

Online-only content for “An Evidence-Based Approach to Taking Charge,” by Flynn and colleagues in the *American Journal of Nursing*, September 2010, p. 58-63.

Role Play Exercise: Service Recovery^a

Variation 1. Information for the Charge Nurse

Your Position: Charge Nurse Vicki Martin

Other Role: Mrs. O’Hare’s daughter, Bonnie

Background Information: You, Vicki Martin, are the charge nurse for the day shift on a 45-bed surgical unit. Mrs. O’Hare, a patient on the unit, is scheduled to go to surgery at 8 AM. At 11:30 AM the staff nurse who’s assigned to take care of Mrs. O’Hare asks you to talk to Mrs. O’Hare’s daughter, Bonnie O’Hare. According to the staff nurse, Miss O’Hare is extremely upset because her mother has not yet left the floor.

You find Miss O’Hare pacing back and forth outside her mother’s room. When you tell her you have been asked to speak to her, she says, with clenched teeth, “I’m beyond upset. My mother was supposed to be in surgery at 8 AM and she hasn’t even left the floor!”

Scenario 1. Play your part aggressively. Be defensive.

Suggested responses:

- “Do you know how many patients we have here?”
- “Do you know how many patients they see in the operating room?”
- “I understand you’re upset about your mother, but it’s not like we did this on purpose. We’re very busy.”

Scenario 2. Play your part assertively; acknowledge, apologize, and amend.

Suggested responses:

- “I can understand why you’re upset. Let’s go into the visitors’ room so we have a private place to talk.”
- “Tell me what happened.”
- “I’ll follow up with the necessary people so this won’t happen again.”
- “Please accept this food voucher so you can have some lunch while I follow up. I’ll get back to you as soon as possible.”

Variation 2. Information for the Patient’s Daughter

Your Position: Mrs. O’Hare’s daughter, Bonnie

Other Role: Charge Nurse Vicki Martin

Background Information: You, Bonnie O’Hare, are the daughter of Mrs. O’Hare, who’s been scheduled to go to surgery at 8 AM. You called the unit at 7:30 AM to see if your mother had gone to surgery and were told that she had already left the unit. The person to whom you spoke told you that you should go to the OR waiting area.

After sitting for two hours in the waiting area, you ask the person at the reception desk about your mother. The receptionist tells you that your mother is not yet in the recovery room. One hour later, you ask if your mother is in the recovery room. The receptionist makes some phone calls and tells you that your mother is still on the surgical unit. You are furious and storm back to the floor and demand to speak to the charge nurse.

Scenario 1. Play your part aggressively. Be defensive.

- “What kind of hospital is this? You say you’re the number one hospital in the city and yet you don’t even know where your patients are!”
- “The person to whom I spoke this morning couldn’t even give me the correct information about where my mother was!”
- “This is not my problem; it’s yours!”
- “Don’t tell me you’re too busy! You’re responsible for knowing where your patients are and what’s happening to them!”

Scenario 2. Play your part assertively.

- “I’m still upset, but at least you’re listening to me and seem to understand.”
- “You’re the first person to help me.”
- “Thank you so much; this is so upsetting. ▼”

^a “Service recovery” is a term used at our hospital to refer to “making amends” when miscommunication regarding a patient occurs.