

Open Disclosure: Principles

SUMMARY



Open disclosure refers to the way we respond to a consumer/patient, family/carer/advocate after an adverse outcome. The following principles can support you effectively respond.

Open disclosure principles

Open, honest and timely communication	Inform the patient, family and/or carers with a factual and timely explanation of what happened.
Acknowledgement of adverse outcome/event	Acknowledge the adverse event/outcome and impact; outline consequences for the their recovery.
Apology/Expression of regret	Make an apology, include the words 'I am sorry' or 'We are sorry'.
Supporting and meeting the needs and expectations	Listen to their experience and commit to providing ongoing support to those involved including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ consumers/patients and families/carers/advocates ▪ those providing care
Good governance	Maintain quality assurance processes by contributing towards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ integrated clinical risk management ▪ systems improvement ▪ documentation and confidentiality ▪ follow up and ongoing support

What do I need to do before an open disclosure conversation?

- Consider any local or national open disclosure policies and regulatory/legal requirements
- Arrange a convenient time to meet with the patient, their family and/or carer
- Plan for the most senior clinician involved to undertake the discussion – perhaps with assistance of a colleague for support and/or objectivity
- Acknowledge your own emotional response
- Think of questions that may be asked
- Prepare/rehearse information to present to the patient
- Consider whether the conversation should be witnessed
- Consider the need to seek legal advice

What do I need to do after an open disclosure conversation?

- Document detailed notes of the conversation, including exact phrasing of your apology statement
- Follow through with commitments to provide ongoing support to the patient and/or healthcare workers
- Contribute towards clinical risk management and systems improvement needs