to not complaining unless you have an idea for a solution.
- Be open and accepting when customers and co-workers come to you with concerns. *“Thank you for sharing that information with me. I was not aware that had happened.”* Or, *“I’m concerned that people are going into isolation rooms without gowns and masks.”*

- Use positive, assertive, can-do language with lots of “I” messages. *“Here’s what I can do...” “Yes, I can find out.” “I think the best option is...” “I understand why you...”* Avoid negative language and “you” messages. *“I don’t know.” “You can’t do that.” “No.” “Yes, but...” “You should’ve...” “You need to...”*
- Speak well of others. In the presence of customers and members of our community, speak positively about your organization and co-workers. Avoid making negative comments about workload, other staff, other departments or personal issues. *“Hopkins is a good place to work. Staff members really work well together and take good care of our patients.”* Or, *“I know my co-worker Janice will be able to help you.”*

Make a lasting impression.

- Leave every person feeling better for having talked with you.
- End interactions with courtesy words and phrases. *“Have a nice day.”* Or, *“I’m glad that I was able to assist you.”* Or, *“Is there anything else I can help you with?”*
- Remember that little things mean a lot to your patients and other customers. A simple touch, laughing at their bad jokes, providing them with a beverage, looking at family pictures—these are all ways to show that you care about them.

Identifies own areas of development and seeks opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Maintain and improve your job skills.

- Seek out learning opportunities to improve the skills you need to enhance job performance. Don’t be embarrassed if you don’t know about the opportunities. Ask your manager about available classes.
- Ask for regular feedback about your work performance. Find out what you’re doing well and what you could do better.
- Strive for the best skill or technique in using equipment or doing procedures relevant to your duties. Seek out those with expertise, or refer to the policy and procedure manual or manufacturer’s instruction manual. *“I’m not sure if this is the correct way to work this piece of equipment. Let’s pull out the manual and check.”*
- Maintain memberships and participate in your professional organizations.
- Complete mandatory education and training requirements.

Explore opportunities for personal growth and advancement.

- Use available resources to grow at Hopkins. Don't wait for opportunities to come to you—seek them out. *“I would like to sign up for the medical terminology course. This will bring me closer to reaching my goal of becoming a rad tech.”* Or, *“I really want to bid on that secretarial job. I'm going to attend the interviewing skills class offered by Human Resources. Then I'll feel more confident and prepared for the real interview.”*
- Volunteer to serve on special committees and teams as opportunities arise. You have an important role to play in the organization. You can make a difference with your involvement.
- Participate actively in setting personal and professional goals with your supervisor.

Carries out responsibilities in a safe and timely fashion and requests assistance as needed.

Be on time.

- Complete your job duties on time. Plan ahead for meetings, work, appointments and assignments.
- Be prepared for meetings and commit to staying focused on the agenda. Contribute to the workgroup by investing time outside of the meeting if required.
- Start and end meetings on time as a courtesy to your attendees.

Do quality work.

- Balance between the need for completing a task in a timely manner and the need for the quality and safety that the task requires. *“Mrs. Sherman, I know you need this room for a new patient, but I need at least 30 minutes to do a good, final cleaning to get it ready. If you need the room sooner, I will need to get someone to help me.”*

Ask for help.

- Seek assistance in completing a task when you cannot do it all by yourself. *“I know that I said I could complete this by the end of the day, but the database was down this morning, and now I'm behind. Would you help me?”*
- Recognize your own stress level and its effect on your performance. *“Maria, I was up in the night with my sick child, and I'm a little tired. I know I'm OK to work, but would you please help me by double-checking my figures?”*

Knows, understands and abides by the policies and procedures of Johns Hopkins.

Be informed.

- Seek out materials that reference and detail all of the policies related to your job. Know where you can find policies in writing and online. Ask your manager if you have questions. It's your job to know what's expected of you.
- Become familiar with new policies or changes in existing policies that affect your job or department. Keep up to date on what's going on by reading staff-meeting minutes, Hopkins publications and broadcast e-mails. If you miss an important meeting, be sure to find out what was discussed.

3. Teamwork

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Teamwork

Works cooperatively within own unit/department and with other units/departments.

Work well with the co-workers on your team.

