



Healthcare Risk Professionals Impact, Influence, Innovate

Risk Management: Breaking the Stigma and Building Trust

Linda Habibi, JD, MBA, CPHRM

Ailish Wilkie, MS, CPHRM, CPPS

Disclaimers

- *The opinions, materials, and statements presented are those of the presenters. They are not endorsed by or necessarily represent the views of CSHRM, MSHRM, NNESHRM, ASHRM or its members.*
- *These materials were created for the 2024 New England Regional Healthcare Risk Management Conference. Republication or reuse of the materials without the permission of the primary speaker is prohibited.*



Presenters

S. Linda Habibi, JD, MBA, CPHRM



- Former medical malpractice defense attorney
- Current Director of Patient Safety and Risk Management at a large academic medical center
- 10 years legal/risk management experience

Ailish Wilkie, MS, CPHRM, CPPS



- Over 20 years of risk management experience
- Career focus on optimizing safety event reporting
- Currently building a Risk and Safety program for primary care practices in a large hospital system

Please refer to the Presenters' bios available on the table and online for more information

Objectives

1. Define “stigma”
2. Identify the stigma in the profession of healthcare risk management
3. Provide tools to break the stigma and build trust within your organizations



Feel Familiar?



<https://rtbosshardt.com/2020/10/04/social-media-the-elephant-in-the-room/>

WHAT is a Stigma?



Stigma Definition

- “A set of negative and unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have about something”¹
- “A mark of shame or discredit”²

Poll

- Take your phones out!
- Go to menti.com
- Use the code provided
- How do you think *non*-Risk Professionals answered the following question:

“What do you think of when you think of
‘Risk Management’?”



Additional Poll Results

- “Safety police”
- “The people in suits”
- “Oh God”
- “What did I do?”
- “Run away”
- “Don’t make eye contact”
- “No one does anything about those event reports anyway so I’ve stopped submitting them”
- “They’re just here to protect the hospital”
- “Focus on blame”
- “Lawsuits, mistakes, punitive, shame”



WHY does this Stigma exist?



Why So Negative?

- Nature of the profession
- Perceived emphasis on blame
- Fear of punitive action or litigation
- Misunderstanding of purpose
- Cultural and organizational factors
- Stigmatization of reporting errors
- Limited awareness and education
- Administrative burden
- Instruction from Risk Management to “not discuss”

Hence the negative stigma!



Risk Management in TV and Film

Can you think of examples where healthcare risk professionals were depicted on screen?



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

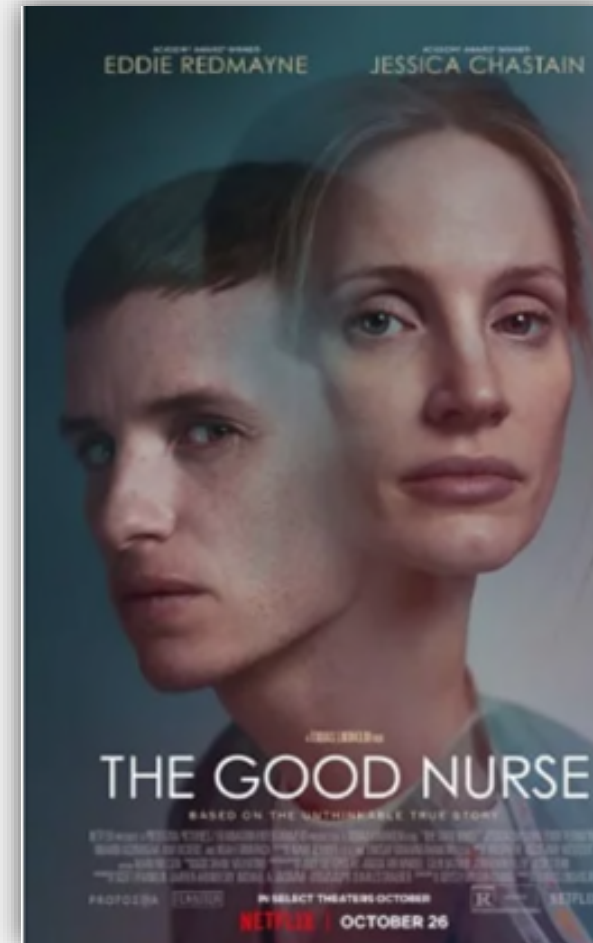
"The Good Nurse"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0DQevX-GZs>



Risk Management in TV and Film

- Charles Cullen, “The Good Nurse”
 - True story of a nurse who admitted to intentionally killing as many as 40 patients in New Jersey and Pennsylvania from 1988 to 2003
 - Convicted in 2006 for 29 murders, although hundreds of murders suspected
 - Received 11 consecutive life prison sentences



<https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/movies/2022/10/27/good-nurse-netflix-charles-cullen-fact-check/10498843002/>

Clinical/Patient Safety



Risk Management in TV and Film



<https://thetab.com/uk/2022/10/31/heres-what-the-cast-of-the-good-nurse-look-like-compared-to-the-real-life-people-279428>

- “Linda Garran”
 - Fictitious character based on the real-life risk professional involved in investigating patient deaths
 - Portrayed as:
 - Unwilling to aid police investigations
 - Concealing information
 - Liar
 - Cold
 - Defensive
 - Mean

This perpetuates the stigma!

