

Key Words at Key Times

(Studer 2003)

Definition:

Stakeholders want to believe that we care about them. *Key Words at Key Times* help us manage up our services and alleviate anxiety. What's more it builds loyalty. *Key Words at Key Times* can also help reduce frustration when something goes wrong. "Words have tremendous power. The right words spoken by the right people at the right times can lift up communities, transform lives, mend relationships, break hearts – even topple empires. So it should not surprise anyone that carefully chosen words, offered by employees at critical points in a transaction, can help build a culture of service and operational excellence." (p. 282)

How do you get started creating your own key words?

- Revisit your satisfaction surveys
- What issues are most important to your stakeholders?
- Come up with service-recovery key words
- Train staff on how and when to use key words
- When issues are being neglected – develop new key words

Or simply ask the question of a dissatisfied stakeholder, "I'm sorry our service did not meet your expectations. What can we do to make it better?"

Expectations:

- Be specific when using key words at key times.
- Revisit your survey results often to keep in mind the areas needing additional focus with key words at key times
- Work with staff on developing key words at key times when working with parents
- Role play is a good way to help train staff in using key words at key times
- Catch staff "doing it right" and reward and recognize