

CLIENT'S BEHAVING BADLY

Too often in the aesthetic and beauty industry we are told that the client is always right, but this is not often the case. Sometimes the client isn't always right.

Some clients believe they are experts in the skin and beauty fields, this type of client inhibits the therapist's ability to engage and develop a relationship with the client.

With your reputation at stake and in an industry that relies on clients who are loyal and satisfied and most importantly, word of mouth recommendations it is likely that you will come across a client that is difficult and no matter what you do, is very hard to please.

The over-demanding client is not contributing any profit at all. In fact, these types of customers are likely preventing you and your team from devoting time to the clients that could make a difference. Time is a valuable resource to you and your team. If you need to ask yourself, is that client taking up too much of your time compared to the profit they are contributing, then it might be time to cut ties with that client.

Clients who behave badly! Which ones are worth keeping?

Clients who are consistently late or cancel at the last minute.

We all have clients who no matter what, are consistently late to their appointments or cancel at the last minute. What you do with these clients relies on how much they invest in your business, loyal clients cost money, if they are 15 minutes late once or only cancel at the last minute once because of a family tragedy, there is no cause for alarm, but when this client cancels or shows up late for a third time you have yourself a chronically late and last-minute cancelling client!

Set limits with clients

For the clients that are consistently late or cancelling out of your accepted cancellation time then throwing your schedule out and affecting your other clients, it may be time to use that late or cancellation policy. If you don't have one, then it is time to implement one and ensure that all staff and clients are aware of the new policy. Add your late policy to your website, your social channels and on any appointment confirmations. Anywhere that your clients are looking to book in their appointments with you.

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It is essential that you follow through with any client who is consistently late or cancelling with the late/cancellation policy, if the policy involves a late/cancellation charge, then let the client know that you are going to implement it on the next visit if they are late again. Don't be afraid to enforce the policy even if you are afraid of losing the client, loyal clients will stick around and respect your time.

If you charge your client the late/cancellation fee and they continue to show up late or cancel their appointments out of the acceptable time stated in your policy, then it is time to block them. By blocking these clients, you are making space in your schedule for clients who respect your time.

The client with unrealistic expectations and/or are never satisfied.

We all have that one client where we have spent a lot of time consulting and explaining the treatment plan. You have spent another hour checking with your client that you are both 100% clear on the treatment plan and the expected outcomes, at the end of the treatment, this client is still not happy with the results, yet the exact outcome is exactly what you had explained and agreed on.

Your clinics policies and procedures should outline exactly what should happen in the above situation. You may want to consider some of the following ideas on how to work with the client that is never satisfied,

- Understand exactly what the client is dissatisfied with and then try and work out a solution. This may include explaining to the client why you cannot achieve the outcome they thought would happen. Referring to the initial consultation will also ensure and remind the client that you covered this in the initial consultation. If you did not cover this in the initial consultation you may need to honour the clients concerns and work on a resolution and new treatment that will give the client the expected results. Extra costs or payment conditions should be discussed at this time, will you give the client a complimentary treatment or will they receive a discount. Remind them that this is a special once only offer.
- If the client's expectations exceed the treatment outcome or they do not agree to follow home treatment plan, then you must be honest and let them know that their expectations will not be met.
- Sometimes when you are on a skin journey with your client, outcomes may not go to plan, being up front and transparent with your client as soon as

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possible will build trust and rapport, preventing the client from becoming frustrated and disappointed.

- If what your client is asking for or expects exceeds what you can achieve, be honest and let them know. The client may not rebook or return but being upfront and honest about the outcomes before beginning the treatment will save you money and may also mean that the client returns if they are not satisfied at another clinic.

Aggressive and abusive clients

If a client becomes angry or aggressive it is important that you and your staff remain calm. It is recommended that you have information in your policies and procedures on how to handle these types of clients if the situation should arise. You should include the following in your strategy for dealing with aggressive and angry clients:

- Stay calm. The worst thing you can do in this situation is to raise your energy levels to theirs. This may ignite the client further, escalating the situation.
- Avoid raising your voice, maintain a soothing voice and mask any of your frustrations you are feeling.
- Do not be sarcastic towards the client, this may aggravate them further.
- Adapt a non-threatening body posture (generally have your arms by your side with empty palms facing forward)
- Do not enter the client's physical space. Violating someone's personal space can be interpreted as a show of aggression. Giving an angry client a larger area of personal space keeps you safe. Stay behind a counter if possible, to any barrier to maintain physical distance between you and the client.
- If you feel safe enough, move to another part of the clinic to make sure other clients are safe.
- Listen to the client's grievance. There may be a very good reason for why the client is feeling angry, allowing them to vent out some of their frustration may prevent the situation from escalating.
- Ask questions to better understand the problem. This may calm the client down as they may realise you are trying to listen and understand.

"Is this the first time you have had this issue"

"Can you tell me more about the issue"

"Tell me exactly what happened"

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- Try to find a solution to the problem. Ask the client what you could do to make them feel better about the situation. If what they are asking is unreasonable and irrational, then let them know that you will have to consider what they are asking and get back to them. This will hopefully give you the opportunity to end the contact with the client and allow you to respond via email.
- If after all of this if the client still refuses to calm down and the situation is out of control or escalating, tell the client that you will ask them to leave if they don't control their frustration. You might say:

"I understand that you are frustrated, but we both need to be calm to resolve this situation"

Explain to them why you are asking them to leave:

"While you have a right to voice your concern, you do not have the right to be rude, abusive towards me and my team"

"I am happy to work with you to resolve this situation, but your behaviour is making me feel uncomfortable"

"If you do not remove yourself from this situation voluntarily, I will have to phone the police to protect my team and other clients"

Do not touch the client if they are aggressive.

You and your team should not tolerate this type of client, you are well within your rights to refuse treatment and service to this client. Keeping your team safe is essential and your responsibility.

Don't confuse the abusive and aggressive client with an assertive client who simply insists on their rights.

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