



## ► Key Words at Key Times AIDET®

### AIDET1: AIDET® GUIDELINES AND KEY WORDS

#### ► Why and How

AIDET® is an acronym that stands for **A**cknowledge, **I**ntroduce, **D**uration, **E**xplanation, and **T**hank You. AIDET® is a communication framework that:

- Improves patient and customer perception of their care or the service they receive
- Helps reduce their anxiety (thus improving outcomes)
- Builds customer loyalty
- Ensures that all service providers are delivering consistent measures of empathy, concern, and appreciation

#### Advantages of AIDET®:

Decrease anxiety with increased compliance.



This tool enables organizations to improve their patient perception of care results. When hardwired in organizations, it is proven that Studer Group partners greatly outpace the national average in improvement.

#### The Keys to Effective Patient and Customer Communication Include:

1. **Acknowledge**— Acknowledge the patient by name. Make eye contact, smile, and acknowledge everyone in the room (patient and families).
2. **Introduce** —Introduce yourself, your skill set, your professional certification, and experience.
3. **Duration** —Give an accurate time expectation for tests, physician arrival, and identify/communicate next steps. When this is not possible, give a time in which you will update patient on progress.
4. **Explanation** —Explain step by step what will happen, answer questions, and leave a way to contact you, such as a nurse call button or phone number. Use language a patient can understand.
5. **Thank You** —Thank the patient. You may thank them for choosing your hospital, and for their communication and cooperation. Thank the family for assistance and being there to support the patient.



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► **Key Words:**

**Clinical Example:**

A	Acknowledge	<i>Eye contact, smile, and acknowledge everyone in the room (patient and families).</i>
I	Introduce	<i>“Hello, Mr. Clark. My name is Jackie and I am your nurse today. I have been a nurse for 20 years and have worked in this hospital for over 8 years. I have done this procedure thousands of times and I go back for training each year...”</i> <i>“Hello, Mr. Clark. My name is Sam. I am your nurse today. I am part of a very experienced care team that will make sure this procedure goes as planned. We do hundreds of these procedures every month...”</i>
D	Duration	<i>“This procedure will take about 10 minutes to perform and then about one hour for the results...”</i>
E	Explanation	<i>“Let me explain some more about the procedure.” (Explain why performing the procedure, what will happen, and what they should expect, understanding of side effects, and answer any questions.)</i>
T	Thank you	<i>“Thank you for choosing us...Thank you for waiting...Thank you for coming in today...What other questions do you have?”</i>

**Non-Clinical (Food Service) Example:**

A	Acknowledge	<i>“Good morning, Mrs. Beeker, may I come in to deliver your meal?”</i>
I	Introduce	<i>“My name is Angel from Food Service and I will be helping you with your meal today. I have worked in Food Service now for 20 years...”</i>
D	Duration	<i>“It won’t take me long to set up your tray for you. Someone else will check in later from Food Service to clear your tray if you are finished.”</i>
E	Explanation	<i>“I see you ordered the meatloaf with broccoli, macaroni and cheese, and an un-sweetened iced tea. Is that correct? The chef’s meatloaf is delicious and I hope you enjoy it.”</i>
T	Thank you	<i>“We have the best hospital food around and I hope you enjoy it...What other questions do you have? Is there anything else I can do for you to make your day better? I have the time... Is there anything else I can do for you? Thank you for choosing our hospital for your healthcare needs.”</i>

► **Key Actions:**



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### **Tips for implementing AIDET® effectively:**

- **Every Interaction:**  
The elements of AIDET® are important in every interaction with a customer. With that in mind, it is not a script. It is a set of five fundamental objectives to be met in the context of your interaction with others.
- **Not Order-Specific:**  
Elements of AIDET® do not have to be delivered in any specific order.
- **AIDET® Works in All Departments and Disciplines:**  
AIDET® is not just a CLINICAL communication tool. It is valuable in all interactions with customers. For example, when calling the help desk with a computer problem, customers appreciate:
  - A: Being acknowledged;
  - I: Knowing who they are speaking with on the phone and knowing that the team is experienced and can handle requests;
  - D: Knowing when they can expect things to occur;
  - E: Understanding what is happening and what the next step will be;
  - T: Hearing a pleasant close to the conversation like, *“Thank you for letting me know about this issue.”*
- **Telephone Conversations:**  
In telephone conversations, AIDET® is extremely important. So much of our message is lost when we cannot rely on the visual cues of body language. Standardizing the content of telephone communication with AIDET® can fill some of that gap.
- **Using Only Parts of AIDET® as Necessary:**  
There are times when you will need to verbalize only one or two of the elements of AIDET®. For example: You are caring for a patient for the third day in a row and they call you by name as you enter the room. It is not necessary to introduce yourself. The communication process is a dynamic one. The decision to “skip” one of the elements should be deliberate and made only after ensuring the customer has that information already. It is always essential to assess if the patient has the necessary information and fill in any gaps that exist. Remember that just because you know you introduced yourself this morning does not guarantee that the patient recalls your name in the afternoon.
- **Repeat If Necessary:**  
Managing up yourself and your team is often done with an initial introduction. It is also useful to repeat when you sense increased anxiety in your patient.
- **Specifics of Duration:**  
Duration is best communicated in specific time increments. Words like “soon,” “not long,” or “as soon as possible” do not achieve the desired outcome with patients. When you cannot commit to a specific time, you can commit to a specific time interval in which you will update the patient on progress.
- **Patient White Boards:**  
Use the patient white boards if available to hardwire your introduction (name and role) or use the board to manage up others. (Ex: “I see Joy is your nurse today; she is wonderful...”)
- **10/5 Rule:**  
The 10/5 Rule is a visual manifestation of the organization’s commitment to excellent communication by everyone. Applying this rule requires adoption of the standard that at 10 feet we make eye contact with those



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we encounter and at 5 feet we speak or greet. Adoption of this rule ensures that all staff understands they have a role to play in creating a positive culture within your organization.

- Standards of Behavior:  
By embedding AIDET® in Standards of Behavior you provide a strong anchor to your culture change.

### **Tips for Physician/Provider AIDET®:**

- Sit down when entering the room (increases the perception of time).
- Shake hands with patients and family members (78% of patients prefer a hand shake – sign of courtesy and respect).\*
- Address patients by name (91% of patients want to be addressed by name).\*
- Use a standardized open and close with patients to hardwire the first and last impression.
  - Opening Example: Hello. My name is Dr. Smith and I am your hospitalist today..."
  - Closing Example: "Thank you for choosing us ...Thank you for waiting ... Thank you for coming in today...What other questions do you have?"
- Manage up co-workers, hospital, support services (shows coordination of care, decreases complaints, and reduces anxiety of patients).

\* Makoul G, Zick A, Green M, *Annals of Internal Medicine* 2007;167: 1172 – 1178