7a. Complaint Investigation and Resolution

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Complaint Investigation and Resolution

How to make lemonade from the lemons clients send you

Objectives

• Define the required elements of complaint receipt, investigation, and resolution
• List ways to demonstrate compliance with defense of the patient’s right to file a complaint without fear of repercussion
• Explain how approaches to complaints can lead to “Positively Outrageous Service”
Anatomy of Complaint Regulations

• Inform potential clients of their right to make a complaint without fear of recrimination or revenge
• Document client’s receipt and understanding of rights.
• Monitor number and type of complaints as part of QAPI program
• If complaint received, record and if ANE suspected report to state within 24 hours – more later in another session.
• Otherwise, investigate within ten days and resolve within 30
• Document actions and decisions including times and dates.

RECEIVING A COMPLAINT

• Key Requirements
  • Gratitude
  • Curiosity
  • Compassion
Gratitude

• That the complaint came to you rather than to the public or the state-always begin response with “THANK YOU”
• That you have an opportunity to see your services through the eyes of your customer
• That you have an opportunity to investigate and potentially improve your services
• That you have an opportunity to “wow” your customer with your response.

Curiosity

• Stay non-defensive, although its hard
• Use active listening
• Get all the facts and feelings from the complainant’s point of view
• Discover if anyone else has knowledge of this incident
• Determine what steps you may need to take to investigate this incident
Compassion

- Put yourself in their place “how would you feel if what they allege had happened to you”
- Try to determine what harm has occurred or what they fear could occur
- Try to understand not only what they feel but what they want to see happen.

INVESTIGATING A COMPLAINT

- Key Characteristics
  - Objectivity
  - Carefulness
  - Commitment
  - Energy
Objectivity

• In this case, do NOT “begin with the end in mind”
• Suspend thoughts of “what if” or outcomes
• Collect data prior to beginning analysis
• Practice patience as you track down evidence
• Keep contemporaneous records of what people say and do, the findings of assessments, evidence collected

Carefulness

• Details matter, be careful to notice and record them
• History and feelings matter, be sure to record what people say about them
• Protocols and processes matter, what are they and were they followed?
• Environments and context matter, be sure to describe them
Commitment and Energy

- Don’t stop at the easy, obvious answers, dig deeper
- If the complaint is big, it deserves a big and thorough investigation

Complaint Resolution

- Key Characteristics
  - Diplomacy
  - Judgement
  - Fairness
  - Compassion
Diplomacy

• Sharpen your sales skills
• Be sure to save face for all parties
• Inform complainant about decision made but not internal affairs
• Present agency’s next actions in most positive way possible

Judgement

• Not looking for “beyond a reasonable doubt” looking for preponderance of the evidence
• Resolution may need to involve outside resources
• Decisions involve both cognition and intuition – your head and your gut
Fairness

• Give equal weight to both sides unless there is reason to doubt credibility
• Weigh both amount and importance of evidence.
• Stay objective even if the agency has made errors and needs to make corrections

Compassion

• Most complaint resolution situations involve high drama and exposed feelings.
• Express concern and understanding for all parties
• Take whatever action necessary with consideration for the consequences and feelings
• No “gotcha games” or “told you so”s.
POSITIVELY OUTRAGEOUS SERVICE

• The customer is not “always right” but they should always feel heard, acknowledged, and taken seriously
• T. Scott Gross tells us the customer’s perception is most powerfully influenced not by what goes wrong but by what we do when that happens. This is the chance to surprise them by giving them more than they expect
• Complaints offer us this chance to perform memorable, over the top acts to correct our errors that will have our clients telling positive stories about us.

Servant Leadership is the Tool

• Consider your agency as an inverted pyramid with you, the owner, or the Board of Directors and each tier serving the one above it.
• The point of this service is to make the tier above you more efficient and makes it easier to perform their duties.
• The point is to smooth the way for those front line workers who interact with and can disappoint or delight your clients.
• Servant leaders ask more questions and issue fewer commands. To serve the tier above you one must understand their needs, frustrations, and want to know “how can I help, how can I make it better”