


RECEPTION AREA 101

A woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a light blue medical uniform, is smiling while talking on a black telephone. She is in a medical office setting, with a computer monitor in the foreground and a whiteboard with a grid in the background. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Patients spend an average of 4 times as long in the reception area, than with a medical provider.

A photograph of a diverse group of people sitting in a row of metal chairs in a waiting area. The people include an older man, a woman, a younger man, and another older man. They are all looking towards the right side of the frame. The background shows a white wall with a window and a whiteboard. The floor is light-colored and reflective. The text is overlaid on the image, with the words "the first impression" highlighted in a purple box.

It is the first impression of the organization, setting the norms, tone and dynamics of the relationship between patient & healthcare team.

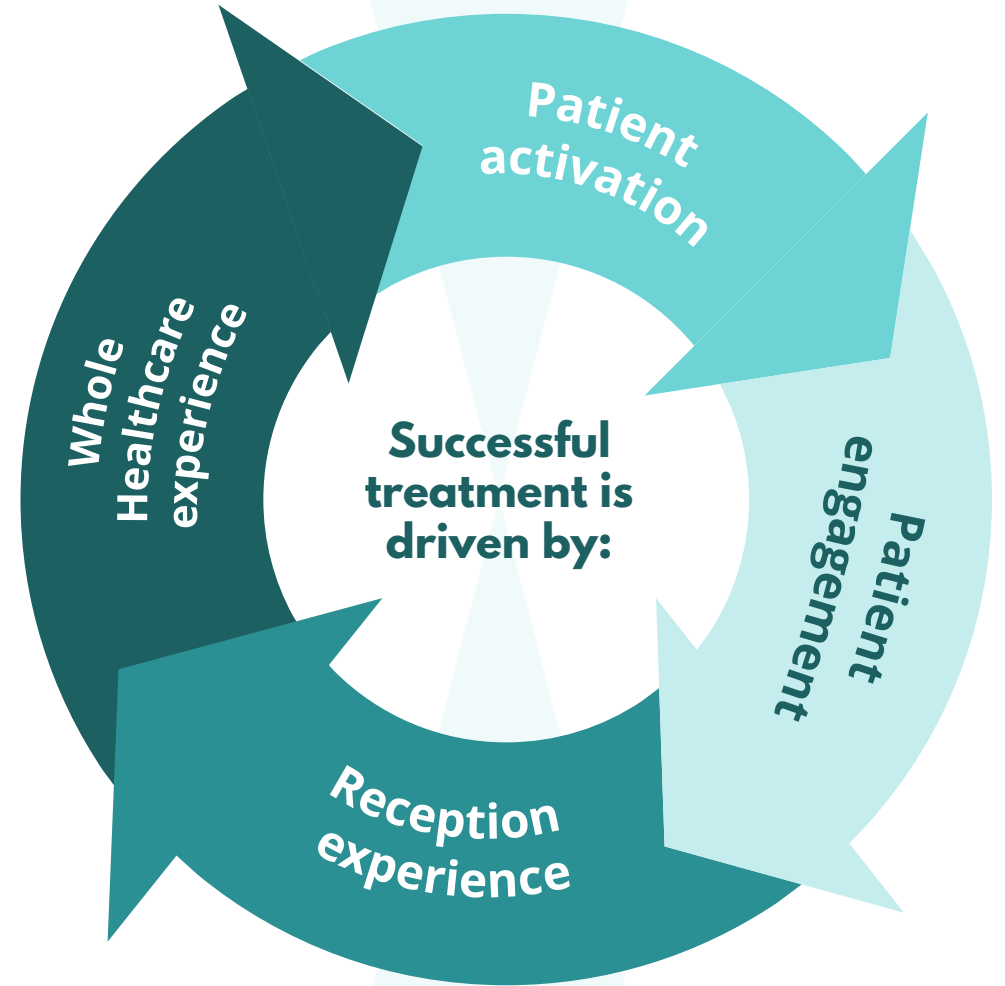
We have been conditioned to believe that ‘treatment’ is something the medical provider applies to the patient...



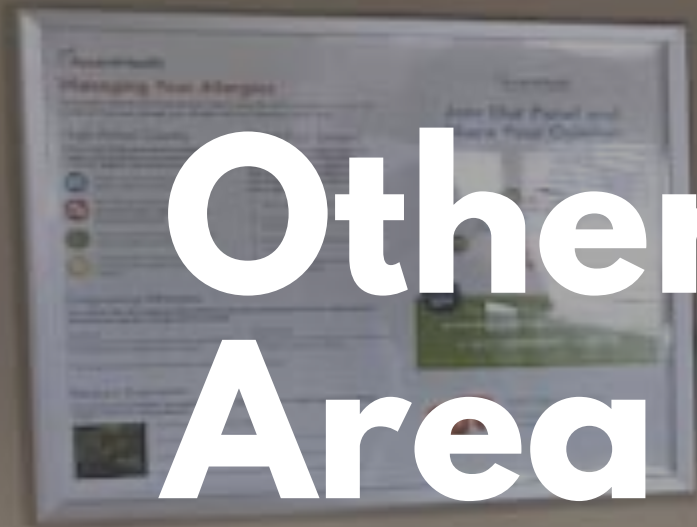


**...and everything
thing else before,
after or around
this interaction, is
inconsequential.**

New paradigm:



Other Reception Area Wounds:



Command Signs:



**NO food or beverage in
waiting area**



**NO CELL
PHONES!**



**NO
SMOKING!**

these are all indicators that the
organization is **taking a power position over
patients**

Glass partitions between receptionists & the reception area, indicate to patients they are in a dangerous place, one where only receptionists are to be protected.

