

## Communication about Medical Errors

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1. Demonstrates respect, compassion, and commitment to patients and families after an error has occurred by providing information, acknowledging harm, and maintaining trust through a process of dialogue that involves multiple conversations.
2. Requires knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow healthcare professionals to discuss facts transparently, take responsibility for what happened, express regret and (as appropriate) apologize, describe what will happen next for the patient concerned, and explain what will be done to prevent the error from happening to someone else in the future.
3. Encompasses two other contexts in addition to disclosure to patients and families: (a) reporting information about errors to healthcare organizations through data collection systems designed to improve patient safety, and (b) discussing errors with fellow healthcare professionals to promote professional learning and receive emotional support.
4. Depends on healthcare professionals who are honest, compassionate, courageous, accountable, reassuring, and willing to acknowledge and engage their own feelings of sadness, fear, and guilt.
5. Should be incorporated into all healthcare practice settings (medical, surgical, in-patient, out-patient), and can be taught to medical students and residents using didactic, role-playing, or simulation methodologies.

### References:

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