

Service Key 11



Respecting Noise Levels

- Goal:** To help staff recognize their role in noise control and how we should all respect our customers and demonstrate trustworthiness in the Quiet Zone!
- Objective:**
1. Understand the physiological and emotional effects caused by noise on our patients and co-workers.
 2. Encourage staff to do their part to keep noise levels down and make our hospital a QUIET ZONE!
 3. Create awareness of who might over hear what you are saying and encourage discretion and sensitivity in all conversations.
- Materials:** Handout- "Quiet! Hospital Zone"
(please make enough copies for your staff)
- Activity:**
1. Review Patient Satisfaction Survey to review any comments regarding noise in your department.
 2. Give staff a copy of the handout "*Quiet! Hospital Zone.*" Allow them a few minutes to review and then discuss the information. (5 minutes)
 3. Discuss areas in your department where staff frequently gather to chit-chat. Who does this area impact? Identify your department's sensitive areas where you must show "speaker care?" Discuss possible patient perceptions when they see/hear staff talking. Example: "They don't care about me. They are talking about their dinner plans". (5 minutes).
 4. Create a "Quiet! Hospital Zone" poster on your department's communication board for the next month.



Quiet! Hospital Zone

Beep. Click-click. Whirrrrr. Ding, ding, ding. “Who’s got the keys?” Beep, beep, beep, Slam! “Respiratory Therapy, extension 5540, Respiratory Therapy 5540.” Squeak. squeak.

Research has shown that noise levels in hospitals are so extreme that they can cause negative health outcomes for patients and reduce staff productivity. Whether people or machine generated, noise causes strain. Our patients and staff have learned to accept the necessary noises of our healthcare environment generated by IV pumps, copy machines, monitors, low-volume discussion and the like. *It is unnecessary noise that people resent.*

Noise affects patients by:

- Causing irritability and anxiety
- Increasing perceptions of pain
- Increasing blood pressure
- Depriving them of sleep
- Offending them

Noise affects co-workers:

- Making them irritable, argumentative and aggressive
- Causing them to lose patience
- Reducing concentration and problem solving skills
- Promoting accidents and mistakes
- Creating stress
- Reducing sensitivity to the needs of others

Do your part to keep noise levels down and make our hospital a Quiet Zone!

- Control the noise associated with your conversation. Be aware of how loud, how long and when you talk.
- Ask yourself, “Is my conversation appropriate for where I am?” You may be in an elevator, cafeteria, patient care area and you never know who is listening and how they will interpret your conversation.
- Avoid calling down the hall.
- Make an effort to avoid slamming, banging, rattling, etc. when moving objects, operating equipment, closing doors and other such activities.
- Appropriate noise during the day may not be appropriate for night. People expect respectful quiet during the evening and until 8:00 am. Patients resent being awakened by loud voices and laughter.
- Be a “quiet advocate”. Tell others you are with, ‘I think we’re getting too loud’ or “Let’s talk about this somewhere else.” Remember, you can control many noises around you.