

HEALTHCARE LEADER ROUNDING ON PATIENTS: BEST PRACTICES

Adapted from [HealthStream Engagement Institute](#)

Including RELATESM into your rounding ensures effective communication. The steps are:

Step 1: Reassure

- Provide an introduction: As you introduce yourself, remember to smile.
- Maintain eye contact/smile.
- Put the person at ease.
- Connect to the resident as an individual.

Step 2: Explain

- Explain reason for rounding.
- Encourage open and honest communication.
- Manage expectations.
- What is rounding?
- Why is their participation helpful?
- How long should this take?

Step 3: Listen and Answer

- Listen, learn, and share.
- Use specific language that will help you get to the goal of your rounding session.
- Focus on fact-finding, not fault-finding.
- Ask probing questions—high gain, open-ended.

Examples of Discovery and Apology Words that Work:

- “In the last 24 hours, how often have you needed to use your call light? If so, what for? How quickly did we respond?”
- “Describe your experience.”
- “Tell me more.”
- “Is there anyone I can recognize for providing you with excellent care? What exactly did they do?”
- “I apologize for the delay in answering your call light. Tell me, how I can make this better for you?”

Obtain Information

As you obtain information about the healthcare experience from resident and families, remember to solicit suggestions for improving the overall quality of care. Actively listen to what residents and families are saying, and seek to perceive the environment from their point of view.

Be cognizant of hesitancy to speak on the part of the resident—this may indicate dissatisfaction which the individual is afraid to convey. In these situations, it is appropriate to say, “You seem hesitant, and that concerns me. I want you to be honest about the care we provided. When you share your experience with me, it helps us learn how we can improve.”

Remove Barriers

Be vigilant in observation as you round, seeking to identify and remove barriers to a “WOW” resident experience.

Watch for opportunities: Keep an eye out for high performance on the part of employees and recognize them on the spot. Be specific in your description of their behavior; doing so serves to hardwire expectations and reinforces the behaviors that you want repeated. Effective rounding with residents and family members can take place in the department/unit/work area where service is being provided—in waiting rooms, hallways, and elevators.

Ensure safety: Watch for unsafe processes, practices, or situations in the work environment.

If you are a support leader, consider rounding in the resident care area. This will give you real-time feedback about the service being provided and suggestions for improvement from those whose perceptions have just been impacted by the experience. Consider taking resident to their car or ride to get the opportunity to round.

Step 4: Take Action

The effort expended in the rounding process can be non-productive if the information gleaned is not acted upon in a timely manner. It is important, therefore, to take notes and initiate the necessary responses as soon as rounding concludes.

- Tell them what you will do with the information, and by what deadline.
- Take notes and follow up on actions.
- Under-promise and over-deliver.

Examples:

- “Thank you for your time and for allowing us to take excellent care of you.”
- “I will be sure to let Stacy know what a great experience she has provided to you.”
- “I will contact Dietary immediately, and I will let you know when they are able to follow up.”
- “I will contact Dr. Smith immediately and follow up with you.”

Step 5: Express Appreciation

- Say thank you and leave your contact information.
- Offer to provide additional assistance/help.
- Follow Up
- Reward, recognize, and celebrate!
- Act on and trend issues/opportunities for improvement.
- Share findings with the senior leaders, peers, and employees.

Service recovery

When rounding, you may encounter problems or service lapses. When you hear a concern or complaint, apologize and follow up immediately by contacting the appropriate staff member to ensure a successful resolution of the matter. Track these incidences to identify trends. Also, be sure to check back with the resident/family to validate his or her satisfaction and reinforce your organization's caring environment.

Best practice: In resident rooms, place the phone call in the resident's presence to rectify immediately.

Share your rounding experience

Spend a few minutes at each department meeting sharing stories and reporting. Think about the feedback that is being shared and ask yourself: Given what we're hearing, are we doing the right things? How can we do better? Where are the opportunities for improvement?

Leader's Advantage Tip

Leaders should bestow recognition right away on employees within their department and in other departments based on positive comments collected during rounding. This important leadership behavior forms relationships of trust and removes interdepartmental barriers.