- Communicate your whereabouts to prevent confusion. Your absence affects your teammates. *“Jack, I let the supervisor know, but can you help spread the word that I am going to be off the floor and in a meeting from 2 to 4 today. Anyone who needs me can page me.”*
- Be sensitive to the inconvenience your request may cause your co-workers. Avoid last-minute requests if you can. If you can't, remember to explain why you need the information so quickly. *“I know we're very busy today, and I am sorry to bother you. I need your data for a meeting tomorrow. The deadline was moved up so we can get the project back on track. I appreciate your help.”*
- Consider others' priorities. *“It seems like you really need the information now. I can make this call later.”*
- Recognize and be sensitive to differences and diversity among your co-workers. Everyone on the team has unique talents and expertise to share. It helps to look at things from different perspectives.
- Eliminate gossip.
- Welcome new employees. Volunteer to participate as a buddy, mentor or preceptor if you can.

Work well with co-workers in other areas.

- Be aware that other departments may need to interact with your customer. Always work as a team in the best interests of the customer. *“I realize that we both need to see the patient now for different procedures. Let's decide together what would be best to do first.”*
- Recognize that patients and their families are part of the care team.
- Seek to understand the system breakdowns that cause problems, rather than putting the blame on the people doing the work. Don't find fault; find a remedy. *“It seems like the procedure for ordering supplies doesn't work well. What can we do together to make it a better process?”* Or, *“Kathi, let's check the refrigerator for the missing dose before asking Pharmacy to send another.”*

Willingly accepts additional responsibility, tries to make others' jobs easier.

Contribute to the team.

- Go out of your way to provide or find what's needed. Don't say, That's not my job. *"Betsy, I can help you with that."* Or, *"Kathleen, I finished my morning rounds early. Let me help you finish up in room 432."*
- Always emphasize the importance of the team in conversations with co-workers. *"It really felt good helping Joan with that procedure. We really work well together as a team."*

Recognizes and supports the skills and qualities of others.

Praise one another.

- Recognize each other for service to patients, customers and co-workers. Look for opportunities to praise every day. Be specific. *"George, you did a good job of calming that customer down."* Or, *"Lakeshia, you always make the best of a bad situation. You're a model for all of us."* Or, *"Ed, thanks for coming in today. I know it was your day off."*
- Learn from your colleagues. They will appreciate your confidence in them. *"You are really good at calling physicians to alert them about a problem with a patient. I need to do that more. Will you coach me?"*
- Frequently tell co-workers how much you value them and why. *"Alaina, you're great to work with. You really know how to run a meeting and keep us on track."* Or, *"I really appreciate your help getting that IV started. It's great having someone here who is as good as you are at that."*
- Acknowledge outstanding service behavior by nominating co-workers for the Catch a Shining Star award. *"Ben handled that crisis with such calmness and efficiency. Let's nominate him for a Shining Star."*

Demonstrate tolerance.

- Recognize that conflicts may exist among co-workers, but professional courtesy is always expected. Hostile behaviors such as raising your voice, using disrespectful language or making derogatory comments are unacceptable.
- Be aware of opportunities to help develop your co-workers. *"I noticed that you seem uncomfortable with that assignment. May I offer you some pointers?"* Or, *"I have an interesting patient today. I know you haven't done this particular dressing change. Would you like to help me?"*

- Provide help or seek assistance for co-workers who are having difficulty performing their jobs.
- Set aside differences when working together to accomplish your goals. You don't have to like all your co-workers, but you do need to be able to work with them.
- Deal with co-worker problems or conflicts while the issues are still small. Address the person with whom you have the problem. Always try to work it out together first. Address unresolved problems by going to the appropriate supervisor or manager. *"I know you do not agree with my plan. Let's discuss this again later when we are not busy (angry)."* Or, *"I've noticed that you've been late coming back from lunch for the past few days. That really delays the clinic schedule and is inconsiderate to the staff."*
- Take all sensitive discussions with co-workers to a private area where others won't hear you.

Willingly exchanges appropriate and professional information with co-workers.

Use the right words and tone.

- Communicate information that will increase the safety, quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the team. *"Sally, I just put your patient in room 607 on a bed pan, but I need to run downstairs to pick up a monitor. Can you watch for her call light?"* Or, *"That machine was not working properly yesterday. Let's take it out of service and tag it for repair."*
- Share information obtained at workshops, professional conferences and seminars by making presentations and handing out materials at department meetings and elsewhere.
- Be clear and concise whenever you are handing off a patient or a project to another employee. We are especially vulnerable to miscommunication and error during hand-offs. *"Davon, Mr. Juarez is being transferred to your unit. His care is complicated, and he is very anxious about leaving the unit. Let's take some time to talk about his needs."* Or, *"I have a critical lab result for Mr. Sanchez. His potassium is 2.8. Would you read that back to me?"*
- Follow your department's procedure for sharing information. Report unusual requests and circumstances. Choose the appropriate setting and communication strategy, be it e-mail, phone or face to face). *"I would like to share a concern with you, and I don't think an e-mail or a memo is the best way to talk about it. May I schedule a brief meeting with you to discuss my concern?"*

4. Communication

Listens to customer needs and responds in a courteous and tactful manner.

