

# HOW TO RESPOND TO NEGATIVE ONLINE REVIEWS

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The definitive guide on how to handle  
negative feedback.



# BAD REVIEWS AREN'T THE END OF THE WORLD.

In fact, they can be a good opportunity to show prospective patients how you operate. It's all about how you respond. Here are 6 tips to keep in mind as you create a plan for reviewing negative feedback.

1 | Software Advice, *How Patients Use Online Reviews*

1

## Don't ignore negative reviews.

No business has perfect reviews all the time. Patients expect a business to have at least a couple of less-than-stellar reviews. Whatever you do, don't ignore the negative reviews. Showing prospective patients that you care about patient concerns goes a long way as they decide who to trust with their care.

2

## Remember to keep sensitive patient information confidential.

If there's one rule to follow, it's this one. Don't disclose sensitive patient information in your response to a negative review. The massive fines you could incur just aren't worth it. This is also a great reason to make sure you're trusting the right person to manage your reviews. Are they fully trained in HIPAA compliance?

3

## Don't address the reviewer directly.

It might seem counterintuitive, but not directly addressing the reviewer helps keep your communication from becoming combative. Of course, you should apologize and acknowledge their frustrations, but directly attacking a reviewer rarely has a positive outcome. Addressing negative reviews is as much about responding to the review as it is about demonstrating your professionalism and care to the other people reading the review. Keep the focus on the problem the reviewer brought up, and explain your policies.

4

### Keep emotion out of the conversation.

Getting defensive when addressing a negative review isn't going to help your case. Even if you feel the review is unfair, avoid bringing emotion into your response. It's not about telling your side of the story. It's about showing potential patients how you operate, and how they can expect to be treated if they visit your practice.

5

### Learn what you can from legitimate complaints.

When you get a negative review, run through a few questions before formulating your response.

- Is this something we hear a lot from patients?
- Could we have prevented this?
- Was the patient warned of this potential outcome ahead of time?

6

### Say thank you, offer solutions, and continue the conversation offline if needed.

It may seem counterintuitive, but remember that for every patient who complains, **26 others stay silent**<sup>2</sup>. A simple thank you to a disgruntled patient for their feedback goes a long way. Offer solutions for their concerns, politely correct any inaccurate information and offer to continue the conversation offline if necessary.

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<sup>2</sup> | Groove HQ, *80 Customer Service Statistics: 8 Lessons to Fuel Growth in 2020 and Beyond*

One of the best ways to stay ahead of negative reviews is to ask for feedback after a patient leaves your office.

Our **Review Power** tool lets you automatically ask for feedback, offers response templates, and helps make your responses helpful, HIPAA-compliant, and good for your business.

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