



OVERCOMING A MEDICAL ERROR:
A Guide for Healthcare Organizations



Did you know that medical errors now account for 10% of all U.S. deaths?

So, what do you do if a medical error is made?

First step: Don't panic.

If you are a healthcare organization, most likely your organization already has a communications and resolution program (CRP) or policy in place when confronting and dealing with medical errors. Seek it and follow protocol.

For those healthcare organizations that don't have a CRP or policy in place, MASC Medical has developed this guide to help assist with medical errors. The purpose of this guide is to help analyze the situation, build support for healthcare professionals involved, and formulate a plan to follow-up with the patient and/or patients' family – all with transparency.

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Source:

https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/study_suggests_medical_errors_now_third_leading_cause_of_death_in_the_us

STEP 1: ANALYZE THE MEDICAL ERROR

It's important that when a medical error is made a thorough analysis is conducted.

This analysis will help the healthcare organization understand what and how the medical error happened, and how to avoid these mistakes in the future.



1. Describe the medical error.

2. Describe the procedure:

a. What was good/accurate for the patient?

b. What was inaccurate or shouldn't have been done to the patient?

3. How high are the stakes?

4. Is there anything that could've been done differently?

5. What are the learnings from this medical error?

6. How can this medical error be avoided in the future?

STEP 2: PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Did you know that when clinicians make a medical error, it will force them to likely suffer burnout, depression, and even suicide?

As a healthcare organization, its crucial to alleviate guilt and provide emotional support to clinicians involved. Simply check-in, see how they've been affected, and what you can do to help them overcome this situation.



7. How has this medical error affected you?

8. In relation with this medical error, is there anything that bothers you?

9. What advice would you give someone in this situation?

10. How can you honor your patient?

STEP 3: PATIENT/PATIENT FAMILY FOLLOW-UP

Medical errors should be handled with transparency.

Once your healthcare organization fully understands how the medical error occurred, reach out to the patient and/or their family to offer an apology, a full explanation, emotional support, and compensation (if at fault).



11. Provide an explanation to the patient/patients' family.

12. Apologize for the medical error and consider compensation to patient if the hospital was at fault.

Sources:

<https://news.aamc.org/patient-care/article/best-response-medical-errors-transparency/>

<https://www.todayshospitalist.com/how-to-move-on-after-a-medical-error/>



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- [6 Ways to Bridge the Staffing Gap \[INFOGRAPHIC\]](#)
- [6 Benefit Trends for 2019 \[INFOGRAPHIC\]](#)
- [15 FAQs Healthcare Organizations Should Ask Healthcare Recruiters \[FAQ Sheet\]](#)



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