

# Service Recovery at MGH

MGH/MGPO PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT

Service Excellence



MASSACHUSETTS  
GENERAL HOSPITAL



MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL  
PHYSICIANS ORGANIZATION

# Things go wrong ...

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# ... but how do we recover?

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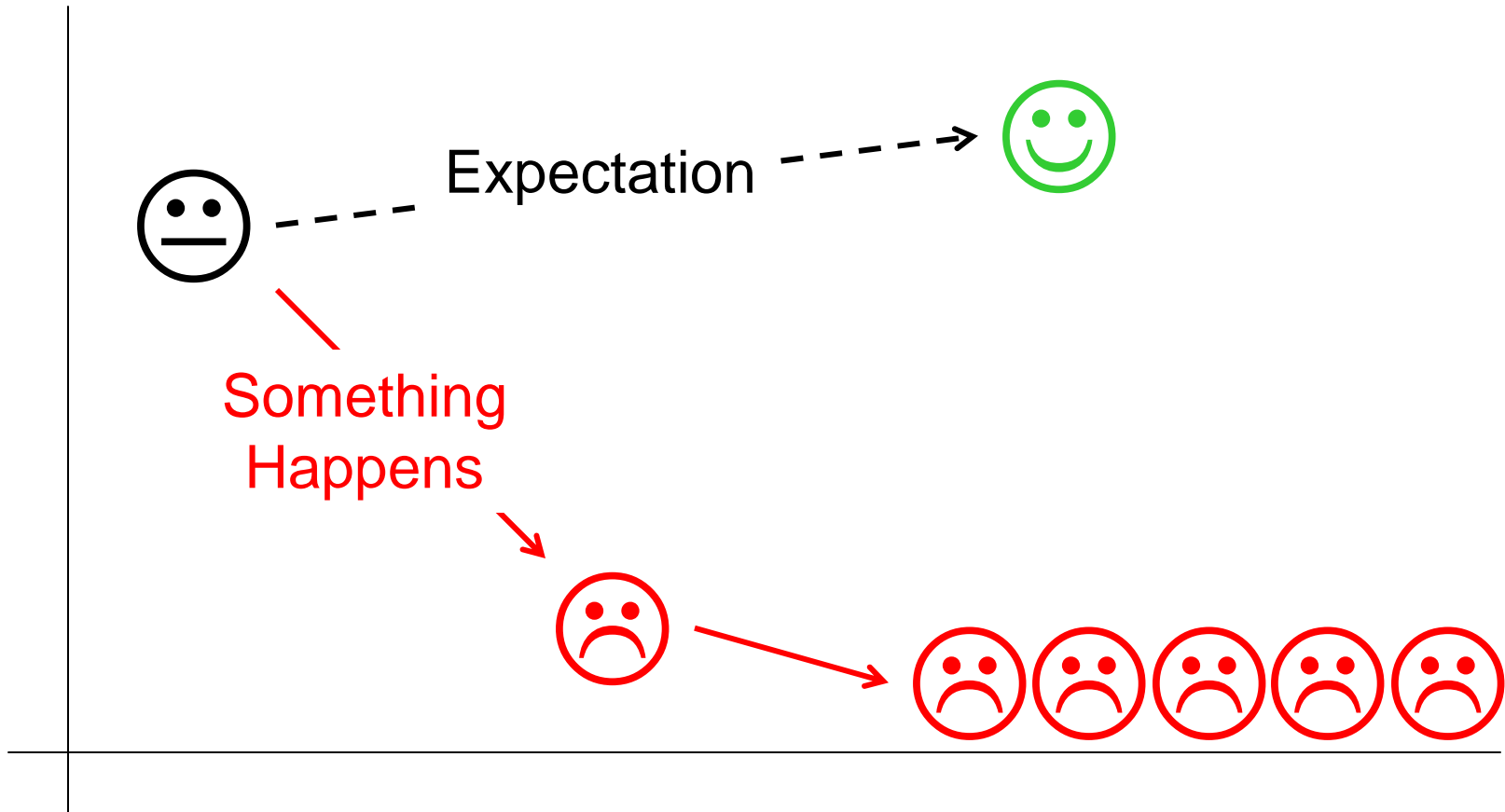
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# Patient Experience

