

The ultimate patient experience involves more than good customer service, more than simply doing the job, checking off a list or being nice. The ultimate patient experience is about creating an experience so repeatable, so expected and so welcoming that your patients would not want to be anywhere else. In doing so, you will build trust and therefore, community in your practice. And in return, you will be rewarded with loyalty and life-long patients who come in for a treatment and stay for the experience.

Why Create the Ultimate Patient Experience?

The obvious answer is to make someone's day. Your staff has an opportunity to make your patient's life a little bit better, a little easier and a little bit happier. But dig a little deeper and you will start to see why establishing a repeatable and refined ultimate patient experience in your practice will benefit your practice as well. Do you need to spend thousands of dollars on online marketing campaigns to be successful in practice? No. You simply need one patient to tell others about their experience.

How Can I Help?

Build your patient experience around this question. If your ultimate goal is to help, you won't go wrong. This starts before a patient ever enters your doors. Accurate and accessible information online, easy communication with your staff, simple forms, entertaining and educational social media content all impact the patient's overall experience in your office. It begins in earnest once a phone call or text conversation is initiated. And of course their experience builds significantly within your walls. But it's not over yet. Their impression of your brand and company continues to deepen after they exit. Put yourself in their shoes, and at every stage of a patient's journey, ask yourself "How can I help make this better?" Bonus: when the whole team is invested in the patient's experience, the team's experience is also made better.

Before the First Visit: Online

Consumers are no longer passive recipients of advertising. Your potential patients are actively searching for you. This is why it is so important to have accurate and accessible information easily available online.

- Search Engines: photos, description, services, hours, address, contact information
- Reviews: high ratings, recent, reply to all reviews
- Website: Simple, updated, links for scheduling, links for contact methods, blog? keep it up-to-date
- Online Scheduling: simple, easy, accurate descriptions, pricing, utilize the confirmation to inform
- Forms: simple, easy, complete
- Email & text: prompt, proper grammar, sign your name
- Social Media: Educational, informational, positive, fun

Before the First Visit: Phone

When a patient is on the phone, they are likely planning to schedule an appointment. The way you guide the conversation will either confirm and convert the appointment or has the potential to steer them away.

- Answer promptly "Thank you for calling *practice name*, this is *your name*, how may I help you?"
- How did you hear about our practice? Reinforce their answer with a comment
- Triage their injury, goals and timeline. Reinforce that your practice is the best place for them to be
- Offer 2 appointment times, if neither works ask for their 'ideal' time. Then offer to see what you can do
** You never want to appear too available, while also being very available **
- Repeat the scheduled time, provider, length of visit and any emails or forms to expect
- Do you have any additional questions for me today?
- Make any notes in the patient's file for providers and other staff members to be aware of



Communication Strategies that Build Trust

Buyer's remorse. You have made a purchase only to feel nervous or regretful afterwards. We never want this in our practices! Instilling confidence in our patient's decisions will significantly reduce stress and anxiety with their treatment in our office and build trust with your brand.

- Ask if the patient has a specific provider, day or time in mind
 - Never say a provider is 'wide open'
 - Repeat the day, time and provider (length of treatment)
 - Provide helpful instructions - best clothing to wear, bring any supplies to evaluate (insoles, shoes)
 - Mention another service - massage, NormaTec, insole scan
- ** If a patient scheduled online, follow up with a phone call to confirm and answer additional questions **

Patient Arrival: Environment

What is a patient's first impression of your practice? Have you walked in their shoes from parking to the front doors, from the lobby to the restroom, their arrival experience may determine the likelihood of returning.

- Parking area - easy to find, snow removal, accessible, free from hazards
 - Sidewalk - well maintained, landscaping, snow removal, free from hazards
 - Reception - clean, uncluttered, sturdy furniture, furniture in good shape, nice smelling, music, media
 - Bathroom(s) - clean, accessible, stocked (diapers, tampons, mints), decor/marketing materials
 - Hallways/walls - clean, undamaged, photos/art/marketing materials professionally hung
- ** Bonus enhancements: slippers, robes, kids area (fresh and clean), rotate free swag **

Patient Arrival: Check-In

Think about a poor customer service experience you have had in health care - no one looks up to greet you or may even seem bothered by your arrival. Now think of an office where the greeting is so warm and genuine that you look forward to returning. This may be a dentist, doctor, hairdresser or restaurant.

- Warmly greet patients promptly upon their arrival - include a compliment or start a conversation
- Greet patients by name when possible - if not acknowledge you are unsure of their name ask 'what time is your appointment?' Then acknowledge by name
- "I've got you checked in, Dr. _____ is running on time and will be out shortly"
- Let the patient know if the provider is running late - even five minutes give the patient time to send a text or an email. Ask if they are ok on time
- New Patients: Always ask about a known obstacle - "Were you able to find parking ok?" and offer that you are aware of the issue and how you can help (smells, ice/snow, repair issues, scheduling problems)
- New Patients: Double check that their paperwork is completed and let them know it was - thank you!
- New Patients: Provide a tour of the office or point out restrooms, water station, slippers, etc.

Patient Support: Lend a hand

It is often so easy to lend a hand or assist a patient. How else can you enhance their experience?

