



*Five Star Service is  
C.L.E.A.R.*



**Information Guide**



*SullivanLuallin Group*

# CONGRATULATIONS!

## You're on your way to Five Star Service!

Employees like video. Television, smart phones, video games, DVDs. They go there for information...for connecting with friends...for leisure-time activities. Which means they'll be totally comfortable learning from this 24-minute DVD about proven ways to make your patients feel valued and important.

### The title says it all – “Five Star Service is C.L.E.A.R.”

SullivanLuallinGroup developed the C.L.E.A.R. Service Model after analyzing satisfaction surveys from more than 340,000 patients – people just like those who come to your practice every day – healthcare consumers who want courteous treatment...caring concern...extra-step helpfulness...along with the very best medical care.

### The C.L.E.A.R. Service Model has easy-to-apply techniques in five categories that produce high satisfaction scores:

- **Connect:** Specific techniques for making a great first impression
- **Listen:** strategies for making patients feel valued and listened to
- **Explain:** ways to ensure patients understand information/instructions
- **Ask:** scripts to make certain that patients get their needs met
- **Re-connect:** techniques for ending the patient visit on a positive note

The complete C.L.E.A.R. Service Model, included at the back of this guide, is for you to use with your staff after they view the DVD program and also in your daily managing.

## Your employees hold the key

There's plenty of research that demonstrates how employees affect survey scores for “overall rating of all care” and “willingness to refer others to the practice.” In fact, there's a significant “halo” effect that your employees have on every other question on any patient survey.

The DVD in this toolkit is titled “Five Star Service is C.L.E.A.R.” In 24 quick minutes, Barbara, the presenter, explains how your staff can use the C.L.E.A.R. techniques to transform your patients' experiences from average to awesome!

On the following pages, we've provided a suggested outline for introducing the DVD at a staff meeting ... and debriefing the major points after they've watched it.

## Showing the DVD to Your Employees

You can use the DVD to review service-centered behaviors with your existing staff...to orient new employees...or as a booster for those employees whose performance doesn't improve as quickly as you'd like.

### A. Pre-work

Let your staff know the day/time of the meeting.

Make copies of the C.L.E.A.R. Service Matrix (Page 6) to use as a hand-out during the meeting.

### B. Introduce the DVD

1. *Tell your employees why you believe Customer Service is important.*

Hint: "Patient satisfaction is more than numbers on a survey report. It's how we measure our success as professionals. It's true that satisfied patients are more likely to follow the treatment plan, and that their compliance leads to better medical outcomes. It's also true that when patients are happy, our workdays go better. But the big reason why we care about patient satisfaction is because that's why we got into the healthcare field – we care about people."

"When patients talk about us, they rarely mention the quality of our medical care – they almost always talk about how it felt to visit our practice."

2. *Make the point that meeting patients' service expectations is part of everyone's job.*

Hint: "Some people think that patients judge their visit in terms of how the doctor related to them, and I'm not arguing that – how patients feel about their doctor is a big part of how they feel about the practice. But it's not the only part – no matter what your job is, when you're with a patient, you ARE our practice. Our reputation is in your hands."

3. *Explain how patients judge a medical practice.*

Hint: "When patients talk about us, they use words like courtesy, friendliness, caring concern, and helpfulness. That's where you come in."

4. Describe the “Five Star Service is C.L.E.A.R.” program.

Hint: “This is a ‘lunch-n-learn’ program to help us make sure that every patient has a world-class experience. We’ve talked about service in the past – but every so often it’s good to review why ‘service’ is part of our jobs, and how to make patients feel valued WITHOUT adding to our workload. The presenter is Barbara Khozam (Ko-zahm) – she’s an experienced “mystery patient” who spends lots of time in medical practices, watching how people like us relate to their patients. Barbara has identified some simple techniques that will raise our patient survey scores. You’ll see that the techniques are grouped under five headings: Connect...Listen...Explain...Ask...Re-Connect. That’s why the video is called “Five Star Service is C.L.E.A.R.” And by the way, watch closely and you’ll see that none of the recommended techniques makes our work harder – they’re designed to make our jobs easier! I’ll give you a copy of the C.L.E.A.R. Model afterwards, but you can watch for them as you view the video.”

5. Show the video (24 minutes)

6. Reinforce the C.L.E.A.R. Service Protocols

Hand out copies of the C.L.E.A.R. Service Model (Page 6)

Hint: Lead a group discussion of the C.L.E.A.R. Service Protocols, with emphasis on “what to do” and “what to say.”

## Maintaining the Service Momentum

Once everyone has seen the video, you have the additional challenge of keeping the focus on patient satisfaction as a continuing way of doing business. You can't afford to have the initial enthusiasm wane as your employees return to the pressures and routine of their jobs. Here are four valuable tools you can use to keep the spotlight on service shining throughout the year:

### 1. Round on your employees

Physicians round on patients in the hospital; you can round on your employees, every day. The process is simple: every day, approach one employee at his/her work station and ask the following questions:

- a. What's working well today?
- b. What do you think can be improved?
- c. Is there anyone we should thank for extra-step service?
- d. How can I help you perform better?

