

APPENDIX 1. WORK SHEET

Medical Errors: Work Sheet for Self-Guided Reflection

Think about *your* most disturbing medical error. Briefly, what was the nature of the mistake?

"Name the hurt." Specifically identify the damage you inflicted on the patient and yourself. Define the actual loss whether physical, emotional, social (relationship), professional (image), or financial.

What was the impact on others?

"Feel the feelings." List the emotions you felt when you became aware of the mistake. Accept and incorporate your pain consciously.

Accept the responsibility. (In order to forgive ourselves, we must first "blame" ourselves.)

Why did this happen? Put yourself back into the time of the incident. What was your mental/physical state? What resources were available to you? What other factors contributed?

In retrospect, how might this have been prevented? Think about what you might do differently if you had the opportunity to relive the situation. Now describe what you have learned.

Forgive yourself—while remembering the experience with reverence. Gratefully acknowledge the gift given by the person whom you hurt. Vow to honour that gift. Commit to applying this learning in the future.

Source: Marian R. Stuart, Department of Family Medicine, UMDNJ—Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, New Brunswick, NJ.
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