- Offer to help
- Hold the door
- Hold a baby or entertain an toddler
- Carry items to the car
- Provide a helpful comment

Branded Swag

We all love free stuff! But we hate cheap and poor quality free stuff. Spend a little money on good quality swag that patients will take out into their world while help do a little marketing for you.

- New Patient Bags - reusable tote, customized ice pack, services menu, approved gyms list
- Rotate bins of - lip balm, chip clips, nail files, etc.
- A branded mug filled with your custom pens - let them steal your pens!
- Stickers are a fun and inexpensive give away
 - ** Give patients a very high quality item like a t-shirt or Yeti bottle when celebrating a milestone (5 or 10 year) appointment, when they have referred several patients or just because they are awesome **

Internal Marketing

Believe it or not, internal marketing will enhance your patient's overall experience. Perhaps they are unaware of other services you offer, perhaps seeing a flyer in your restroom will lead to another booking.

- Acrylic frames on walls or doors with rotating flyers (monthly specials, events, provider highlight)
- Services menu brochure
- Rack cards for individual services/specialties
- Business cards
- QR code in a frame in all public areas to log on to your wifi
 - ** QR code on all paper marketing materials - this acts like a clickable link on a smart phone **

Provider Interactions

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- Read prior visit notes before bringing the patient into the room or if NP, intake forms
- Greet patients by name, offer a helpful comment or compliment
- New Patients: establish goals - revisit goals often
- Recap what they were in for last time, ask how they are feeling, ask for additional illnesses or injuries
 - ** Be sure to notice bandaids, bruises, braces/casts and ask about them. Many patients are self treating and not always correctly - you can help **
- Provide the most excellent care possible
- Gather information - family names, schools, job, fitness routine, hobbies - this is important in creating treatment plans and encouraging referrals
- Don't provide the 'kitchen sink' all in one visit - educate your patient on the benefits of adding one technique at a time to know what works, and ps - patients get better faster when you add therapies slowly
- Talk about the patient's progress in positive terms and tell or ask them how you/they feel about the current frequency and techniques of treatment
- Reassure the patient of how they should be feeling and recap the session
- Always recommend an exact time frame for follow up care
- Revisit the duration since their last visit as a jumping off point - "Your last visit was two weeks ago, how did that feel to you?" Or "your last visit was two weeks ago and I'd like to bump that out to three weeks" or "your last visit was two weeks ago, but with this flare up I'd like to see you next week"
- Walk the patient to the front desk and let staff know exactly when you want to see the patient again
 - ** Reminder: refer internally or within the profession first **



Patient Exit: Check-Out

There is nothing worse than leaving an appointment and not knowing what the next steps are. Let patients know when they should return and why.

- Ask how their appointment was today, and really listen. Provide positive reinforcement.
 - My appointment was awesome - have you ever written a google review? Make it their idea
 - It was good, but I'm still pretty sore - reinforce that that can be normal and might mean progress
 - It was just ok - Ask if you can help, answer any questions. or offer the practitioner or clinic director's contact info - our goal is make sure you are happy and feeling great after each visit
- Reschedule the patient - language matters - Don't ask if the patient wants to reschedule, just start rescheduling them "I can get you rescheduled" or "when does the doctor want to see you again?" recommend an exact date and time
- Recommend a complimentary service to add-on such as massage or NormaTec if it is available
- Ask: have you ever had (massage/acupuncture/nutrition consultation) at our office?
- Follow up on prior purchase history - supplements, insoles
- Ask patients if they follow us on Instagram and remind them that you frequently post videos of at home care rolling, taping, stretching, etc.
- Ask about family members
- Be sure to tell them you enjoyed seeing them today and to have a great day/night/weekend

After visit: Follow Up

The patient's experience in your practice is not over when they leave. This is the perfect time to reinforce the relationship you are forging with them. But it involves more than just a follow up email asking for feedback!

- Send a follow up email asking for feedback (everyone else is doing it)
- Schedule a reschedule reminder if they did not rebook
- Follow your patients on social media and interact with their content
- Add them to your newsletter distribution list - and write a great email newsletter
- New Patients: send a hand written card or email to the person who referred them (include a gift card)

Social Media

Reinforce the trust you have created with your patients by creating educational, fun and relevant content online. Increase the value by including patients in your posts.

- Collaborate with patients
 - Ask for reviews (and respond to them)
 - Static posts - informational
 - Reels - light and fun but keep it professional
 - Videos - educational, DIY, support your treatments at home
 - Interact with local and symbiotic businesses, chiropractors, gyms, massage therapists, medical practices
- ** Never disparage your profession, avoid posting about controversial topics **

Events

Creating community involves being part of the community. There are dozens of ways your practice can give-back, celebrate your patients or enhance your community.

- Collaborative events - teacher appreciation week, pop-up-clinics, classes at gyms, ergonomic assessments
 - Patient appreciation week events - in the office, park day
 - In-office collections - coat drives, school supply drives, halloween candy exchanges
 - Interact with local and symbiotic businesses, chiropractors, gyms, massage therapists, medical practices
- ** Don't forget to promote your efforts on social media, newsletter, in-office flyers **

