

As we prepare ourselves to transition from our current IT health systems to CareConnect, some of us may begin to experience varying levels of anxiety. Why? Because we are beginning to experience change. Change may feel awkward at first because it brings with it the unknown and not knowing what is to come can contribute to feeling anxious. So why is change difficult to do and make one feel anxious? According to Dr. Jim Taylor, adjunct professor at the University of San Francisco, there are four obstacles that contribute to apprehension and can prevent people from changing or even attempt to embrace change. If you can identify what affects you the most when it comes to change, then you can better prepare for the new opportunities that change can bring. To better understand what affects you the most, we look to the **Four Obstacles** that work against effective change.

Obstacle 1

You bring childhood experiences into adulthood and, as a result, you likely bring some not-so-good experiences, known as "baggage." The most frequent types of baggage include the desire to be perfect, fear of failure, need for control, and the need to please. The "baggage" you bring into adulthood influences you to behave and act based on who you were as a child rather than the wonderful adult you are. It can sabotage your efforts to achieve success.



Obstacle 2

As a result of the baggage, deeply ingrained habits influence the way you think. For example, a person who practices a bad technique will

become very good at the bad technique and even share the bad technique with another as the "right-way." So in other words, you react to the world in a certain way because that's the way you always have and believe it is the right thing to do.

Obstacle 3

You don't make an effort to change because of negative emotional attitudes you are experiencing, such as fear, anger, sadness, or frustration. For example, many people resist change because of their fear of failure. They might think "what if I can't change, then I'll prove myself to be more of a failure."

Obstacle 4

You create an environment that reinforces your baggage, habits, and emotions. The people you surround yourself with and the activities you participate in give you a sense of security. This environment may not support change, or worse, discourage it.

If you embrace the sage words "the only constant in life is change" then you will understand that change is natural and occurs in small increments over an expanse period of time. Change takes persistent effort to embrace the unknown that accompanies it, otherwise we backslide to how things were prior to change occurring; this is sometimes referred to as your comfort zone. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines comfort zone as the level at which one functions with ease and familiarity. You are familiar with what you know, and less familiar with what you do not.

As your awareness of the four

obstacles transcends into action to conquer them, you will more readily accept change and begin to view it as an opportunity to discover new ways of doing old tasks. Along the road of change there will be many challenges. In times of change you must remember mistakes will be made. However, this can also be your opportunity to shine. Change is your opportunity to see differences as advantages, not excuses to give up and backslide into complacency.

There is a story of an ancient wise-man that stressed the need for patience and discipline when it comes to change. The wise-man said, "Change is like farming bamboo. Once the bamboo seed is planted it must be watered everyday for over three years before the tree even breaks through the ground. But, when it finally does, it grows 60 feet in the next 90 days." Change, like bamboo, needs time to "take root" before the full benefits are realized. Plant your seeds of change, embrace the process, and watch great things happen! ▶

A Positive Attitude Can Contribute to Good Service

As a healthcare professional, you are called upon to extend empathetic levels of service and patient care to be perceived as courteous and helpful. Creating a positive service environment will contribute to your ability to do just that. But, you might be surprised to learn what the number one quality is that can help in creating a positive service environment; it is attitude. A positive attitude can be defined as a helpful state of mind or a feeling regarding a situation or fact. It is how we perceive events, experiences, and other things in our lives. An individual with a positive attitude strives to identify what can be done in lieu of focusing on what cannot be done. Therefore, the most important quality an individual must have to succeed in establishing a positive service environment is having a positive attitude.

Is Your Attitude Positive?

A positive attitude helps explain why one staff member in a department willingly helps an upset patient while another takes the situation personally. If you can bounce back from a customer's statement of disappointment and can see beyond the customer's frustration, you might be viewed as having a magical ability to remain focused on a solution; you likely have a positive attitude! It may not always be easy to choose a positive attitude, but remain encouraged, because character aspects of a positive attitude can be learned. It takes practice and a willingness mindset.

"Success doesn't happen by accident. It starts with an unwavering commitment to build a dedicated team who serves their boss...the customer."

—Mac Anderson

Develop A Positive Attitude

The following suggestions are ways that you can strengthen your positive attitude and create a winning service environment.

I. Select a Customer-Focused Attitude

Realize that a positive attitude is a matter of choice. We decide the positive aspects of any situation and choose our reaction. Focus on the customer's needs and wants, not on any of their unpleasant characteristics such as a sarcastic tone, closed body language, or impolite words.

II. Strive for Constant Improvement

Always strive to improve your attitude. When negative thoughts arise, ask why? Acknowledge it and refocus on the positive by replacing the negative thoughts with positive ones.

III. Use Positive Language

State what you can do, not what you can't. Rather than saying, "no, we don't bill for co-pays," try saying, "we'll gladly accept your cash or credit card." Use positive terms. Instead of calling a situation a problem, call it a challenge or opportunity. Remember, people want to work with, receive service from, and be around positive people.

IV. Observe Yourself

Hear what you say to others. Listen to your tone of voice. Mentally observe your body language. Are your statements upbeat and positive, or negative and condescending? Is your message delivered with enthusiasm and a smile or laced with sarcasm or frustration? People tend to mirror your message and your body language. If your speech is positive you can expect a favorable response.

V. Set an Example and Walk the Talk

When we focus on being a positive service provider, and being responsive to the customer, we create a positive image for others to see and emulate, and the impression we present of our business is favorable and memorable. People want to be around positive individuals and are more willing to follow the example you set. Be a leader.

A positive attitude can help you respond to challenging situations with a can-do mindset. It is fuel for your thought process and how you choose to think. You have the power to contribute to establishing a positive service environment; the choice, much like your attitude, is yours. You succeed because you believe you can. It all begins with U.▶