Be an active listener.

- Be quiet and listen carefully to the customer's words, intent, feelings and needs. Listen with your eyes as well as your ears. And remember that listening is not just waiting for your turn to speak. *"Ms. Starckovich, you are telling me that you are not in pain, but I see you wincing whenever I touch you. Let's talk a bit more about how you are feeling."* Or, *"Dolly, you are telling me that you agree with me on this decision, but I sense you are not entirely comfortable with it."*
- Seek to understand before being understood. *"It seems like we have a difference of opinion about the plan of care for this patient. Tell me more about your ideas."*
- Summarize what you heard by repeating it in your own words. *"Lizzy, if I heard you correctly, you would like to try to talk with Mike before I talk to him. Is that correct?"*
- Check for understanding. *"Mr. Jefferson, would you please repeat how you're going to take your medications? I want to be sure you are perfectly clear about the instructions."* Or, *"Will you please demonstrate for me how to do your exercises?"* Or, *"Mr. Ellis, do you need any more information?"*
- Ask questions to clarify the customer's needs. *"Ben, did you say you wanted to go to lunch first today?"* Or, *"Mr. Lewis, you will need someone to escort you home after this procedure. Do you have someone with you?"*

Provide information.

- Demonstrate your competence to assist. Use your knowledge of campus buildings, parking lots, departments, services and more.
- Use easily understood and appropriate language. Avoid incorrect grammar, slang, medical terminology and abbreviations. Never use language that could be deemed inappropriate or offensive.
- Speak in a tone of voice that says, *"I am here to help you."*
- Use language interpreters as needed or requested. Do not rely on family members to interpret for you.

Take action.

- Address the customer's needs and take whatever action is appropriate. Ask others to help you, if necessary.

Provides timely feedback to the appropriate customer in a clear and concise manner.

Clarify expectations—yours and your customer's.

- Clearly state the purpose of any procedure or service, the reason and steps involved. Clarify any expectations. *“Good afternoon, Mr. Hutchins. My name is David and I’m from Respiratory Therapy. I’m here to give you a breathing treatment. This will help with your shortness of breath. Let me explain how the treatment works and what I need to do.”* Or, *“I am waiting for your family medical leave paperwork from your physician, Mrs. Townsend. Once I receive the paperwork, I will be able to process your FML request.”*
- Ensure that the customer understands any procedure or service to be performed. Always obtain approval to continue. *“Mrs. Carter, is there anything that you would like me to go over again or explain further?”*
- Set appropriate expectations as to when a request can be fulfilled. Negotiate, if necessary, to meet mutual needs. *“I will be able to complete that project by Wednesday. Will that meet your needs?”*

Follow up all requests.

- Check in with your customer to ensure that the request has been completed to his satisfaction. *“Mr. Ford, I sent the requested information yesterday. Have you received it? Is there anything else that you need?”*
- Check in with patients and family members frequently to make certain they have all of the appropriate information relating to patient care, delays, etc. *“The doctor is finishing with a patient and will be in to see you in a few minutes, Mrs. Weinstein. Are you still having pain? Has the medication helped?”* Or, *“Our plan for tomorrow is to get you out of bed.”*
- Focus on the customer’s perception in all misunderstandings. *“Mr. Long, you seem upset about something. Please tell me what is concerning you.”*
- Inform patients and other customers when you will return or get back to them, rather than having them make repeated requests. *“Mr. Paine, I want to make sure that we respond to your concern in the best possible way. Because of that, I’d like to talk with my supervisor. Even if I don’t have a complete answer, I’ll get back to you later today.”* Or, *“I am sorry that your food tray was not what you ordered, Mrs. Taylor. I’ve called the dietary department. They are currently making up another food tray for you, which will take about 20 minutes. I know you’re hungry. May I get you a snack from our kitchen while you wait?”*

Uses professional judgment in providing information based on the situation and is sensitive to individual and organizational concerns.

Be open and honest.

