

Getting Started with a Communication and Resolution Program (CRP) Policy or Commitment Statement to CRP

Developed by the Collaborative for Accountability and Improvement's Policy Committee

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to assist organizations that are wanting to create a policy or statement of commitment to CRP. A diverse group of professionals collaborated with families who have lost loved ones to a medical error to provide the framework in this document. Our intent is to create a framework that you can adapt for your organization. Your final document should be reviewed by other key stakeholders at your organization, including but not limited to, senior leadership team, claims, risk, communications, medical staff, general counsel, nursing, and mission/pastoral care. Your final document should be a document that you will share with families and patients as well as the community.

We are appreciative of your organization's efforts in furthering the principles of CRP.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- Statement of Purpose: Should state the guiding principles of the policy which should include assisting clinicians with providing transparent, honest, and direct communication to the patient and family following a harm event, preventing future harms through event analysis and quality improvement, supporting the patient and family as well as the clinicians who serve them, and identifying and training the people who will lead the CRP process at the institution.

AIMS

- The aims should include the following six commitments:
 - Commitment to caring for patients with transparency and empathy.
 - Commitment to immediate (ideally within the first hour) and ongoing communications as information is learned to patients and families when something did not go as planned in the setting of medical care. Patients and families have the right to know all outcomes of their care.
 - Commitment to ongoing support of patients and families.
 - Commitment to investigating, learning, and preventing the harm from happening again to other patients.
 - Commitment to supporting clinicians, including through peer-to-peer support.
 - Commitment to training hospital leadership in the CRP process and to ensuring that hospital staff is aware that there is an institutional commitment to transparency and the CRP principals.

The language below could be included as part of the policy or separated out into attached procedures/process, per institutional preference and practicality.

SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

- This is applicable in all settings of care, including acute care, post-acute care, and clinical practices when care delivery did not go as expected. Consideration for revisions may need to be considered for clinical practices where a “hospital team” may not be available.

CORE CRP TEAM

- The institution develops and trains a core CRP team who will be responsible for the early response, ongoing management, and engagement with the patient and family.
- The core CRP team often includes the chief nursing officer, the chief medical officer, and the quality and patient safety officers.
- There should be a person identified who will participate in the initial conversation with the patient and family and who will be available over time. The person identified will depend on the organization and circumstances (may be drawn from patient relations or patient safety).
- The core CRP team will consult with others, including the attending of record and appropriate experts.

INITIAL COMMUNICATION AND ONGOING CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PATIENT AND FAMILY

- It is important to intentionally prepare prior to the initial meeting as well as all following conversations with the patient and family in order to ensure that all communications are completed in a compassionate and transparent manner based on the facts that are known at the time.
- The initial communication should be done by the CRP team in partnership with the attending physician and other involved parties.
- All meetings with the patient and family should occur in a private and secure location.
- An interpreter should be used when appropriate in all communication with the patient and family.
- Communication should include an empathetic and compassionate statement of regret or apology.
- There should be a commitment for ongoing communication of factual information as available in accordance with the patient and family wishes.
- It is the responsibility of the individual who leads each conversation with the patient and family to timely document the meeting in the electronic medical record, including participants, time and date, and contents of the meeting.
- At each meeting, there should be a commitment to share next steps with the patient and family.

EVENT INVESTIGATION

- The institution’s risk management and claims department should be educated on CRP principals and should be involved throughout the CRP process.
- It is important to interview the patient and/or family members as part of the event review.
- Based on what is learned in the event review, the institution must provide to the patient and family a summary of the facts of what occurred, action plans, and future commitments.

ONGOING SUPPORT

- There is a commitment to supporting providers involved with the event, in a private, confidential, and respectful manner using just culture principles.
- There is a commitment to ongoing support of patients and families.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Institutions should hold medical bills following an event and consider a more detailed policy on when to waive costs.
- If and when appropriate, connect with an institution's claims division for financial resolution and encourage legal representation on behalf of the patient and family. The point of contact with the patient and family present earlier in the CRP process should remain the same at this stage of the CRP process.

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

For more information, see resources below.

- [Collaborative for Accountability and Improvement \(www.communicationandresolution.org\)](http://www.communicationandresolution.org).
- [MACRMI - Massachusetts Alliance for Communication and Resolution following Medical Injury. \(www.macrmi.info\)](http://www.macrmi.info)
- [PACT Collaborative: Pathway to Accountability, Compassion and Transparency. \(www.ariadnelabs.org/pact\)](http://www.ariadnelabs.org/pact)