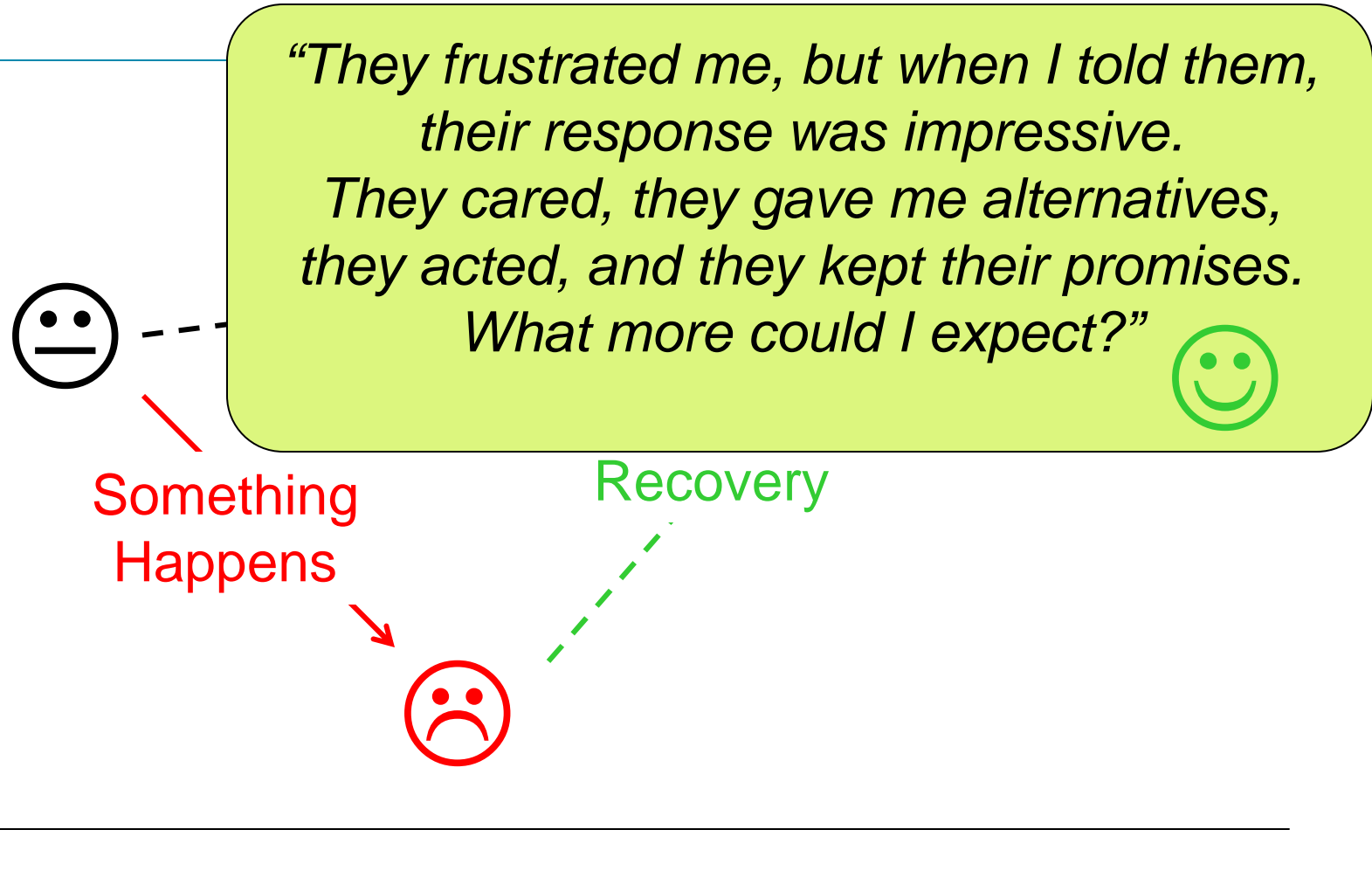
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# If Left Unresolved ...