- Be honest at all times, but be cautious and discreet with sensitive information. *“Mrs. Cohen, I know that your daughter told me that I could discuss her care with you; however, I believe it might be better for you to ask her that question directly. If you’d like, I’d be happy to come with you.”*
- Consult with your manager when a mistake is made. Make a plan for communicating it. This is especially important if the error is related to patient care. Consult your policy and procedure manual if you are not sure what to do. *“Michael, I made a mistake with Mr. Lewis’s medication. Can we talk about the best way to inform the patient and his family?”* Or, *“Lisa, that report we just sent Dr. Sherman has an error in it. I’ll page him now to let him know while you change the report.”*
- Be willing to participate in and contribute to discussions and debriefings about adverse events.

Be adaptable.

- Offer options and choices, where possible. *“Mr. Gotjen, today’s the day to get you up and moving a bit. Would you like to get out of bed before or after lunch?”*
- Adapt your verbal and nonverbal communication style to mirror the customer’s age, culture and health status. Use your Hopkins resources if you’re unsure. *“Charlene, you’re such a grown-up 4-year-old. Thank you for being so good. We need to give you a shot. You’ll feel a pinch like when your brother pinches you. It is a medicine that will make you feel better.”*

Consistently ensures that information known about the customer is kept private and confidential.

Maintain confidentiality.

- Know and abide by all HIPAA guidelines related to confidential patient information.
- Share information about a patient’s care or payment for services only with those who “need to know” in order to provide care or service. *“Mrs. Pappas, we are only allowed to give out patient information to known family members.”* Or, *“Latoya, you should not forward this part*

of the e-mail to Joe. It contains confidential patient information that he doesn't need to see."

- Ensure that you have permission, in writing, to discuss protected health information (PHI) with anyone not involved with the delivery of health care. Specific forms can be obtained from your supervisor. *"I need you to sign this release form so that we can share this information about your care, Mr. Kymbriti."*
- When disposing of documents, shred all those with protected health information. Employee documents containing private information such as Social Security numbers also should be shredded.
- Keep your passwords to yourself. Do not share them.

Maintain privacy.

- Discuss patient or customer information in a private area where you cannot be overheard. Elevators, hallways, cafeterias or other public areas are not appropriate for patient-related discussions. Remind others of this if you hear conversations you shouldn't be hearing.
- Conduct phone conversations with discretion and protect confidentiality. Be aware of the environment and who is present. *"I have to keep my voice low because there are others nearby."* Or, *"Let's wait until we are back on the unit to discuss Mr. Cook's condition."*
- When you are away from your work area, log off or black out screens that contain patient information.

5. Ownership / Accountability

Treats customers' property and Johns Hopkins' property with care and respect.

Take care of patients' belongings.

- Place the patient's personal items in a belongings bag with the patient's name clearly visible. Ask patients to send valuables and money home or secure them according to your policy.
- Inventory belongings on the patient belongings form.

Take care of Hopkins' property.

- Follow proper procedures when using any equipment.
- Make sure that all equipment is properly stored and secured after use. *"Dwight, whenever possible, we need to plug in the COW [computer on wheels] to keep it charged up."*
- Remove or sequester broken or damaged equipment immediately, label as needing repairs with a short note about the problem, and then report it to the appropriate person or department. *"Dolores, the IV pump is not working right. Will you please tag it and remove it from service while I call Clinical Engineering?"*
- Put things back where they belong. *"I borrowed this wheelchair from the Emergency Department. I'll be back right after I return it."* Or, *"Greg, when not being used, the LCD projector is stored in the locked closet at the end of the hallway."*
- Respect our policy of sharing scarce resources with other departments. *"Molly, I understand why you want to hide the SCD [sequential compression device] pump. You want to have one ready when your patients need it. But we have to make it available for patients on other floors who may need it in the meantime."*

Demonstrates conservation and responsible use of resources.

Use resources wisely, ensuring safety, quality and efficiency.

- Monitor inventory, and order only what is needed. *"We don't use this pack as much as we used to. Let's not order as many from now on."*
- Consider carefully the amount of supplies you need to achieve the desired result. *"Karen, that's a lot to photocopy. Why not make it a two-sided copy instead of one-sided? That will save paper."*
- Use caution in a clinical setting before you reuse or recycle. Sometimes recycling is not the way to go. Ask your supervisor if you're not sure about recycling. *"I know it seems like a waste but we need to discard everything in this room, even unopened supplies, because of the type of isolation."*

Contributes to the safety and security of the Johns Hopkins environment through personal actions.

Keep it clean.

