OPEN DISCLOSURE
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Open Disclosure Policy requires that local health districts and specialty networks have in place local processes to support the implementation of the policy and associated responsibilities. The roles described do not necessarily imply the need for additional staff resources, as some functions can be combined and responsibilities may overlap.

THE CEC, HEALTH SERVICES BOARDS, CLINICAL COUNCILS AND CHIEF EXECUTIVES

The Clinical Excellence Commission is responsible for:

- Collaborating with key stakeholders, including the Health Education and Training Institute, to develop an open disclosure education framework for all clinical staff, and other staff as deemed necessary for their role
- Collaborating with Health Services to provide advice and support for clinicians and health managers on open disclosure issues and scenarios
- Providing evaluation tools for open disclosure
- Providing information to support open disclosure for clinicians
- Providing information about open disclosure for patients and their support person(s)
- Providing information about open disclosure for Health Services Boards, Clinical Councils and peak quality committees.

Health Services Boards, Clinical Councils and staff are responsible for:

- Actively committing to open disclosure for all patient safety incidents, to create and support an environment where the focus is on patient-based care
- Enabling timely open disclosure through actively promoting a just and fair culture that ensures all staff in the Health Service are supported and encouraged to identify and report when a patient safety incident has occurred
- Building a positive culture by learning from all patient safety incidents.

Chief Executives are responsible for:

- Leading and overseeing the implementation of the NSW Health Open Disclosure Policy and the accompanying Clinical Excellence Commission Guide to Open Disclosure
- Ensuring that systems and processes are in place for all staff in the Health Service to identify and report when a patient safety incident has occurred, so that open disclosure can be initiated
- Ensuring that all clinical staff (and other staff as deemed necessary for their role) access and complete role-relevant open disclosure education and training
- Allocating responsibilities and resources to maintain effective open disclosure processes
- Ensuring the availability of effective clinician support services
- Ensuring the availability of trained Open Disclosure Advisors to support formal open disclosure.

LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICTS/SPECIALTY NETWORKS

All clinicians are responsible for:

- Completing education about open disclosure
- Ensuring that the patient is safeguarded from further harm
- Apologising to a patient and/or their support person following a patient safety incident, without attribution of blame or speculation about the course of events
- Participating in open disclosure as required
- Ensuring that a patient safety incident or complaint and associated open disclosure is recorded in the patient’s health care record and the incident management system.
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Senior Clinicians are responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate treatment for the patient has been initiated following a patient safety incident
- Ensuring ongoing care is provided to the patient for as long as is required
- Leading and performing clinician disclosure
- Participating in formal open disclosure as required
- Ensuring that a record of the patient safety incident or complaint and the open disclosure is made in the patient’s health care record and the incident management system
- Notifying the requirement for formal open disclosure to their Department Head and the Facility/Operations/Service Manager, in addition to the Chief Executive and Director of Clinical Governance
- Participating in local clinical review and morbidity and mortality meetings where open disclosure is reviewed.

Directors of Clinical Governance are responsible for:

- Implementing open disclosure within the Health Service, including development of local systems, processes and procedures for open disclosure
- Providing leadership, support and advice on open disclosure
- Appointing, in conjunction with the Chief Executive, a panel of appropriately trained Open Disclosure Advisors to guide the process
- Gaining assurance that an Open Disclosure Coordinator is appointed and an open disclosure team is established when formal open disclosure is required
- Overseeing the availability and completion of education and training in open disclosure for all clinical staff (and other staff as deemed necessary for their role) including Open Disclosure Coordinators and advisors
- Overseeing and facilitating access to and uptake of staff support services
- Monitoring and evaluating open disclosure processes and systems.

Managers with operational responsibilities at facility/service level are responsible for:

- Actively promoting and supporting open disclosure
- Appointing the Open Disclosure Coordinator/s within a health facility or service, in conjunction with the Director of Clinical Governance
- Ensuring that an open disclosure team is established when formal open disclosure is required
- Monitoring and evaluating open disclosure processes and systems.

Department Heads are responsible for:

- Ensuring ongoing care is provided to the patient for as long as is required, including where practicable when the patient and/or their support person(s) request a different care provider
- Participating in open disclosure should the senior clinician be unable to do so
- Ensuring their staff access and complete education and training in open disclosure
- Providing support to their staff who participate in open disclosure, both throughout the process and through promoting access to the staff support services
- Ensuring that the requirement for formal open disclosure is notified to the Director of Clinical Governance and the Chief Executive
- Incorporating the review of open disclosure practices into local clinical review and morbidity and mortality meetings.
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Open Disclosure Coordinators are responsible for:

- Coordinating and supporting clinician and formal open disclosure in a health facility. This person may also have other roles and responsibilities for example, as a patient safety or patient liaison officer
- Responding quickly upon notification of a patient safety incident, to gain an understanding of the event and the needs of the patient and/or their support person(s) and staff involved
- Establishing and coordinating the open disclosure team, including the appointment of an open disclosure advisor, as directed by the Facility/Operations/Service Manager or Director of Clinical Governance
- Coordinating the provision of ‘just-in-time’ training as required to assist clinicians to prepare for involvement in open disclosure
- Coordinating the open disclosure process, including
- Ensuring the flow of information between the Health Service and the patient and their support person(s) during and after the investigation process
- Following-up with the patient and their support person(s) as required.

Open Disclosure Advisors are responsible for:

- Undertaking advanced training in empathic communications skills and open disclosure processes
- Supporting the formal open disclosure team throughout formal open disclosure, including planning for and attending meetings between the clinician involved (or delegated substitute) and their support person(s) and completing defined debriefing processes
- Mentoring colleagues preparing for and participating in open disclosure
- Acting as a source of expert advice throughout the open disclosure process.