



**A-HEART** is a tool that helps you remember the key steps for service recovery when a patient or member has a problem or concern. It shows them we are committed to fixing their issue and supporting them. Good service recovery lets us turn a negative experience into a positive one. As a leader, you can model **A-HEART** in action and encourage your co-leads and teams to use it with their patients and members.

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**A**

## Apologize

- » Begin with “*I’m sorry...*”
- » Apologize for what happened or how it made them feel
- » Avoid blaming them or anyone else

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**H**

## Hear

- » Let the person speak fully
- » Listen for their key concerns and feelings
- » Ask gentle questions if you need more clarity
- » Avoid jumping into solutions until they finish

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**E**

## Empathize

- » Use a calm, respectful tone
- » Choose words that show you care and understand  
*Example: “I can understand why you’re feeling frustrated.”*
- » Match your body language to your empathetic words

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**A**

## Ask

- » Apologize again for the issue
- » Ask, “*What can I do to make this better?*”
- » Pause and give them time to answer

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**R**

## Resolve

- » Use their solution if you can
- » If not, offer a few options and let them choose
- » End your suggestions with “*for you*”  
*Example: “I want to make this easier for you.”*
- » Share the concern with your manager afterward

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**T**

## Thank

- » Begin with “*Thank you for...*”  
*Example: “Thank you for letting us know what happened.”*
- » Acknowledge the effort it took for them to speak up
- » Explain how their feedback helps improve care for them and others

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Source: [National Care Experience](#)