- Clean up after yourself. If you're "borrowing" space from another department, be especially considerate, and leave it in better shape than it was when you arrived.
- Keep your work area and public areas neat, orderly, clean and clutter-free. If you come across litter in the hallways, pick it up and dispose of it properly, or call Housekeeping.
- Keep all entrances and hallways clear and free of unnecessary obstacles.
- Be observant of unsafe conditions in the workplace. Notify others as necessary. *"Sara, what's that on the floor? Please notify Housekeeping, and I'll find a 'Wet Floor' sign to alert others of this hazard."*
- If you carry food or liquids, take care that nothing spills on a floor where others might slip and fall.
- Report broken or damaged equipment.
- Always use proper procedures and techniques when performing your duties, especially when it relates to safety. *"Will you please assist me? I need a second person to check the programming of Mr. Carlos's PCA pump."*

Keep it safe.

- Know your safety and disaster emergency codes and how to respond appropriately.
- Know the JCAHO patient safety goals and how your department contributes to improving patient safety. If you don't know, ask your manager.
- Be aware of safety and security issues by reading publications and attending staff and departmental meetings and in-services. *"Tim talked about the new card swipe that was installed for access to our work area. Please check with him to get the details and your access."*

6. Continuous Performance Improvement

Effectively and efficiently fulfills responsibilities to achieve the greatest benefit at an acceptable cost.

Be wise about money and resources

- Suggest new ways of performing job duties that will result in improved safety, quality, productivity and cost savings. *“I have an example of how we can save time and reduce infection with this procedure I saw at another hospital.”* Or, *“Sheila, I think we can improve the way we document our calls and letters. Can we meet to discuss my ideas?”*
- Use supplies carefully and cost effectively. *“Tameka, we can get a discount on this if we get it paid in 30 days. Please note this on the check request.”* Or, *“Dr. Jans, we need to be sure all the supplies we used for Mrs. Liget are charged to her.”*
- Use the least costly supplies and readily available equipment when possible to save time and money. *“Susan, let’s use this dressing pack. It will work just as well, and it’s less expensive.”*
- Prevent waste of supplies, equipment and time. *“LaShana, let’s take care of another patient while we are waiting for the equipment we need for Mr. Walter.”* Or, *“Eric, let’s check to see if we have enough of those folders in another color to save money.”*

Continually strive to suggest and implement ways to improve personal, departmental and institutional performance.

Be wise about safety and quality

- Create systems that allow tasks to be completed more rapidly without sacrificing accuracy, cost or safety. *“Peggy worked with the lab to develop a protocol that saves time and allows us to start treatment in the Emergency Department sooner.”*
- Support quality improvement activities by serving on relevant committees and/or assisting with special events.
- Participate in quality improvement projects within your work area. Everyone contributes to quality improvement efforts. Assist with data gathering. Go to a training class. Do some research. Share your ideas.

- Evaluate your work process and discuss possible efficiencies with your supervisor. *“Nancy, I think I can be more efficient if I batch this work and do it twice a week. Will that be OK?”*

APPENDIX 1

Telephone Etiquette

Greeting the Caller

- Answer the phone within *three* rings.
- Use a pleasant, caring and sincere tone of voice and an unhurried pace.
- Use a three-part greeting with welcoming words, your name and your work area. *“Good morning, HR Service Center. This is Louise.”* Or, *“Housekeeping. This is Jane. How may I help you?”*

Being a Good Listener

- Listen carefully to understand the caller’s words, intent, feelings and needs.
- Validate what you heard the caller say by repeating it in your own words.
- When giving information, use easily understood and appropriate language (e.g., no incorrect grammar, slang, medical terminology or abbreviations).
- Address the caller’s needs and take whatever action is necessary. Ask others to help you if necessary.
- Check for understanding and ask, *“Do you need any more information?”* And, *“Do you have any more questions?”*

Placing a Call on Hold

- *Always* ask if the caller is able to hold, and then wait for a response. *“Mrs. Jones, would you mind holding while I research that information for you?”*
- Tell callers why you need to put them on hold.
- Let callers know how long they will be on hold.
- Check back every 30 seconds, give the status of the call, and see if the caller can continue to wait. If not, ask for the caller’s phone number and return the call.
- Thank the caller for holding. *“Mrs. Jones, thank you for holding. Ella is still on the other line. She knows you are holding and expects to be finished in another minute or so. Would you like to continue to hold, or would you like me to have her call you right back?”*

Transferring a Call

- Always ensure that callers understand why they are being transferred.
- Ask their permission to transfer and *wait* for a reply.
- Explain where the call is being transferred and to whom.
- Give the caller the number for future reference.
- Give information about the call to the person receiving the transfer.
- Remain on the line until a connection is made. *“Hello, Mr. Jones,*

thank you for holding. I spoke to Medical Records. They have your chart and will be happy to help you with your concern. I am going to transfer you. I will stay on the line to make sure you get through, but let me give you their phone number just in case.”

