

Week of February 13, 2017

Thought for the week: "Be kind for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle." -Plato

Courtesy Checklist: Do you do these every day?

The C in CREATE stands for Courtesy which is a vital part of who we are and what we do here at Stamford Healthcare System. Courtesy is not just a nicety; it is a necessity for leadership, teamwork, customer service, and patient care. Far more than a pleasantry, courtesy opens doors, impresses in first meetings, shows respect, expresses care, smooths rough moments, defuses tension, bridges gaps, and feeds relationships. Here are 10 ways we can practice courtesy every day:

1. **Greet politely and/or warmly.** Welcome new teammates on their first day and you set teamwork in motion. Greet patients and visitors with courtesy and enthusiasm. You give them a picture of many positive experiences ahead. Engage employees at the beginning of a meeting. You overcome the typical meeting apathy.
2. **Start a request with please.** It was everywhere in decades past. Has it slipped away? Grab hold of it and put it back in every request. This one small word communicates respect that prevents requests from being misconstrued as disguised orders. In leadership, teamwork, and customer service, this one is an essential on your courtesy checklist!
3. **Give sincere and abundant thank yous.** The gift of gratitude is free yet far from cheap. People hold gratitude in high regard. It is quite dear. A culture of gratitude sustains customer relationships and employee morale.
4. **Interact with an open mind.** Many don't think of open-mindedness as a part of courtesy. It is! Any behavior that considers others and eases interaction is courtesy. When working with customers, teammates, or employees very different from you, your open mind welcomes them in. Solutions and success come from openness!
5. **Eliminate common rudeness.** There are habits that most people consider rude: talking too loud, slurping drinks, smacking lips when eating, clinking utensils, eating while you're on the phone, going through a door and not holding it behind you for the next person, and the list goes on. Beyond these habits, learn cultural norms when working with people from around the globe.
6. **Adapt to personality types.** Most people think of the driver personality type when they read this on the courtesy checklist. Yet it applies to all types. Amiables, analytically, and expressives, can be just as extreme in their behavior as the driver type. Extreme behavior tips toward discourteous. Seek balance. Consider others' needs and flex. You can't change your type yet you can adapt your behavior.
7. **Show interest but don't pry.** Showing interest in customers is a courtesy that warms the relationship. Prying into their lives with intrusive questions will slam the door shut. Asking teammates about their weekend can start the week off well. Grilling them with personal questions builds walls that stop success.
8. **Share information. Don't gossip.** Every time a customer service rep tells a customer how much trouble another customer was, it mars the professional image. Even if the customer you are telling agrees with you, they wonder what you will say about them to someone else. This is a perilous detour from positive customer relationships. Stay on the road of courtesy and professional behavior.
9. **Smile don't sneer, snicker, or smirk.** Non-verbal communication is on the courtesy checklist. Derisive gestures and looks demean others. In their mildest form they are rude. In their extreme form, they can constitute bullying. Treating people badly — discourtesy — pushes people away. Simple, respectful behavior keeps everyone engaged.
10. **Guard generalizations.** Generalizations about people will almost always disrespect someone. Honor individuality and diversity.