

Guilty, afraid, and alone — struggling with medical error.

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Delbanco T, Bell SK. Guilty, afraid, and alone--struggling with medical error. N Engl J Med. 2007;357(17):1682-3.

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/guilty-afraid-and-alone-struggling-medical-error>

[Disclosure of medical errors](#) remains an important and challenging practice, with a past [report](#) providing thoughtful guidance on how to respond. This commentary addresses the humanistic aspect of what patients, families, and clinicians go through in trying to bring closure or forgiveness to the experience. Drawing from interviews highlighted in a [documentary film](#), the authors share a number of specific themes not frequently addressed. These include feelings of concern by patients about the potential for further harm to occur, feelings of isolation by patients from their clinicians when they need them the most, and feelings of guilt by family members that often exceed those of providers. An AHRQ WebM&M [commentary](#), [perspective](#), and [interview](#) also discuss multiple facets of error disclosure.