## **When You Have To Go Over An Employee’s Head**

It’s happened to all of us.  We treat our patients, clients, and family caregivers as politely and as fairly as possible.  Then they complain to our boss or worse yet, our boss’s boss.  Suddenly someone we report to has made an exception for the patient and we feel disrespected and confused.

No, the patient doesn’t have to pay that bill.  Yes, there can be eight family members in the hospital room when there are supposed to be no more than two.  A boundary that the organization set—and an employee enforced–has been overturned.

Often a leader has a very good reason for making exceptions.  But when you go over an employee’s head, it can create a lot of stress in the healthcare workplace—resentment, time-consuming human resources complaints, and even staff turnover.  Here are three tips for reducing workplace stress when you must go over an employee’s head:

1. Let your employee know that you are going over her head.  Don’t even think about overturning an employee’s decision without discussing it with that person directly.  Give that employee the respect of hearing it from you.
2. Give a reason if you are able.  But even if you can’t explain fully why you decided to overturn the employee’s decision, at least share that.
3. Emphasize that the employee did the right thing by enforcing the rule in the first place.  A healthcare workplace is chaos without policies and procedures.  Let the employee know that he should continue to make decisions and that going over his head will not be a common occurrence.

**Jennifer L. FitzPatrick, MSW, LCSW-C, CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) is a speaker, consultant, author and founder of Jenerations Health Education, Inc. One of less than 800 Certified Speaking Professionals worldwide, Jennifer is the author of Reimagining Customer Service in Healthcare and Cruising Through Caregiving: Reducing The Stress of Caring For Your Loved One. She was a gerontology instructor at Johns Hopkins University's Certificate on Aging program for over a decade and has been featured on ABC, CBS, Sirius XM and in *Forbes, U.S. News & World Report, Redbook, Fast Company* and countless other media outlets. Her board appointments include serving as a Care Advisory Board Member for Seth Rogen & Lauren Miller Rogen's non-profit HFC (Hilarity for Charity). For more information please go to** [**www.jenerationshealth.com**](http://www.jenerationshealth.com) **.**