AVERT in Action: The Apology of REMORSE

Reach out for guidance: who needs to be involved?
- Make initial contact (within 24 hrs.) with patient/family to state known facts, express empathy, and provide reassurance about care and followup.
- Contact designated AVERT member at your site.
- Trigger QI investigation.
- Contact Physicians Insurance Risk Management.

Examine the facts: what are the known issues?
- Determine immediate and ongoing patient/family needs.
- Anticipate patient/family emotions and questions.
- Develop an action plan for future treatment/followup.

Make the disclosure: what content is shared?
- Take time to acknowledge your emotions.
- Practice the disclosure, using lay terms and diagrams.
- Consider best setting and who should attend.
- Empathize, and help patient/family to name feelings.
- Elicit responses—and listen.

Own up and take responsibility: who apologizes?
- Acknowledge responsibility when clear medical error.
- Tie apology to the error.
- Avoid excuses and blaming.

Restitution and patient care plan: what is offered?
- Seek guidance about offering restitution.
- Consider immediate and long-term needs.
- Maintain ongoing contact with patient and family.

System improvement: how to prevent recurrence?
- Inform patient of investigation results and corrective action plan.
- Implement corrective action.

Extend support to those involved: what support is offered?
- Check in with involved providers.
- Debrief with your office staff.
- Offer resources to build resilience.

The Other Half of the Equation—
You and Your Medical Team!

Acknowledge your emotions.
- It is common to feel guilt, anxiety, depression, loss of concentration, fear of consequences.

Share your feelings with family and friends.
- Keep patient information confidential.

Check in with the care team involved in the event.
- Model open sharing of mistake.
- Focus on broken system vs. blame.
- Foster atmosphere of caring/compassion.
- Offer peer support and counseling.
- Offer training and coaching for prevention.

Documentation After Disclosure

- Date of the meeting
- Health care team participants
- Family members present
- Chronology of the discussion and its content
- Follow-up patient care plan, with roles and responsibilities outlined
- Name of contact person for additional concerns

Our Risk Management and Claims Department personnel are trained to assist you!

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