

# 40.

## **How do we overcome resistance to common key words that all employees are expected to use?**

### *Question*

Our Leadership Team decided to roll out the following key words to the entire organization: “Is there anything else I can do for you? I have the time.” There has been significant resistance, with comments ranging from, “It doesn’t feel natural,” to, “You are asking me to lie to the patients by saying I have the time.” What is your recommendation regarding modifying the words versus remaining committed to them?

### *Answer*

This is a very common occurrence. We have found that rolling out the key words is harder than developing them. My most important suggestion would be to ensure that prior to asking staff to do this, unit leaders are Rounding for Outcomes with staff. If you haven’t connected to what the staff needs, then you will not be successful at hardwiring this behavior. It is important to build the emotional bank account with staff prior to asking them for something. For suggestions on leaders rounding on staff, see Question 9. Once this foundation is in place, here are some suggestions:

1. I wrote an article about developing key words. You can read the article, “Key Words at Key Times,” at [www.studergroup.com](http://www.studergroup.com). Just search on “key words.”
2. Make sure the senior leadership is behind the key words that are developed, and share success stories in using them at department meetings. The leaders must role model using the key words themselves. It is essential.

3. Develop talking points for supervisors/frontline managers that help them re-introduce the words and discuss why they're important at their department meetings. I have found that when managers ask staff to put themselves in a patient's shoes, they start to realize the difference they can make. Leaders may also discuss how key words may save them time, as patients will not call them back in.
4. Start with: "Is there anything else I can do?" Then, based on senior leadership guidance, decide when to start adding: "I have the time." Remember, it takes the small victories to win the big battle.
5. Ask employees for help in developing the words that work for their particular areas.
6. Look for people who are doing well and reward them. Ask them to share with your team why the key words make them feel better about themselves and the work they are doing.
7. Finally, for the clinical units, you can document the call light usage before and after implementation of these key words. As a result, staff will see how their use of key words decreases call lights.