



# The HEART METHOD

## RESOLVING COMPLAINTS BEFORE ESCALATION

**H**

**Hear:** Hearing involves listening actively to what the customer or client is saying. This provides the client an opportunity to vent their frustrations and feel heard. In this stage, you can assure your client that their concerns are being taken seriously. Having someone really listen can take the power out of many complaints. Help them see you are on the same side.

**E**

**Empathize:** With Empathize, you validate the customer's feelings. Do not give reasons why there is a problem. This doesn't necessarily mean you agree with their standpoint, rather you acknowledge their feelings and communicate understanding and respect for their perspective.

**A**

**Apologize:** Next, you Apologize. This isn't necessarily admitting fault, but it does show concern for the distress your client is feeling. You're not necessarily apologizing for what you've done, but rather how they're feeling. 'I'm sorry this has caused you distress' can go a long way.

**R**

**Respond:** Here, you seek solutions. You may suggest ways to improve the situation or ask the client how they think the situation could be improved. This step is about taking action to ensure the complaint doesn't arise again. Find some way to acknowledge you will take some action, even if it is "I will get back to you."

**T**

**Thank:** Finally, you Thank the customer. Express your genuine gratitude to them for bringing the issue to your attention. We all need feedback in our business. It shows you appreciate their feedback and gives them a sense of fulfillment for contributing to your service's improvement.



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In today's highly competitive market, the key differentiating factor between several businesses often boils down to one simple thing - **customer service**. But how exactly can you assure that you're providing excellent customer service? Introducing the HEART method, a simple, yet effective technique for managing customer complaints and enhancing customer relations.

The HEART method is a strategy used to enhance customer service with the acronym standing for Hear, Empathize, Apologize, Respond, and Thank. This technique is extensively applied in mental health services for managing customer complaints.

By adopting the HEART method, you not only manage and resolve complaints more effectively but also forge a deeper, more meaningful relationship with your clients. Remember, the HEART method isn't just about resolving issues, it's about showing **empathy** and **understanding**. It's about acknowledging their feelings and taking action to improve their experience. Implement it today and transform customer service in your practice.

The bottom line is, that taking the time to hear out customer complaints can stop a problem from escalating. Even if you did nothing wrong, letting people talk out their frustrations without you defending your actions takes the fight out of most people. With nothing to fight against, once they have talked through their issues, they stop. And if you thank them they might even thank you for listening.