Error Reporting Quick Guide

8 Recommendations for a More Humane and Compassionate Culture

Four key values for creating a culture where clinicians feel safe to report their errors are:

1. Openness
2. Trust
3. Supportive relationships
4. Commitment (versus compliance)

The 8 actions leaders and all clinicians can take to foster these values are listed below. They came from my research on the *Effects of Shame and Guilt Among Obstetric Clinicians* which you can access at the bottom of this Quick Guide.

Actions leaders can take:

1. **Engage your providers and staff in discussions about unit activities** and whether they align or don't align with the four values. Example: "Do our shift to shift hand-offs, huddles, multidisciplinary meetings, etc. demonstrate the four values?" Make adjustments according to what you discover.

2. Have "open door" accessibility for providers and staff to bring concerns and celebrate accomplishments. **Praise (in private and in public) those who bring you "bad news"** to overcome hesitations about sharing "negative" information.

3. Frame and address **errors as learning opportunities** keeping the **focus of coaching on the person's behaviors** (e.g., "I'm confident that you were doing your best under the circumstances. What actions do you see that would prevent this from happening in the future?") and **not** on their **personality** (e.g., "You were negligent").

4. Model the vulnerability that is needed for providers and staff to come forward with their errors by **publically sharing your own mishaps**. Let your team members know what you're doing to learn from them and invite suggestions for improvement.

5. Ask team members for their **help to solve unit problems**, which includes how to make improvements based on what they are learning from their error reporting.

Actions all clinicians can take:

6. Reach out to team members who have made an error – you can **set the stage for safe sharing** by showing concern for their well-being and **sharing with them your own experience** with mishaps and what you learned from them.

7. Refrain from participating in **"blame" discussions and gossip** that can have **disparaging effects** on a colleague's reputation.

8. Be especially mindful of the **power differences** stemming from the professional hierarchy (e.g., provider, nurse, tech, etc.) and how it can impede raising concerns and errors – for those with higher status, **provide positive reinforcement and support** for disclosure to those with lower status.

You can receive the full open access article *Effects of Shame and Guilt on Error Reporting Among Obstetric Clinicians here*.

1. Zabari, M & Southern, N. **Effects of Shame and Guilt on Error Reporting Among Obstetric Clinicians.** *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, and Neonatal Nursing (JOGNN).* July 2018