Glass partitions are ineffective for safety. Research indicates they actually increase escalations.



A stack of old, worn, and torn magazines is shown in a waiting room. The text is overlaid on the image, with the words "impact confidence" highlighted in a purple box.

**Old, torn or inappropriate magazines
in the waiting room **impact confidence**
in care, adherence & healthcare
outcomes.**

A woman with dark hair, wearing a light-colored cardigan over a teal top and blue jeans, sits in a patterned armchair. She has a thoughtful or slightly anxious expression, looking off to the side. Her hands are clasped in her lap. The setting is a waiting room with other similar chairs and a table with brochures in the background.

**Chairs backed
up to the wall
around a room
is a design for
increased
anxiety &
social isolation.**

**Other reception
area problems,
that demonstrate
a disrespect of
patients, and sow
distrust of the
healthcare team's
competency:**





Unattended TV, showing anxiety provoking programming (such as news) or inappropriate programming for children in the reception area



No patient control over the TV (another power-over indicator)



Old furniture, in disrepair; fluorescent overhead lighting; messiness; garbage on the floor; full garbage cans; wall hangings that are taped, torn, or directed at staff

Reception Area Salves:

A modern office reception area featuring a long, white, curved reception desk. On the desk, there is a large potted plant with green leaves and white flowers, a small bowl of snacks, and a printer. In the background, there is a glass partition with a decorative pattern of black silhouettes of people. The room is well-lit with circular pendant lights hanging from the ceiling. The floor is covered with a patterned carpet.



Positive distraction options that are **self-paced** such as a variety of new, appropriate & uplifting reading materials, an office newsletter, Wi-Fi availability, etc.

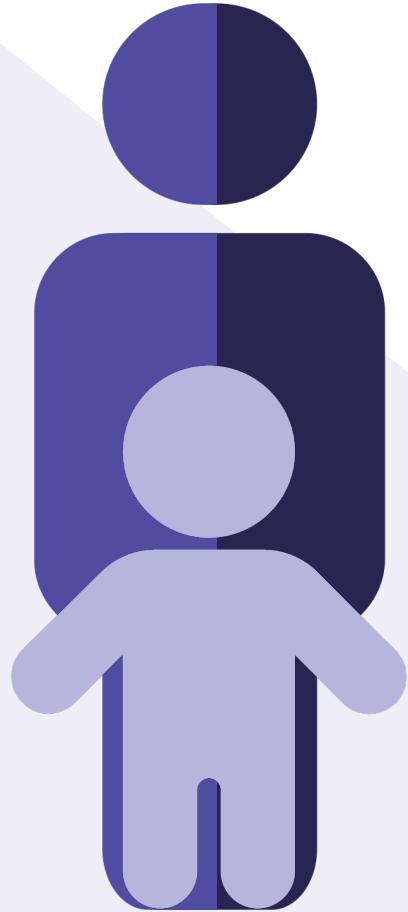
**Responsive
waiting rooms
are tailored to
the population
served.**





**If 20% of our patients
are monolingual
Spanish speakers...**

then we should have substantial
Spanish language reading materials.



If half of our patients are children or bring children, we should have a children's table, books, & toys.



A modern office interior with glass walls and a grey sofa. The room features a wooden floor, a grey sofa with a plaid pillow, and a glass wall. A green exit sign is visible above a doorway. The text is overlaid on the image.

**Chairs placed to create
smaller sitting areas of
8-10 people each**

**Tidy and clean, soft wall lighting,
visuals or other art that evoke the
natural world.**

**Offerings of any kind: water, nutritious
snacks, coffee or tea.**



**All of us who work in this
field have a dual role;
we are patients as well
as health care workers.**

A blurred background image of a waiting area. In the foreground, a man in a grey sweater sits on a blue couch, looking thoughtful with his hand on his chin. Behind him, another man in a grey sweater sits on the same couch, looking down at a smartphone. In the background, a man in a wheelchair is visible, and a woman in a white lab coat stands near a large white lamp. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an indoor setting like a clinic or office.

We know what we appreciate and prefer in the reception experience, and we also know what dislike, what is ineffective, tiring & irritating.



We could all decide right now that we will work to transform the waiting room where we work, into a waiting room we would like to be in ourselves.

**For more useful resources
please visit:**

www.emorrisonconsulting.com