Taking a Message

- Obtain the following information and write it down:
 - Name of person being called.
 - Caller’s name and phone number.
 - Time and date of call.
 - Purpose of the call.
- Restate the message to check for accuracy.
- Put your initials on the message.
- Make sure it reaches the appropriate person.

Ending the Call

- Use an appropriate phrase such as, *“Is there anything else I can help you with today?” “Thank you for calling the unit.” “If we can be of further assistance, please give us a call.” “Have a nice day.” “Good bye”* (not *“Bye-bye”*).
- Make certain the caller hangs up before you do. This ensures that the call is over.

APPENDIX 2

Elevator Etiquette

1. Hold the door open for approaching passengers. Ask others “What floor do you need?” if you are near the buttons.
2. Wait until those on the elevator exit before entering.
3. Step aside or to the back of the elevator to make room for others entering.
4. Allow guests to enter the elevator first.
5. Make positive eye contact, smile and speak to fellow passengers.
6. Safeguard patient confidentiality. Do not have discussions on elevators about patient care.
7. Do not have personal conversations when a customer is on the same elevator.
8. Patient transport has the right of way in elevators. If you see a patient being transported in a bed or on a stretcher, step off or wait for another elevator.
9. When transporting patients, always face them toward the door and exit with care.
10. Hold the door open for passengers exiting the elevator.

Wellness Tip: When you can, try walking up one flight or down two flights of stairs to avoid using the elevator altogether. You will reduce overall elevator traffic and stay fit at the same time!

APPENDIX 3

Answering Call Bells

Answering a call bell/light is the responsibility of *all* employees. This includes staff members on the unit as well as ancillary and support staff such as housekeepers, dietitians, social workers and respiratory/rehab therapists.

Any staff member walking past a patient's door with the call light on should stop in and ask if they can assist.

- Knock on the door, announce who you are and ask permission to enter.
- Introduce yourself in a warm tone of voice. *"I noticed that your call light was on. How may I help you?"*
- Use helpful phrases that build confidence, such as, *"I'd be happy to get your glasses from the bedside table."* Or, *"I'll be glad to assist, but first let me bring the nurse in."*
- Apologize for problems and inconveniences. If the issue involves another person or department, apologize without placing blame. Don't appear defensive, interrupt or make excuses.
- Address the patient's needs, and take whatever action is necessary. Ask others to help you if necessary.
- Always make sure that a nurse is involved if a medical request is made.
- Before leaving a patient's room, always ask, *"Is there anything else I can do for you?"*

If the patient needs a nurse, get assistance from the nurses' station. Tell the patient that help is on the way. Do not turn off the call bell/light.

If the patient needs something non-medical, such as help turning on a light, assist them and turn off the call bell/light. Advise someone at the nurses' station of what you have done.

Make sure the patient is both physically able to access the call button and understands how to use it.

Survey patients' environments and take appropriate action. You might, for example:

- Make sure they have fresh water.
- Make sure they have personal care items.
- Place the call button within reach and encourage them to call for all their needs.
- Ask if they understand how to work the equipment in their room.

APPENDIX 4

RELATE

Service Recovery Model

RELATE (*recognize concern, empathize, listen, apologize, thank the customer, and explain*) is a model that takes you step by step through the process of turning around a difficult situation.

Recognize concern

- Recognize that you have a “service recovery” opportunity, or a chance to turn a perceived wrong into a right.
- Look for nonverbal cues that may indicate dissatisfaction.
 - *“Mr. Gerard, I sense you’re concerned about...”*
 - *“Lilly, you seem upset about something.”*

Empathize

- Put yourself in the customer’s shoes. How would you feel?
- Listen to the feelings behind the words as well as the content of the message.
- Acknowledge the difficulty, whether you agree or not.
 - *“Mr. Foster, I can see how upsetting this is to you.”*
 - *“I can appreciate how disappointed you must feel, Lori.”*
 - *“Mrs. Myers, I can hear how angry this has made you.”*
 - *“I understand this is a very difficult time for you, Joshua.”*

