

More than 200,000 people are treated in Australian hospitals each day. Occasionally something doesn't go to plan and a patient can be harmed unintentionally.

Australian health service organisations are working to improve the way they handle things that don't go to plan. Part of improving the way they manage these situations is by being open with you about what happened.

The process of communicating with you when things haven't gone as expected is called Open Disclosure.



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Open Disclosure

Important Information for
Patients

What is Open Disclosure?

Open Disclosure is open discussion about incidents that caused harm to a patient.

If you have been harmed during your treatment, your doctor, nurse or other healthcare worker should talk with you about it. Health services encourage their staff, as well as patients and their family or carers, to identify and report when things go wrong or when patients are harmed so that care can be improved.

When would Open Disclosure occur?

Most things that don't go to plan in health care are minor or are found before they affect you. For things which don't result in harm, your doctor or nurse will talk with you about what went wrong in the same way they talk with you about other aspects of your treatment. They should talk with you as soon as they are aware of the incident.

If you are seriously harmed, you will be informed as soon as possible, and an Open Disclosure meeting will be held.

If you think a serious incident has occurred which has not been acknowledged, tell your doctor, nurse, or other health service staff.

What can I expect if an adverse event happens to me?

During the Open Disclosure process, the health service staff will:

- Tell you what they know about the incident.
- Explain what went wrong and, where possible, why things went wrong.
- Apologise or express regret.
- Provide you with support appropriate to your needs.
- Develop a plan with you, which will list what you wish to achieve from future meetings and any questions you have that you would like followed up.

Is there any other information available?

There is a booklet for patients beginning an Open Disclosure process called '*Open Disclosure of things that don't go to plan in health care.*'

You can get copies of it from the health service or from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care's web site:

www.safetyandquality.gov.au

