

STEER

Healthy Business

'THE 10 GOLDEN RULES FOR THE PERFECT TREATMENT' TO ACHIEVE BETTER PATIENT CARE AND CUSTOMER RETENTION

RULE 1: GREET YOUR CLIENT WITH A SMILE!

No matter how busy you are, or how much of a rush you are in, take the time to smile and say 'Hi John/Judy. How are you today?' openly and warmly. First impressions are everything. Remember, you are in the profession of customer service as well as Physiotherapy.

RULE 2: ASK YOUR PATIENT WHAT THEY WANT TO ACHIEVE.

'What can I do for you today?' is one example of what to say. This not only shows the patient you are willing and ready to help them, but also directs the patient to tell you their number one source of concern. Knowing what the patient wants is vital, as it is your job to fix their problem. A satisfied customer is one who has their problem solved. To take this to the next level is to understand the emotional factors behind the patient's injury. It may mean to them that they are unable to work or perform household duties or take part in an upcoming fun run. It is your job to find out what this is.

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RULE 3: SHOW EMPATHY FOR YOUR CLIENT'S CONDITION.

You cannot underestimate the importance of showing empathy with regards to establishing rapport with your patients. It is something we often are 'too busy' to do, but is absolutely essential in the treatment process. Empathy shows you really care and builds your patient's confidence and commitment in you, your treatment and your treatment plans.

RULE 4: ALWAYS MAINTAIN YOUR PATIENT'S MODESTY.

Always take care to cover sensitive areas of the body. It's as simple as placing a towel over an area. This is not only a common courtesy, but also shows you are caring for your patient in every possible way. Ideally, when the patient rings to make an appointment your receptionist should ask what the problem is and advise the patient regarding appropriate clothing to wear or bring along, for example, a singlet for shoulder problems.

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RULE 5: BE CONFIDENT!

There is nothing worse for a patient coming in to see a Physiotherapist who is not sure in themselves or their advice. Take a moment now to realise how much you know, how long you have studied for and know that you deliver best practice patient care. So back yourself. Confidently explain to the patient what you think the problem is and what the solution to their problem is. For example, 'From my findings I feel you have a moderate sprain of your ankle. In order for you to get the best possible outcome you will need to see me twice a week for 3 weeks and then weekly after that for 3 weeks. You will benefit from Hydrotherapy initially and then I will give you a series of exercises to do.'

RULE 6: OFFER A FULL SOLUTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH BEST PRACTICE AND LINK YOUR TREATMENT PLAN WITH WHAT THE PATIENT WANTS TO ACHIEVE.

It sounds logical enough, but as Physiotherapists we often forget to say it out loud. For example, 'By treating your ankle this way, I will be doing everything I possibly can to get you ready for the fun run next month.' This enhances both patient satisfaction and compliance with treatment. Never 'water-down' a treatment solution, based on what you think the patient might be thinking. You cannot know what someone else is thinking, so offer best practice treatment i.e., the best solution to their problem.

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RULE 7: GAIN AGREEMENT, COMPLIANCE AND TRUST FROM YOUR PATIENT WITH THE SOLUTION OFFERED.

Ask your patient about the solution you have offered.

For patients who are 'feeling' type personalities ask 'How does that feel to you?'

For patients who are 'thinking' type personalities ask 'What do you think of that as a plan?'

For patients who are 'aural/listening' type personalities ask 'How does that sound to you?'

RULE 8: DISCUSS...

Be prepared to openly discuss the best fit of the plan for you your patient. You both might have to modify your plans to come to an outcome that works for both parties. You may need to say 'OK, no problems, if we choose to do this then things may take a bit longer to get the best possible result for your injury.'

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RULE 9: DELIVER BEST PRACTICE TREATMENT.

This is where you can implement your knowledge in the best possible way and even add your preferred specialties and innovations. The wonderful thing about Physiotherapy is that there are many proven and effective solutions to one problem, so add your personal flavour and get thinking about new and exciting options too.

RULE 10: ALWAYS CONNECT ON A SOCIAL LEVEL WITH YOUR CLIENT.

For example, keep a record of any significant aspects of your patient's life, for example, his or her wife's or husband's name and his or her hobbies. Write this down in an appropriate and easily accessible section in their notes.

**Follow these 'Ten Golden Rules',
and you will have patients lining up to see you.**

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BONUS RULE: MAKE SURE YOU AND YOUR WORK SPACE LOOK PROFESSIONAL, NEAT AND TIDY.

Sounds logical right? Unfortunately, it doesn't always happen. For your clients, the way you, your clinic and your treatment space is presented is a direct representation of the quality of care they expect to receive. So presenting yourself and your clinic in the best possible way, means you are serious about delivering high quality care.

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