

"Think about a time that you went home from work and were thinking 'I love my job.' Tell me, what happened that day?"

"Tell me about a day when you had the opposite emotion and thought, 'I need to find something else to do.' What happened that day?"

New hires at Mayo Clinic typically undergo multiple interviews. They interact with a panel whose members ask values-revealing questions such as "What would you do if you observed another staff member treat a patient rudely?"

Teach the why, not just the how. Employees must be prepared to perform services "onstage." In addition to training them for functional tasks, organizations should educate them about customers, strategy, service offerings, and culture. Individual service providers also need to know where they fit in the organization and the importance of their work. Identifying the necessary skills and knowledge, formalizing learning as an ongoing process rather than an event, teaching the big picture, and rewarding desired behaviors (for example, by formally recognizing employees who have done something exceptional for patients) are all important.

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY CAN ASSUAGE ANXIETY BY PROVIDING REAL-TIME INFORMATION AND ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE.

Extracting, codifying, and disseminating the best practices of the organization's top service providers will help guide all staff members toward better outcomes. Set aside time for ongoing personal development as a nonnegotiable investment. A portfolio of teaching and learning approaches is best. Mind-stretching, job-relevant, inspiring reading through a company book club or an article-of-the-week distribution is worthwhile. "Mystery shopping" other units, conducting service simulations, and role-playing can be effective. As part of its training programs to improve how its 43,000 employees emotionally connect with patients, Cleveland Clinic produced two videos about empathy: *Empathy: The Human Connection to Patient Care* and *Patients: Afraid and*

Vulnerable. "They have been pivotal in rallying people around a core element of our mission: to provide exceptional patient experiences," says Adrienne Boissy, a physician and the clinic's chief experience officer.

Leverage peer-to-peer learning. Peers learning from peers, which is common in health care, is powerful because it has credibility. Every cancer center in our study schedules time for clinicians and other team members to discuss specific patients' cases and reach consensus on treatment options. These meetings typically involve a cross-functional group of specialists for a certain cancer type, including surgeons, radiologists, medical and radiation oncologists, pathologists, and nurses. They may also include social workers, who can offer insight on non-medical issues such as a patient's anxiety about the effect of treatment schedules on work or about leaving the family in debt after treatment costs. Pooling knowledge to provide the best possible service experience accelerates learning, facilitates teamwork, and benefits patients.

Turn middle managers into teachers. In all but the smallest organizations, service providers report to and have regular contact with middle managers, affording still another important teaching opportunity. Middle managers can have a tremendous impact through the example they set—actions as well as words—and through coaching. Organizations can improve the quality of high-emotion services by promoting effective teachers into management and by developing current managers' teaching skills.

Several times a year Cleveland Clinic requires its more than 2,000 managers to attend daylong educational sessions devoted to topics such as change management, interpersonal communication, and emotional intelligence. The managers prepare annual plans for enhancing the engagement and satisfaction of their direct reports. (See "Health Care's Service Fanatics," HBR, May 2013.)

CANCER CARE epitomizes high-emotion services—the very need for which catapults customers into an emotional state. Even before the initial encounter with the provider, they may suffer anxiety, fear, or other intense emotions. If cancer centers can strengthen patients' confidence and resolve, mitigate their anxiety and stress, and continue to provide an excellent technical service, imagine what managers in less emotionally intense settings could do. ♥