Listen

- Focus 100 percent on the customer.
- Make eye contact and listen patiently while the customer tells his story. Allow him to tell you the whole story. Do not interrupt.
- Your facial expression and tone of voice should show concern and compassion.
- Acknowledge what has been said. Ask good questions, repeat key words or phrases, and paraphrase so you fully understand the situation.
- Don’t be defensive or take it personally.
 - *“Mrs. Curtis, please tell me what happened.”*
 - *“Can you describe what your concerns are, Roberta?”*

Apologize

- Negative situations may be saved with a simple “I’m sorry.” Remember, you are apologizing on behalf of Johns Hopkins. Show your commitment to customers’ needs by using those few simple words.
- Do not blame anyone else for what happened, (e.g. *“I don’t know why she does things like that.”* Or, *“Well, you can count on long waits in that department.”*).
- Don’t try to excuse the incident with statements like, *“We’re so short-staffed.”* Or, *“He’s a new employee and we’re training him.”* Or, *“I’m sure you weren’t waiting that long.”*
- Effective apologies are sincere, personal, specific and immediate.
 - *“Mrs. Weinberg, I’m sorry that was your experience.”*
 - *“Gwen, I’m sorry that happened to you.”*
 - *“I am so sorry, Mr. Doyle, that this has happened, but I’m happy that you let me know.”*
 - *“I’m very sorry that you are so frustrated (angry, upset, or disappointed) with our service.”*

Thank the customer

- Because they have brought the service breakdown to your attention, the customer has given you the opportunity to use the planned service recovery process. The opportunity also allows you to regain their trust, build customer loyalty, and possibly improve a process to prevent further breakdowns.
- Thank the customer for giving you the opportunity to make something right and/or improve service in our organization.
 - *Mr. Ruiz, thank you so much for taking the time to share this with me.*
 - *We are always trying to do things better. Your comments will help us do that. Thank you very much.*
 - *Thank you for bringing this to my attention.*

Explain your actions

- Explain how you are going to address the concern. *“Mr. OConnor, let me tell you what I’m going to do today to follow through.”*
- Get your customers buy in.
- If you feel it will help, write down information for the customer, including your name and extension. Do what you said you would do!
- If you cannot resolve the issue immediately, or at all, tell the customer what you will do and what they can expect.
 - *This is an issue my manager will need to resolve. I will contact him and ask him to see you or call you by the end of the workday. Will that be OK with you? After the situation has been resolved, or you think it has, call or stop by to see the customer to verify that what was supposed to happen did actually happen.*
 - *Is there anything else I can do for you today?*

APPENDIX 5

Care and Concern

The 10 Habits of the CARE-ing Organization

Care and Concern shows our patients and customers that we not only care for them, we care about them. These 10 habits describe how we can do that. It's not about doing more. It's about doing what we already do—but always with care and concern.

- **CARE-ing about** ranges from fluffing pillows and offering someone something to drink to seeking the deepest understanding of what the other person really needs. It's paying attention to the things that are important to the customer.
- **CARE-ing about** is not only the right thing to do. It also leads to better outcomes, improved satisfaction, fewer complaints and better staff morale.
- **CARE-ing about** is what transforms good health care organizations into great health care organizations.

Habit #1: Mind Your Manners

Use courtesy words and phrases like please, thank you, and may I help you?

Habit #2: Be Present

Give your customer 100 percent of your attention with your eyes, words and body language.

Habit #3: Be Positive

Think the best of people in all situations.

Habit #4: Teamwork Works

Support your co-workers. Make each other look good.

Habit #5: Do Sweat the Small Stuff

Make a big impact with a small gesture of kindness.

Habit #6: Make a Promise, Keep a Promise

Follow through with all commitments. If you say you're going to do something, do it.

Habit #7: Rediscover Silence

Practice active listening skills. Remember that listening is not just waiting for your turn to speak.

Habit #8: Be Thankful

Take time to thank someone every day.

Habit #9: Think Ahead

Anticipate your patients' and other customers' needs.

Habit #10: Just Do It

Put yourself in your patients' and other customers' shoes.

How would you expect to be treated?

APPENDIX 6

Key Words at Key Times

Mrs. Augustine, I can appreciate your frustration with the admitting process. I sincerely apologize for the inconvenience you and your family have experienced.

I am sorry that there has been a delay in your room assignment. We are working to accommodate you as quickly as possible. It may be a while longer until our discharges are completed. Is there anything you need while you continue to wait, Mr. Galvez?

