



## PROACTIVE COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

TRAINING • COACHING • CASE MANAGEMENT



## Some Destructive Comments in Complaints Handling

It is interesting to note how often a misplaced word or comment can have devastating effects on a relationship.

On some occasions the comment or comments are thought through prior to being made and at other times it is a slip of the tongue i.e. the person was thinking about the comment and it *“just slipped out”!!*

Irrespective of intent, a misplaced comment can have a devastating effect on the recipient or the person making the comment.

The Charter of Care Recipient Rights was introduced in 1996 and is now a schedule to Aged Care Act 1997 and states – Each care recipient has the right:

- ✓ to live without discrimination or victimisation, and without being obliged to feel grateful to those providing his or her care and accommodation;
- ✓ to be free from reprisal, or a well-founded fear of reprisal, in any form for taking action to enforce his or her rights

Therefore as stated in the Charter for both residential and community care individuals have a right to complaint and to be listened to, however a complainant also has the responsibility not to belittle, discriminate or be abusive to an individual receiving the complainant.

Some comments that I have heard or been a witness to include the following:

*“If you don’t like it here why don’t you leave?”*

*“You are the only family that always complains!”*

*“Nothing we ever do ever satisfies you!”*

*“Once again we had one complaint this month and you all know who that was from!”*

*“I have more important things to do then trying to always resolve your complaints!”*

*“It doesn’t seem that we can ever make you happy – so why are you still here?”*

We all may feel like saying this at some point however the above comments (and many more), will not endear you to the recipient and if anything it will cause you more angst than it is worth.

My favourite saying that I keep in mind when I am feeling frustrated or upset is by Ambrose Bierce and it goes like this:

***“Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever live to regret!”***

An effective complaints handling system has the following:

- ✓ Backing of senior management;
- ✓ Is fair and seen to be fair by all stakeholders (including staff);
- ✓ Be easily accessible to all;
- ✓ Responsive to the needs of the complainant;
- ✓ Open and transparent.

Every organisation will need to have robust and effective policies in place to deal with aggrieved and/or disgruntled complainants which may be causing distress and/or is an Occupational Health and Safety or Work Health and Safety concern for your organisation.

Workplace legislation around Australia requires each employer to ensure that they provide a safe and healthy workplace free from hazards,

therefore each organisation will need policies in place that take into consideration the following:

- i. How does an employer identify hazards and risks in the workplace in order to maintain a safe work environment?
- ii. Each hazard will need to be assessed to determine the level of risk it may pose on the workplace;
- iii. Each employer has the responsibility to control and eliminate foreseeable risk(s) in the workplace;

However each organisation will need to be mindful that individuals who do complain may also feel frustrated that they aren't being listened to or being heard.

The definition of a complaint is:

***“A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service offered or provided” –***

*Australian Standard 4269 – 1995 @1.4.2*

***“Expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected”.***

*ISO 10002 – Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisation.*

Why may our customers become disgruntled customers?

- A perception that an organisation is not taking them seriously;
- A perception of a lack of commitment by the organisation to resolve their complaint;
- Issues repeat themselves;
- Lack of feedback to a complainant i.e. resolution/outcome of a complaint.
- A perception that they are being ignored or viewed as a nuisance

Proactive Complaints Management is able to offer your organisation assistance and advice that meets your requirements please feel free to email Steve Aivaliotis [steve@proactivecm.com.au](mailto:steve@proactivecm.com.au) or call Steve on 0418 313 303 – [www.proactivecm.com.au](http://www.proactivecm.com.au)