



# Taking the H.E.A.T.

## Office Staff Training



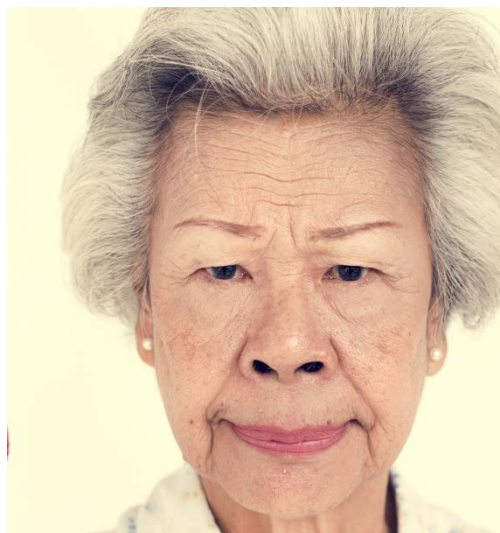
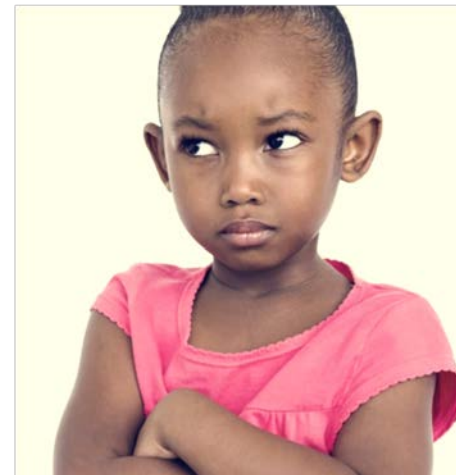
# Learning Objectives

**By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:**

- Define the four elements of H.E.A.T.
- Demonstrate integrating the fundamentals of H.E.A.T. communication
- Incorporate the H.E.A.T. techniques into daily practice
- Identify the types of angry patients



# The Angry Patient



# Types of Anger



- **EMOTIONAL:** personal problems...“In the line of fire...”
- **SITUATIONAL:** person, place, thing
- **IRATE:** extreme anger, enraged, irrational, intimidate
- **VINDICTIVE:** desire to hurt someone who has caused hurt to you – verbal or physical



# Look for the Signs



## BODY LANGUAGE:

- Tightened jaw
- Tense posture
- Clenched fists
- Fidgeting
- Talkative to silent
- Voice rising in pitch
- Pounding on desk





# Take the H.E.A.T.

**H**ear them out

**E**mpathize

**A**pologize

**T**ake action





# Take the H.E.A.T.

## **H**ear them out. This is an important first step.

- Do not assume you understand why they are upset. Give them the opportunity to share their frustrations.
- Demonstrate that you are actively listening to them by asking probing questions.
  - “When/where did this happen?”
  - “Who was involved?”
- Demonstrate your understanding by paraphrasing back to them.
- Stay calm and be patient.



# Take the H.E.A.T.

## **E**mpathize.

- Focus on their feelings. Respectfully acknowledge their feelings and opinions.
- Use statements like:
  - “I would be (concerned/unhappy, etc.) too, if \_\_\_\_\_ happened to me.”
  - “That had to be a (difficult/challenging, etc.) experience to go through/have to deal with.”





## Take the H.E.A.T.

**A**polo**g**ize. *Simply saying “I am sorry” can go a long way.*

- Communicate with sincerity.
- Be genuine and avoid over apologizing as this can be perceived as patronizing.
- Use statements like:
  - “I am sorry you had that experience.”
  - “We appreciate you bringing this to our attention and giving us the opportunity to (assist you/make it right, etc.).”



# Take the H.E.A.T.

## **T**ake action

- It is important to not get defensive or take it personally.
- Focus on the issue and how you can help to resolve the concern or need.
- Take responsibility to follow-up or report the issue.
- Ask the patient about his/her desired outcome and work within policy and/or regulation to address it.
- Follow through. Set appropriate expectations on when that will occur. May need to enlist help of others in organization.

# What Can You Do?

- Remain calm and professional.
- Be aware of your **non-verbal behavior**:
  - ✓ Maintain direct eye contact.
  - ✓ Just **listen** and keep your distance.
  - ✓ Don't get into a "combative state."
  - ✓ If patient is standing, stand!
  - ✓ If patients is sitting, sit!
- Speak softly and use patient's name.
- Move the patient to a private area.
- **DOCUMENT COMPLAINTS.**



# Losing Our Cool



# “Oh, no... Here he comes!”

*“Oh, no, here comes Mr. Lane, and he looks very irritated. He was so furious on the phone yesterday when I told him that the doctor could not fix his billing statement and he would have to come into the office to meet with our account manager, Marcie. No one knows where Marcie has gone and Mr. Lane has been in the reception area for 25 minutes just waiting.*

*I have been watching him out of the corner of my eye, and his face continues to get redder. I am worried about his blood pressure.*

*The office manager is at lunch, the waiting room is full –  
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?!”*





# Take the H.E.A.T.

**H**ear them out

**E**mpathize

**A**pologize

**T**ake action



# Let's Review

Take the H.E.A.T.	Answers	Appropriate Action
1) Hear them out		a) Say "I am sorry." b) Respect the patient's feelings and opinions.
2) Empathize		c) Follow up or report issue. d) Ask questions: When, where, who?
3) Apologize		e) Stay calm and be patient. f) Communicate with sincerity.
4) Take action		g) Have compassion for the patient's situation. h) Don't get defensive.



# And the Answers Are...



Take the H.E.A.T.	Answers	Appropriate Action
1) Hear them out	d, e	a) Say "I am sorry." b) Respect the patient's feelings and opinions.
2) Empathize	b, g	c) Follow up or report issue. d) Ask questions: When, where, who?
3) Apologize	a, f	e) Stay calm and be patient. f) Communicate with sincerity.
4) Take action	c, h	g) Have compassion for the patient's situation. h) Don't get defensive.





# Discussion

