

Say You're Sorry

Your guide to rebuilding trust in a healthcare crisis.

Healthcare organizations are hometown heroes, helping communities endure everything from natural disasters to global pandemics. But what happens when a healthcare organization faces its own crisis?

Those crises usually revolve around one of three issues: clinical mistakes, malfeasance or fraud.

Today, outside regulators have access to healthcare organizations' processes and procedures, making crises hard to hide. The only ways to heal are through transparency and truth.

The first thing that must happen for healthcare organizations to rebuild trust: say they're sorry. The second thing—show they're sorry.

Mower has worked with healthcare organizations for decades, handling crises ranging from physician error to financial scandals. As the negative news unfolds, here's how you can show you're sorry to reduce the severity and duration of your crisis.

1. COLLECT THE FACTS.

Ask yourself: *What happened that made this all go wrong?* Understand the timeline and know who or what was involved. Sharing the facts prevents the spread of rumors.



2. BE PROACTIVE.

If bad news is going to come out, it should come from you. You get only one chance to make an impression, and admitting mistakes can earn forgiveness.

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3. TELL YOUR FRIENDS FIRST.

To regain trust, it's critical that all stakeholders hear from you directly. Communicate internally with patients, their families, your staff, regulators, etc. They can help share/defend your communications to the community.



4. TELL THE FULL STORY.

The longer the bad news lingers, the worse the damage, so don't let the crisis leak in dribs and drabs.

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5. ANSWER BEFORE YOU'RE ASKED.

You know the answers people will demand, so be honest. It's the best way to defuse anger, suspicion and hostility.



Whether you need help crafting the perfect words to say you're sorry, support showing it or simply a good friend by your side, we're here to help. To start a conversation contact [Pete Smolowitz at psmolowitz@mower.com](mailto:Pete.Smolowitz@pmolowitz@mower.com).