Everybody has to deal with the upset patient. How do we handle this situation?

Have you ever been the upset customer? How does the upset patient perceive you?

For the record, we’re not talking about the violent or excessively abusive patient. We’ll talk about that later.
Become an “OWNER” of your Practice
Realize the consequences of not taking care of the UPSET PATIENT’S needs.

What happens when the practice loses a patient?
- Reputation Loss
- Financial Loss

What is a Practice’s Reputation?
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Compassion
- Empathy
- Competence
- Professionalism

A patient’s PERCEPTION of your practice is all your practice has.
- A SLIGHT MISTAKE COULD TAKE A LONG TIME TO REPAIR, OR MAY NEVER BE REPAIRED.
- IT COSTS TIME AND MONEY TO ATTRACT A NEW PATIENT TO YOUR PRACTICE.
- IT TAKES MUCH LESS TIME AND MONEY TO HAVE AN EXISTING PATIENT RETURN TO YOUR OFFICE.

“IT’S EASIER TO MINE A SHAFT THAT’S ALREADY DUG.” - Dennis Neely

FINANCIAL LOSS
- What does an AVERAGE patient mean to your practice?
Average exam fee - $130.00*
Average material payment - $220.00*
Total - $350.00*

This does not consider whether the patient gets contacts, 2nd pair, sun Rx, SCL solutions, special tests, medical treatments, etc.

*Fictional figures for illustration only

Compound this loss for 2 family members for 25 years -

$350.00 \times 2 \text{ members} \times 25 \text{ years} = $17,500.00

You've probably lost presbyopic dad, younger sister when she needs contacts, Granny's hacked, Cousin Ed thinks you're a bunch of goons, neighbor Cravett has heard the war story. You get the picture.

How do we handle these patients?

Some Suggestions -

It is critical to understand the doctors and managers are not taking the patients' side of these situations.

They are trying to protect the practice. A patient that is unhappy is not only an economic loss to the practice, but is more likely to be a litigious one, also.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO 1st?

HOW DO YOU KEEP THE SITUATION FROM ESCALATING?
BE PREPARED!

• Smile, listen, watch your tone of voice.
• Survey your patients.
• Role play in office meetings.
• Watch what you say in and out of the office.
• Have written office policies regarding upset patients.

Ask patients what they want

"I found one of the quickest ways to diffuse a situation was to first listen to a patient’s complaint and then ask what he/she thought would be a FAIR remedy. Usually, they want a whole lot less than you think". Brigitte Kelly

Refunds

Not always easy to do, especially if this person not been very nice to the office staff or the doctor.

Alert managers, doctors, and appropriate colleagues

• Ensure the patient’s needs are completed to their satisfaction.
• Managers, doctors, or staff may want to contact patient to soothe ruffled feathers.
Follow up with patient

- Make sure the patient is satisfied.
- Blow them away with your concern that their problem has been resolved.

The VIOLENT or EXCESSIVELY ABUSIVE Patient

Notify manager or doctor IMMEDIATELY

Have EMERGENCY CODES

Have EMERGENCY #s

Be a great Ambassador to your practice!
Thank You!

Texas Optometric Association
“Doctors of Optometry working together
to advance excellence in eye care for every Texan.”