



## Greetings

“I will treat everyone as if he/she is the most important person in the facility.” This sentence is listed on Covenant’s Standards and Behaviors, but how often do we practice this on a daily basis? What would your office, facility, or clinic look like if you treated everyone that you encounter as the most important person in that space, whether they are a patient, customer, or coworker? At Covenant

Health, our customer-driven experience must begin by putting relationships with others **F.I.R.S.T.** The acronym **F.I.R.S.T.** stands for **F**riendly, **I**nterested, **R**elatable, **S**upportive, and **T**hankful. Everyone wants to feel valued and know they matter, and relationships with others prove we matter. This **F.I.R.S.T.** initiative reinforces these core principles to build positive relationships.

Knowing that building relationships starts with being friendly, we must seek to create a welcoming environment. This can be done by greeting everyone with respect and kindness. The 10 by 5 rule can be helpful when developing this type of friendly environment. When you are within 10 feet of someone, smile and/or acknowledge them with a wave. If you are within 5 feet of someone, say hello or offer a friendly greeting. Not only can we enact the 10 by 5 rule to show kindness, but we can also focus on introductions. Another sentence from the Standards and Behaviors under the effective communication section states, “I will introduce myself, greet all with respect and courtesy, make direct eye contact, and speak with clarity and interest.” Introductions are fundamental in how first impressions are made. In order to make a great first impression, offer a firm handshake, look the person in the eye, and use their name. When we repeat someone’s name, it indicates an investment we have in this individual and demonstrates our care.

Ultimately, how we greet people matters in all work relationships but especially with patients. Research shows that demonstrating kindness and empathy can lead to improved patient outcomes. A study from the Journal of General Internal Medicine found that patients with diabetes who received caring and empathetic treatment “had better blood sugar control and were more likely to adhere to their treatment plan.” Another example was from the Journal of Patient Experience. This study focused on compassionate care and indicated that “patients who received this type of care had lower levels of anxiety and depression.” With these types of outcomes, we must treat everyone as though they are the most important person in the facility.

-Josh

Hughes, S. (2023, June 12) *The Importance of Kindness and Empathy in Meeting Patient Needs*. LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/importance-kindness-empathy-meeting-patient-needs-sarah-hughes->