



# Performance Speaks

March-April  
2013

## How to Improve Customer Service - Tips & Techniques

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Research shows that if we receive good customer service, we'll tell two or three people. Word of mouth recommendations and referrals are often key drivers of new business. But - if we get poor service, we'll tell ten to twelve others!

**So, how do you improve customer service in your agency?** Simply follow these practical tips to raise service levels quickly and easily:

- 1. Send staff out as "mystery shoppers" to your competitors.** Let them see for themselves what others are doing. Get them to share their experience and see what best practice you can adopt and what ideas you can steal.
- 2. Seek and analyze customer feedback.** Don't make assumptions; look for ways to find out what your customers think about the organization. Be radical - invite them in to help you identify what you could be doing better.

- 3. Track and analyze errors and complaints.** Get to the root cause to find out what's going wrong and why. Involve people in improving processes to prevent recurrences. Undertake remedial training and coaching.

- 4. Go 'back to the floor'.** Shadow people in the organization. See how your systems and processes affect the customer, and see what obstacles get in the way of good customer service.

- 5. Build your processes around the customer, not the organization.** Look for ways of streamlining end to end processes and reducing 'handoffs' to reduce errors.

- 6. Set and communicate clear standards** in terms of quality, accuracy, behavior, appearance, and good customer service. Staff need to know what you expect from them. Ensure that the service is consistently good, in every location, from everyone, every day.

- 7. Capture and share**

**examples of really great service in your organization.** This gives recognition to the individual who delivered it, and it also helps others to learn techniques to build confidence.

- 8. Treat staff as you treat your customers.** Behavior breeds behavior and happy staff lead to happy customers. We've probably all experienced staff who look and sound completely fed up, and they're the worse ambassadors.

Motivate and retain good staff, because turnover is expensive, both in recruitment and training costs, as well as in respect of lost experience. Employees want to feel valued, so think about ways to give them positive feedback, especially when they demonstrate great customer service. Build a sense of pride in your organization.

- 9. Pay attention to those who don't serve customers directly.** The chances are that if they're not serving a customer, they're serving someone who



**“Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work.”**

**- Steve Jobs**

is, and these people are their ‘internal’ customers.

**10. Build a team culture.** Emphasize that everyone is a link in the chain and that everything they do should be focused on the happiness of the customer.

**11. Set measurable objectives around improved customer service.** Be sure to share them across the organization.

**12. Review individual performance regularly.** Undertake performance reviews not just during the annual appraisal. Give feedback about what’s going well, as well as coaching for areas needing improvement.

**13. Have regular customer service sessions with cross sections of staff.** They are at the sharp end, and they’ll have lots of ideas on how things could be improved. Encourage them to think of what can be done to provide the ‘wow factor’ - use the creativity of the group to brainstorm and think outside the box for less obvious suggestions.

**14. Recruit the right people.** Use effective selection techniques and invest in staff training. To the customer, whoever they’re dealing with **IS** your company. Are you measuring the right behaviors and attitudes that achieve high levels of customer service within your selection process?

Let great service be the norm in your organization by applying the customer service tips and techniques above.

#### **Dealing With Difficult Behavior**

Dealing with difficult behavior can be challenging for both the recipient and the person displaying the behavior.

At work, we may come across challenging behavior from our colleagues, our manager, or our customers. How you manage the difficult behavior, may therefore be slightly different dependent upon the situation. However, following these principles may help you overcome these daily challenges:

**1. Adjust and appreciate.** Ask your-

self why this person may be behaving this way and is this typical or out of character. If you do wish to respond to the behavior, adjust your frame of mind to one that is positive and focused on helping them and you move forward.

**2. Build rapport and empathy.** Show some empathy and understanding appropriate to their behavior and “state” of mind. For example, if someone is angry, you can calm them down by simply lowering your voice. Responding back in anger is only going to inflame the situation.

**3. Change the environment.** Try physically moving away from the current environment, moving chairs, or giving the person space and time can help calm the situation down and dampen the negative or difficult behavior you are experiencing.

**4. Defuse the emotion first** before addressing the root cause of the behavior. If the person is angry or upset for example, they are unlikely to respond as rationally and calmly as you need them to, to

get to the root of the reason for the behavior.

**5. Explore the root cause of behavior.** Ask them open questions such as “what has led you to feeling this way?”, “what are your real concerns about this situation?”, actively listening and summarizing, and reflecting back their comments to check out your understanding of what they are telling you, and to help them recognize that you are really listening to them and taking them seriously.

**6. Focus on the outcome wanted.** Focusing on a positive outcome will address their root concerns and ultimately change their challenging behavior to be more amendable and positive, checking along the way that you have a clear understanding of the outcome they are seeking. If you are not clear, then asking them “what would help us move forward” or “what would make the situation better” for example, will help them consider and convey what they want or need, and helps the person move on from focusing purely on the past or

the negative aspects of a situation.

**7. Develop an agreed solution.** The agreed solution will be one which both you and the person view as a win/win outcome or compromised solution that satisfies the main elements or issues in a constructive way.

**8. Highlight agreement and next steps.** This is required to reaffirm your commitment to addressing the person’s concerns or needs and to ensure you have effectively addressed the issue in full. Thank the person for bringing the matter to your attention.

**9. Informs others where appropriate.** Informing others of the situation or issue to ensure no future misunderstanding occurs or problems resurface. Obviously, where difficult behavior has occurred due to personal issues, it may not be appropriate to inform or share information with others. If you commit to retaining confidentiality, your credibility in dealing with the difficult behavior and relationships in general will be

at risk as well as the original trust in the relationship.