### 2. Reward Your "Service Stars"

Performance enhancement programs work best when people receive immediate reinforcement for stellar performance. You probably have some favorite ways to recognize team members who deliver five-star customer service. The most effective reward costs absolutely nothing! It's showing appreciation for a job well done.

Encourage each of your physicians to be on the lookout for service superstars, and praise anyone who makes an extra-step effort to make patients feel welcome and valued.

You can go even farther by using small rewards to provide instant recognition to your superstars. Here are some rewards used by other practices to acknowledge outstanding performers:

- Pizza lunch
- Catalogue gift
- Paid half-day off
- Manicure coupon
- \$25 gas card
- Gift certificates

The most effective rewards are team rewards – they're consistent with the "we're all in this together" spirit that you want everyone to feel. Team rewards encourage everyone to work together, and to celebrate their successes.

## Coach Underperforming Employees

The momentum strategies listed above are excellent vehicles for encouraging everyone on your team to join the effort to raise survey scores. Still, you may have someone who “just doesn’t get it.” Private counseling sessions emphasize that patient-centered service is not an optional part of the job – it’s the heart of working in a service industry, and the C.L.E.A.R. Service Protocols communicate your expectations! Further, there’s a good amount of research and advice on the best ways to conduct those private counseling meetings:

*1. Don’t let the sun go down!*

The best time to address performance problems is to use your first available opportunity to engage your employee in a corrective discussion. Problems get worse if you ignore them.

*2. Praise in public; criticize in private*

When you praise your superstars in public, you reinforce and promote more top-level performance; when you criticize people in front of others, you get defensiveness.

*3. Don’t accept “detours”*

Corrective interventions are uncomfortable for employees, and it’s easy to understand why they might try to get you off on an unrelated issue. Don’t go there! (For example, if an employee says “You’re picking on me, but you let Marty get away with it,” your best response is “We’re not talking about Marty – this is about your performance.”)

*4. Focus on behavior, not attitudes*

Talk about the performance you’ve observed, not about the employee’s attitude or motives. (Unless you’re a trained psychologist, you’re not legally entitled to make decisions based on your perceptions of an employee’s attitude.)

*5. Deal with specifics, not generalities*

People can’t make changes to their performance unless they know what behavior is unacceptable, and the specific changes that need to be made.

*6. Set new standards and deadlines*

Describe exactly what behavior you want, and when you want to see it.

*7. Reinforce performance improvement*

When you see any improvement, praise the employee.

## *C.L.E.A.R. Model for Staff Members*

TECHNIQUE	WHAT TO DO	WHAT TO SAY
<b><i>Connect</i></b>	Acknowledge patients immediately; introduce yourself	"Good morning, Mrs. White, I'm Marie I'm a registered phlebotomist. I'll be drawing your blood this afternoon."
	Establish eye contact; smile	<i>No words here – you know how to smile!</i>
	Wear your name badge correctly	<i>No words here</i>
	Use the patient's name	"Hi Mrs. White, how's my favorite patient today?" "Mrs. Saldana, please wait one second while I locate your record..."
	Use a friendly helpful voice tone; say "please" and "thank you"	"Could you sit on the exam table, please?" "I'm glad I could help." "Mrs. Smith, thank you for holding, how may I help you?"
<b><i>Listen</i></b>	Maintain eye contact	<i>No words here...just a pleasant expression!</i>
	Use "active" listening techniques	"Uh-huh." "I see..."
	Be relaxed (body language); don't interrupt	<i>No words here</i>
	Repeat information for accuracy	"Let's see if I've got that right..." "So you've been having symptoms for two weeks, is that right?"
	Respond with empathy statements	"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that." "That must be uncomfortable for you."
<b><i>Explain</i></b>	Describe what's going to happen; explain as you go	"Thank you for your patience, Mrs. Saldana. The Radiology tech will be here in a few minutes." "I'll be attaching these leads to your chest and legs...they may feel a little cold for a second."
	Use layperson's language (not abbreviations or acronyms)	"Do you have your explanation of benefits?" (Don't say EOB) "Here's some information on how we respect your privacy..."
	Let patients know when delays are expected	"Dr. Jones has one other patient ahead of you. She'll be in as soon as she can. Is there anything I can do for you while you wait?"
<b><i>Ask</i></b>	Check for understanding	"Did you get all your questions answered?"
	Be sure the patient's needs have been met	"...is there anything else I can help you with?" "Is there something I can do to make you more comfortable?"
<b><i>Re-connect</i></b>	Check back frequently with waiting patients	"Dr. Smith asked me to let you know we haven't forgotten you. He'll be in as soon as he can."
	Help patients find the next location	"Mr. Johnson, let me walk you to the pharmacy. "
	End with a friendly parting comment	"Take care."