I apologize for the delay of the treatment, Mr. Finley. I understand how frustrating it is to wait for results, especially when you are tired and unable to eat. Is there anything I can do to make you more comfortable?

I apologize for the length of time it took to respond to you, Mrs. Goodman. I was committed to returning several time-sensitive phone calls. How may I help you?

Mr. Hrabe, I'm sorry our service did not meet your expectation. It is important that we know when things like this happen so that we can correct any deficiencies. Thank you for your feedback.

Mrs. Morgan, I sense you're not completely satisfied with the explanation you were given. What additional questions can I answer for you?

Mr. Malik, I apologize for the delay in answering the call bell. I was completing a procedure. I appreciate your patience. How can I help you?

I can hear how angry this situation has made you, Mrs. Klein. I'm sorry that the discharge process did not go efficiently for you. Please tell me what happened and if there is anything further I can do for you.

Mr. Hodson, I apologize for not being able to see you immediately. Sometimes emergencies arise that take priority. I am sorry for the delay and will be with you as quickly as I can. Is there anything we can get for you while you wait?

I'm sorry to hear that you're still having pain, Mr. Williams. Let me check the options we have to help make you feel more comfortable.

I'm sorry for the delay in getting pain medication to you, Mr. Singer. I will bring you the medication immediately.

We continue to focus on improving our processes. Your comments are appreciated and important to us. Thank you for your comments, Mrs. Ingram.

Mr. Dunbar, I'm sorry that [rude behavior of a staff member] was your experience. I will inform my supervisor. What can I do for you right now that will make a difference?

I'm sorry, Mrs. Sears. I can't tell you exactly how long you will need to wait. Sometimes problems occur with patients that delay the next patient from being seen. Is there anything I can do to make you more comfortable while you continue to wait?

Mrs. Willis, thank you for making us aware that your room needed cleaning. I have called Housekeeping. They are sending a staff member to do the necessary cleaning. I'll stop back to make sure the cleaning has been completed to your satisfaction.

Tell me about your concerns with the food, Mr. Lashkey. A new tray will be made for you within the next half hour. I will also contact the dietitian to determine when she can talk to you about your special diet.

Mrs. Hershey, I can see how upsetting losing your belongings is to you. Security is currently trying to locate them for you. I will keep you informed of our progress.

Mr. Feliciano, I apologize that the case manager has not been in to see you. Is there anything I can do to make you more comfortable while you wait? It will be just a few minutes longer.

APPENDIX 7

SBAR Model

Breakdowns in verbal and written communication between health care providers are a major concern in the delivery of care. Poor communication is not only a common occurrence but is also associated with adverse events. It is critical that caregivers have standardized communication tools that create an environment in which people can speak up and express concerns.

SBAR (situation, background, assessment and recommendation) is a model that provides a framework for communication between members of the health care team. It is an easy-to-remember, concrete mechanism for framing any conversation, especially critical ones that require immediate action.

While designed to assist health care providers to communicate more effectively, the SBAR model can be applied to both written and verbal communication in general. All of us have experienced the frustration of not feeling listened to, of not seeming to get our point across, of being flustered in the midst of a serious conversation. SBAR can help.

The goals of the SBAR model are to:

- Provide communication that is clear, concise and focused
- Improve the timeliness of communication
- Minimize the effects of differing communication styles
- Improve listening
- Foster teamwork

Why does SBAR work?

- You and your co-worker are thinking through a problem using the same standardized communication tool.
- You are thinking ahead and giving the listener data that would be needed anyway to solve the problem.
- You are saving your co-workers time by researching and presenting options and providing a recommendation.

Situation

What is happening that has warranted the communication? Briefly state what the problem is, when it occurred, and how severe it is. Stay focused on the reason for the communication. Don't go into too much detail. Try to describe the situation in one sentence.

Background

What are the facts? Explain the circumstances leading up to this situation. Put it into context for the reader or listener. Provide pertinent related information.

Assessment

What do you think the problem is? Offer your definition.

Recommendation

What would you do to correct the problem? What would you like to see happen? What is your suggestion? Your suggestion may or may not be accepted, but it is a starting point to possible solutions.



Johns Hopkins Medicine would like to formally recognize Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center's standards team for their hard work and leadership on this project.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of

*Service Excellence
Standards of Behavior*

I agree that it is my responsibility to:

- Read this employee reference guide.
- Ask questions of my supervisor if I need additional information.
- Abide by these standards of behavior and incorporate them into my work.

Please sign and date this form and return it to your supervisor.

Name (please print)

Signature

Date



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