



National Association for Home Care & Hospice

Crisis Communication Tip Sheet

1. Calmly field the question, and give the caller an answer.

Never say “No comment.” Your answer might be: “We appreciate your question, and we will look into the situation. We’ll get back with you as soon as we have some information.” Suggest when you might have an answer.

2. Investigate.

Thoroughly examine the incident in isolation and in context. Include all key personnel in the investigation. Seek legal and/or other professional counsel as needed. Know the issue and its possible repercussions. Own your answer.

3. Develop your response.

Honestly answer the question, and include your plan for rectifying the situation. Be sure to clear statement(s) with legal counsel, if the issue is difficult and involves personnel and/or patient privacy issues. You may wish to answer in writing by fax to assure accurate reporting of your statement.

4. Put the issue into context.

Example: Emphasize agency positives. Give total number of problem-free visits annually, total number of employees, complete range of services you offer, geographic area you cover, and so on. Include only relevant data, but give the questioner your agency’s and home care’s “big picture.”

5. Be true to your word.

If the situation requires remediation, do it. Don’t wait for the media to track you down to check whether you did what said you would. Avoid a secondary crisis by following through.

6. Be prepared for the second shoe.

Develop an answer for the follow-up call, visit or question. Match your script from the original release or press conference, and highlight your solution. Reiterate context and the “big picture.” Take every opportunity to put home care and your agency in a positive light.