Clinical/Patient Safety



HOW to break the Stigma?



Breaking Through the Stigma

- Education and awareness campaigns
- Training and professional development
- Promote a “Just Culture”
- System-focus over individual-focus
- Engage leadership
- Integration with clinical practice
- Collaboration & communication
- Attribute improvements to those who identified the issue
- Participate in quality improvement

Risk Management

- Risk Managers identify and evaluate risks as a means to improve patient care and reduce the chances of an injury to a patient, staff member, or visitor within the organization.
- Risk Managers work proactively and reactively - to either prevent adverse events or to minimize the damages following an event.

Contact Us When...

- An unexpected adverse event occurs
- There is an event requiring regulatory reporting
- You are contacted by DPH, BORM, or another regulatory agency
- You have questions about a guardianship or health care proxy document
- You are contacted by an attorney
- You receive a subpoena, summons, or other legal document
- You need assistance with a challenging patient situation, such as:
 - Inappropriate behaviors
 - Attendance issues
 - Non-compliance



S. Linda Habibi, Esq., CPHRM
Beth Jackson, MS
Christopher Quinn, Esq., CPHRM

37 Bennett Street, 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02111
617-636-6363 (Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Group Email:
TuftsMCRiskManagers@tuftsmedicine.org

For more urgent issues, a risk manager is available on call 24/7 to support our staff via Tiger Text role “T Risk Manager On Call”.

Clinical/Patient Safety



Breaking Through the Stigma



- Highlight success stories and good catches
- Celebrate achievements
- Be transparent and accountable
- Use a data-driven approach
- Use a patient-centered approach
- Start with “how are you?” & EAP
- Get out of your comfort zone
- Commit to rounding
- Be available

Clinical/Patient Safety



Positive Problem Solving

Appreciative Inquiry - focuses on strengths and opportunities

- “We are better able to meet our challenges creatively by defining and using our strengths, instead of spending so much time defining our deficits.”
- Components:
 - Focus on strengths rather than weaknesses
 - Celebrates successes
 - Spread what has proven to work well
 - Ask powerful, positive questions
 - Use positive images of the future to motivate positive action

Clinical/Patient Safety



Difficult Conversations

- Communication: all about what the other person hears, not what you say. The listener constructs the meaning of your words.
- Physiological responses may trigger either:
 - Cortisol: hormone released when we feel criticized, marginalized, attacked.
 - Oxytocin: the chemical that is released when we feel empowered and complemented.
- Giving feedback:
 - Set expectations
 - Evaluate performance against expectations
 - Decide on next steps together

Clinical/Patient Safety



Healthcare Risk Professionals Impact, Influence, Innovate

Emotional Intelligence

“EQ” - helps us understand the importance of learning to identify and work with our own emotions and the emotions of others.

- Components:
 - Self-awareness
 - Self-regulation
 - Motivation
 - Empathy
 - Social skills
- Recommended video: Daniel Goleman, Strategies for Becoming More Emotionally Intelligent (10 min)



The Way Forward

As the healthcare landscape changes, so must our approach to Risk Management!

- Risk Management vs. Risk Prevention
- Transition from reactive to proactive
- Discuss when things go well, not just when they go wrong
- Be mindful of your approach, both verbal and non-verbal
- Provide pre-emptive support
- Circle back to check in with those involved in significant events, lawsuits, etc.
- Be available and present



Clinical/Patient Safety



Success Stories

- “Thankfully what comes to mind today, has changed or evolved from past interactions with Risk Management.” (*CNO*)
- “Team that has our backs when things don’t go as planned.” (*Front Line Nurse*)
- “What comes to mind is "Trish Goodwin". She has created a strong culture of trust and support. Our experience over the years has been, if something didn't feel right we reach out and she gets back to us the same day with a solution.” (*Practice Manager*)
- “Thank you Ailish!!!! I'll keep practicing as long as you're here to have my back!” (*Primary Care MD*)



What experiences can you share?



Questions/Discussion

A great question
doesn't simply inform...
it enlightens.

