



Huddle Up

Improving the Grievance Process Series #3

Patients must be able to question procedures or staff performance (e.g., whether or not a staff member washed their hands prior to initiating the patient's treatment) without fear of reprisal.

However, patient experts have shared they are afraid to voice their concerns, fearing that staff will impose negative consequences such as changing the patients schedule, moving their chairs, hurting them when taking them on and off treatment, or causing errors with their machine. Here's a quick self-check for staff:

Retaliation

Under the Federal regulations all patients are afforded certain rights, including: "The right to be informed of his/her right to file internal grievances or external grievances or both without reprisal or denial of services."

"Reprisal" would include retaliation or revenge and could include perceived punishment, isolation, the intentional infliction of physical pain or emotional distress or involuntary discharge from the facility.

Fear of retaliation is the most common barrier that patients share as to why they do not file a grievance at the facility.

You might be retaliating if you...

- Feel angry or hurt when a complaint is filed
- Take it personally
- Change your behavior or attitude
- Make unkind comments or gestures
- Engage in unprofessional behavior
- Slow down your caregiver response
- Neglect certain duties
- Avoid eye contact
- Ignoring the patient
- Make statements like, "if you don't like it here you can leave"

What to do when patient's complain...

- Control your emotions
- Be objective
- Don't over react
- Acknowledge anger or hurt feelings
- Notice your actions—they speak louder than words
- Give yourself time to regroup
- Explore the root cause of the complaint
- Respect the patient and yourself