



Module 2

# Frontline Skills



## The importance of good complaints handling

- Promotes service quality and service improvement
- Helps to identify problems and solve them
- Provides feedback on consumer priorities and issues
- Show patterns and recurring problems so the cause can be fixed



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## Understanding Complainants



- treat people like they are valued – fair and friendly
- communicate respect, courtesy, impartiality and honesty
- never take a complainants anger personally
- express concern and listen
- give clear advice - written and verbal
- provide processes that are easy
- give relevant and accurate information
- offer flexibility for how the service is provided



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## Barriers to making complaints

- Power imbalance
- Fear of retribution
- Lack of skills eg negotiation, communication
- Lack of knowledge
- Previous negative experiences
- Daily challenges take priority
- Specific issues like disability, mental illness, etc
- Language difficulties
- Literacy issues



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## What is a complaint?



Definition:

“expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to it’s service, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response is explicitly or implicitly expected”

*Standards Australia, 2007*

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## Complaints language – identifying a complaint



- I am unhappy about...
- I am dissatisfied with...
- I don't like...
- I disagree...
- Why didn't ... happen?
- I don't understand why...
- Why doesn't the service...
- I don't think it's fair that...





















Can you hear me now?

twitter customer service

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Making a complaint/disclosure

Please 	I want 	Feel safe 	Police 	
Do something 	I don't want 	What are my options? 	Social worker 	
Do nothing 	Tell 	Person to be fired 	Lawyer 	
Don't 	Make a complaint 	Person not to work with me 	Counselors 	
	See 		family member 	



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## Encouraging Complaints



- Train your staff to view complaints as gifts
- Market that you are looking for complaints
- Invent new ways for your clients to give feedback
- Randomly ask for feedback
- Ask for value ratings eg. OK, difficult, really good
- Hang out with your clients
- Go after people who don't normally complain
- Capture staff feedback
- Ensure your consumers are empowered to speak up and complain

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 **How do *you* handle complaints about you or your work?** 

- Reject the feedback, & blame the other person
- Blame yourself: become embarrassed & upset, immobilised to act
- Justify what happened & reluctantly take some responsibility
- Openly admit your mistake but remain feeling negative, secretly blame others and do nothing to change
- Be positive about it: Listen, apologise, if appropriate, and take corrective action
- Take the feedback as an opportunity to improve. Correct the mistake, investigate the reason for it, and find ways to avoid it happening again. Share your knowledge & success with others.

Debrief !

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**Unreasonable complainant behaviour**



**The beach was too sandy.**

## Unreasonable complainant behaviour

- Unreasonable persistence
- Unreasonable demands
- Unreasonable lack of cooperation
- Unreasonable arguments
- Unreasonable behaviour



## Managing Unreasonable Complainant Conduct

- All complaints need to be assessed
- All complainants deserve to be treated with respect
- Pursue all pathways to resolution of complaint
- Give reasons in writing
- Set boundaries around difficult behaviours
- Take all threats seriously
- Protecting staff is a priority



## Limiting Responses and Restricting Access

- Try to reduce impact of unreasonable behavior but not cut off contact completely
- Consider all issues and facts for each individual
- Can reasonably limit access if a complainant:
  - Unreasonably diverts resources
  - Is consistently rude or abusive
  - Causes damage to property or threatens physical harm