**10. Judge your success and learning.** Ask yourself what you have learned from this situation, what you did well, and what you might do differently next time. Every experience in dealing with difficult behavior will be slightly different, so your ability to adapt to the person and the context of the situation will be vital. There is always something new to be learned.

Before implementing any of the above strategies for dealing with difficult behavior at work, we first need to take a step back and review our own perception and thought processes around the behavior, and ask ourselves “why do we find this behavior difficult?” Being clear of your purpose or reason for changing the behavior is important, keeping you focused at all times.

[www.ksl-training.co.uk](http://www.ksl-training.co.uk)



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**We're on the Web:**

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muskegoncmh.org**

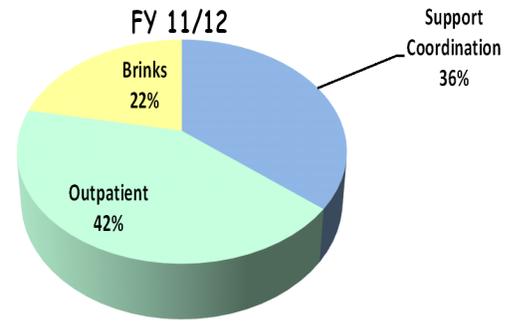
# Community Mental Health Services of Muskegon County Muskegon CMHSP Annual Satisfaction Survey Report For FY11/12

Report Date 2/26/13

## AGENCY Survey Facts

- ★ In FY 11/12 Muskegon CMH Staff handed out or mailed 2518 Satisfaction Surveys
- ★ 997 Surveys were completed and returned for an overall return rate of 39.6%
- ★ Survey responses indicate satisfaction with services, program sites and staff.

## Agency Surveys Completed by Program for FY 11/12



### 92% of Returned Surveys Indicated Satisfaction



	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied
■ Responses	92%	6%	2%

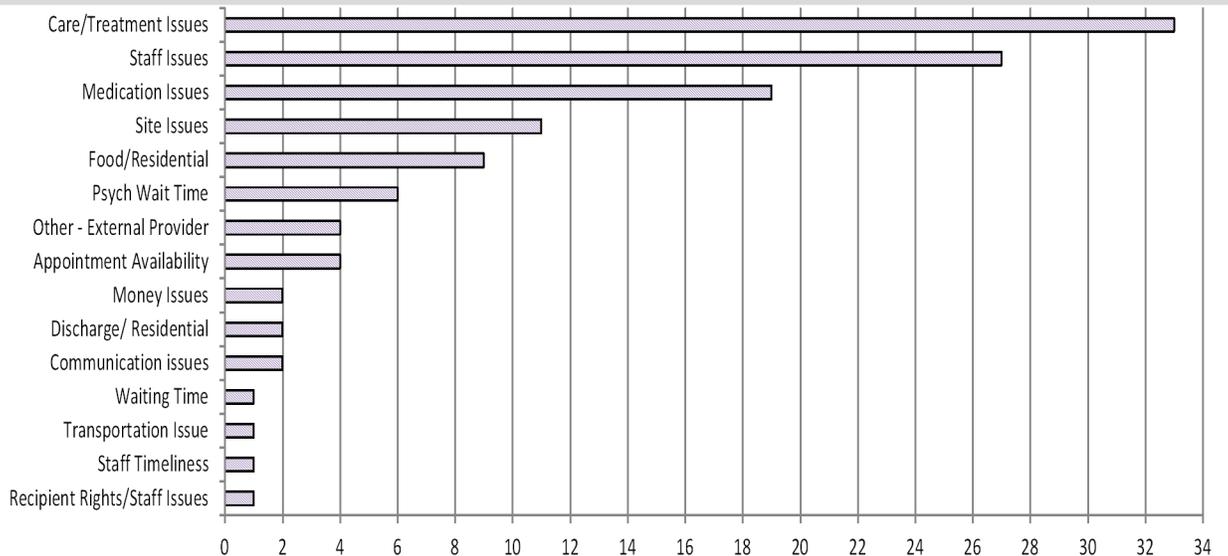
## Questions In Which Responses Indicate the Highest Satisfaction

- 95%** **\*\*When Receiving CMH Services you were treated with respect.**
- 95%** **\*\*You felt welcomed by staff.**
- 95%** **The environment (offices & lobby areas) was clean, comfortable and accessible.**
- 93%** **CMH Staff listen to you when planning your CMH Services.**

\*\*Received the highest % rating for the last 3 years

**Survey Responses included 373 comments: 123 were identified as concerns and received follow-up by Supervisors / Customer Services**

**N = 123**





**Community Mental Health Services of Muskegon County  
376 E. Apple Ave., Muskegon, MI. 49442**

“Regionalization” comes to Muskegon County. What does this mean for mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance use services?

Changes are coming to the behavioral health service system in Muskegon, West Michigan, and the State. These changes are known as “regionalization”. CMH’s Executive Director, Julia Rupp, will speak about these changes at two community forums. The public is invited to attend.

Learn more about the “regionalization” of CMH and its impact on our community and the individuals that we serve. There will be a Q&A time and light refreshments will be provided.

**When & Where:**

Friday, April 5 from 3:00-4:30 at the Folkert Community Hub  
*640 Seminole Rd., Muskegon MI 49441*

Tuesday, April 16 from 3:30-5:00 at Community Mental Health in the Boardroom  
*376 E. Apple Ave, Muskegon MI 49442*

Health and wellness affects everyone. Things are changing in the mental health system. Join us to become educated about the future of behavioral health services as our community navigates these changes.

**Questions?** Call Paula Kelson 724-1101