

Customer Service Notes for

“You Never Get a Second Chance to Make a First Impression”

It’s been said that “You never get a second chance to make a first impression.” First impressions are important in many aspects of life, including in a WIC office, and are related to stellar service for participants.

When a new participant arrives at your office, what they see impacts their impressions and opinions formed. Consider the following questions:

- Was there ample parking? Was the parking lot free of trash, etc.?
- Are the office and rest rooms clean?
- Is the office neat?
- Is the participant pleasantly greeted?
- Does the waiting area have enough chairs?

The WIC staff member who is the first to interact with the participant needs to be welcoming. This includes smiling, making eye contact, and offering a pleasant greeting such as “Good morning.” All of this can help create a positive first impression. If the participant needs to complete paperwork, be sure to explain what needs to be completed or filled out and provide a pen for the participant to use.

Other WIC staff, such as nutritionists, who will also be meeting with the participant, also need to be welcoming. Especially during the first appointment, it can be helpful for WIC staff to explain the process and procedure your office follows with participants.

Particularly with participants who are new to WIC, WIC staff need to be mindful not to use jargon that the participant may be unfamiliar with. Simple is better when providing explanations. Asking, “What questions, if any, do you have for me at this point?” will encourage participants to ask if, indeed, they have questions. Compare this to asking, “Any questions?”, where participants may feel that you prefer they not have any.

With participants for whom English is not their first language, WIC staff should ensure they understand the information if an interpreter or appropriate staff member is not available to translate.

When participants leave after their first appointment, WIC staff should close on a pleasant note. If another visit has been scheduled, the WIC staff member can say, “I look forward to seeing you next time.” **Making that good first impression goes a long way toward building a positive relationship with your participants!**

Questions for Reflection

1. Even if you are extremely busy and/or stressed, do you remember to smile and greet a participant who is new to your office?
2. Is the look of your office inviting and not messy?

