



**SYP Tool:** Repair Damaged Relationships

**Title:** I'm Sorry

**Objective:** Discuss how an authentic apology can turn a bad customer/client interaction into a potentially better relationship

**Setup:** Mistakes happen. It is understandable that mistakes or errors will occur within your organization and between you and your customer/client. When mistakes happen, it is how you handle the situation as an individual that can determine the longevity of your customer/client relationship with the organization.

For example, some malpractice-overhaul advocates say an apology can help doctors avoid getting sued. Research has shown that being upset with a doctor's behavior often plays a bigger role than the error itself in patients' decisions to sue.

**Activity:** People want an apology when they have been hurt or when someone has done something wrong. A thoughtful and authentic apology can mend a relationship while a thoughtless one may cause further conflict and end a long-standing relationship.

Have each person think of one example from their past when they have been the customer in a situation where things did not go well with the exchange. Have them share what the individual/company did to apologize for the error or mistake.

Form partners or small groups to share the situations. Based on group size, have each person share their example or have a representative from each group.

**Debrief:**

- How did the individual/company apologize?
- What made the apology a good one?
- What was the impact of the apology on your relationship?
- What are the important components of an effective apology? (flipchart the responses)