

Welcoming People at Subsequent Contact

Involve the whole family

Take an active interest in the whole family. Welcome and include the family and significant others, where appropriate. Learn their names.

Help with forms

Patients may need help reading, understanding or completing forms. People are unlikely to ask you for help, so you need to actively offer assistance. To avoid form burnout and respect privacy, only collect essential information.

Get to know the person without judging

Recognize the unique characteristics of each person, including the skills, abilities and strengths. See the person as a whole, not just in terms of the problems they present with.

Accept the person for who they are and respect their choices and lifestyle. Try to establish a real understanding of the situation and the person's concerns.

Encourage questions at any time

Ensure people feel comfortable asking questions every step of the way. Your responses should be credible and knowledgeable.

Try to remember what happened in previous meetings. Document key issues or useful information to aid memory. Communicate any potential delays or changes to the plan.

Personalize emails and phone calls

A handwritten letter expressing concern that an individual has not attended an appointment has been shown to significantly increase the likelihood of that individual returning to service.

After discharge, introduce routine callback. This is an excellent way to finish the experience positively, gather feedback and encourage people to use aftercare services. Intermittent motivational reminders can also help keep people engaged with aftercare service.

Take complaints seriously

Respond to patients' needs as best you can in a safe, respectful way. Consider being flexible with appointment times to better suit the patient and their other commitments. This can go a long way towards fostering respect and trust.

Be considerate and aware of the language you use

Words can hurt. There are often negative stereotypes associated with particular words, or they may indicate a lack of understanding.

Be aware of who can hear the conversations that you are having with visitors or other staff members, wherever you are in the building. It is always a good idea to test this out!

Think about the ways staff interact with one another in the communal areas. We must remember that this can affect the emotional atmosphere of the building.

Reduce the power imbalance

Demonstrate a hopeful attitude toward recovery. Ensure the person has a sense of control over decisions and treatment. This reduces feelings of helplessness. Acknowledge the needs of the person even at the expense of your own agenda.

Deal with delays respectfully

You can help people feel respected and welcomed when running behind:

- Communicate any potential delays.
- Always use please and thank you.
- Try to ensure that no one feels ignored.
- Where possible, offer tea, coffee or water.
- Don't pass anyone without making eye contact or smiling.