

✓ **Checklist**

How negative customer experiences can make you feel

Understanding the impact

- Dismissive responses can resurface past traumas, causing distress and withdrawal.
- Being ignored undermines confidence and can prevent people from speaking up.
- Judgements based on appearance, communication style or finances can be dehumanising.
- Impatience and frustration can heighten anxiety and feelings of rejection.
- Rigid policies without personalised responses reinforces feelings of powerlessness and mistrust.
- Neglecting inclusivity can result in inappropriate services being offered or unintentional exclusion.
- Poor customer service can lead to frustration, increasing the potential for conflict and emotional distress for all involved.

Long term impacts

- Negative experiences can lead to self-blame and discourage customers from seeking help in the future, not just in your business, but in other areas of their life too.
- Negative customer services can cause or worsen long-term challenges like anxiety, depression, feelings of hopelessness, poor health and strained personal relationships.
- Lack of clear information results in uninformed decisions being made.
- When someone is unable to access support due to poor service interactions, it can prolong their time without stable housing and financial security.

- Loss of customer trust damages a service or business reputation.
- Frequent negative interactions create a stressful work environment, lowering staff morale and increasing staff turnover.

Best practices for a more positive customer service

- Engage with customers without judgement or assumptions.
- Create a space where customers feel safe asking for help.
- Offer everyone the same service, irrespective of how they may present.
- Be empathic and actively listen, acknowledge concerns and show understanding without judgement.
- Validate experiences with supportive phrases like, 'I understand this can be frustrating; let's find a solution'.
- Apologise when things have gone wrong, even if you are not responsible, as this can improve customer relations, help someone to feel like they matter and build trust.
- Be inclusive and tailor responses to individual needs.
- Use clear, jargon-free step-by-step explanations to make processes easier to navigate.
- Be patient, allow extra time if needed, avoid rushing or showing frustration and suggest alternative solutions to break down barriers.
- Take care to notice the signs of distress, such as non-verbal cues that indicate discomfort or frustration, and respond in a calm and reassuring manner.