# When Resolved ...



# What is Service Recovery?

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*“Patient complaints are inevitable and are a gift – they give us a second chance to make things right.”*

1. Chance to rectify our mistake
2. Chance to improve patient’s perception of our care
3. Opportunity to earn more loyalty than if the mistake never happened!

# Whose Job is Service Recovery?

Everybody!  
*ALWAYS!*

We are all  
Stewards of the  
MGH Reputation



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# Every interaction of a patient's visit makes an impression...

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# When something goes wrong ...

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... what do you do?

**First, we don't let things get worse ...**

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**Then, we respond:**

## **Service Recovery Steps – “L.E.A.D.”**

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***L = LISTEN***

Listen to what the patient has to say to understand problem

***E = EMPATHIZE***

Notice and acknowledge feelings

***A = APOLOGIZE***

Apologize for the error without placing blame

***D = DO THE RIGHT THING***

Ask how you can help and offer a solution

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# L = LISTEN

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- Defuse the situation with active listening.
  - Establish eye contact
  - Use silence to let them vent
  - Use key words:
    - “I hear you saying...”
    - “I can hear you are frustrated...”
  - Repeat what they said
  - Ask open-ended questions
- Control your responses
  - Breathe deeply
  - Lower your voice
  - Speak slowly and clearly



# E = EMPATHIZE

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- Notice and acknowledge their feelings
- Make the patient/family member feel valued from the start and establish the impression that you are there to help
  - Use key words:
    - “I can understand why you are upset...”



# A = APOLOGIZE

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- Apologize for the inconvenience on behalf of the hospital (*Blameless Apology*).
  - “I apologize for the wait. I realize that waiting is inconvenient. I will keep you informed. Is there anything I can do to make you more comfortable?”
  - “I apologize for the noise in the hallways; I understand why it startled you.”
  - “I’m sorry there was some confusion about who you were scheduled to see today.”

# The “Blameless” Apology...

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- Does not assign blame to anyone or any department.
- Does not blame the patient or family even if they made a mistake.
- Saying “I am sorry this happened to you” as a representative of MGH.
- A sincere acknowledgement sets the stage for the entire patient experience by creating a positive rapport.

*You are the MGH!*



# Apologizing Tips

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- Apologize no matter what the situation. An apology is not about guilt, it's about not meeting expectations.
- Apologize even if you didn't cause the problem.
- An apology conveys your concern, which is what the patient wants to hear.
- Don't shift the blame to the customer, another employee or department.
- Always say I'm sorry not we're sorry.
- Your heart needs to be engaged. An apology cannot be a canned response. Say it like you mean it.

# D = DO THE RIGHT THING

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- Solve the problem quickly if possible
- Offer options if possible and ask the patient how they would like the problem resolved
- If you cannot solve, connect to those that can
- Most people just want a “fair fix”



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# Storytelling...

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- Share an example of when you observed a coworker that did a superb job recovering a challenging situation.
- Share an example of when someone didn't do a good job turning a situation into a positive outcome.

# Recap Service Recovery Goals

*“Guided by the needs of our patients and their families...”*

- Support a culture of service at MGH.
- Restore patient and family trust despite a service breakdown.
- Protect our reputation and well being.



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# Questions

# Resources

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- *The HCAHPS Handbook* (by Quint Studer, Brian C. Robinson & Karen Cook, RN)
- *Making It Right: Healthcare Service Recovery Tools, Techniques, And Best Practices* (Press Ganey)