

## Just Culture Coaching Guide

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### Introduction

In osteopathic practices, fostering a **Just Culture** means creating a supportive environment where errors are treated as learning opportunities. This coaching guide helps leaders in DO practices coach their teams through mistakes while maintaining accountability, focusing on system improvements that enhance holistic, patient-centered care.

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### Key Coaching Principles in a Just Culture

#### 1. Focus on Learning, Not Blame

- The primary goal of coaching is to understand **why** an error occurred and how systems can be improved to prevent similar mistakes in the future.
- **Example:** If a DO documents the wrong diagnosis in a patient's chart, the coaching conversation focuses on how the system might be improved, such as creating better documentation workflows.

#### 2. Balance Accountability and Support

- While accountability is important, most errors are the result of system issues, not individual negligence. Coaching should emphasize system improvements and personal growth.
- **Example:** A DO who skips a step in a manual osteopathic procedure is coached on better workflow management rather than being reprimanded.

#### 3. Encourage Open Communication

- Practitioners should feel comfortable reporting errors or near misses without fear of punishment.
- **Example:** A DO reports a near-miss involving a patient misidentification. The leader thanks them for reporting the issue and reassures them that the focus will be on improving the identification process.

#### 4. Promote Continuous Improvement

- Coaching should always encourage practitioners to contribute ideas for ongoing improvement, both in individual practice and in overall system processes.
  - **Example:** A DO suggests a new protocol for patient handoffs after experiencing confusion during a shift change, and the suggestion is welcomed by leadership.
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## Steps for Just Culture Coaching in DO Practices

### 1. Start with Gathering Information

- **Step 1: Understand the Event**
    - Gather all the factual information about what happened. Focus on understanding **why** the error occurred and what system-related factors contributed.
    - **Example:** Investigate whether a mix-up in treatment was caused by unclear patient records or staff rushing through appointments.
  - **Step 2: Create a Safe Space**
    - Reassure the practitioner that the focus is on learning and system improvements, not blame.
    - **Example:** “Our goal is to understand what led to this issue and how we can improve the process to prevent future mistakes.”
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### 2. Identify the Type of Behavior

- **Step 1: Use the Behavior Differentiation Tool**
    - Determine whether the issue was due to **human error** (unintentional), **at-risk behavior** (risk unrecognized), or **reckless behavior** (intentional disregard for safety).
    - **Example:** If a DO didn't complete a follow-up appointment, was it because of unclear communication or an intentional decision to skip it?
  - **Step 2: Coach Based on Behavior Type**
    - Tailor your coaching approach based on the behavior:
      - **Honest Mistakes:** Console and support system improvements.
      - **At-Risk Behavior:** Educate about the risks and guide safer practices.
      - **Reckless Behavior:** Address firmly with appropriate disciplinary action.
    - **Example:** If a DO failed to update a patient's chart because they didn't see it as necessary, coaching focuses on educating about the risks of incomplete documentation.
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### 3. Encourage Reflection and Learning

- **Step 1: Ask Reflective Questions**

- Help the practitioner reflect on what happened and how it could be prevented.
- **Example:** “What could we have done differently to avoid this error? What might help in the future?”

- **Step 2: Promote System Improvements**

- Encourage suggestions on how systems can be improved to prevent similar errors.
  - **Example:** If the error was due to an unclear EHR workflow, ask the DO how the system can be adjusted to make it more user-friendly.
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### 4. Reinforce Positive Change

- **Step 1: Acknowledge Efforts to Improve**

- Recognize when a practitioner makes efforts to correct or improve their processes following coaching.
- **Example:** “I’ve noticed you’re taking extra care to double-check patient records lately, which has really helped with accuracy.”

- **Step 2: Provide Ongoing Support**

- Continue to support the DO’s progress by offering follow-up coaching sessions or check-ins.
  - **Example:** Schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss the effectiveness of new patient safety protocols after they’ve been implemented for a few weeks.
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### Common Scenarios in a Just Culture for DO Practices

1. **Honest Mistake Example:**

A DO unintentionally prescribes the wrong treatment due to a similar-sounding medication.

- **Coaching Action:** Reassure the practitioner and focus on improving the medication alert system in the EHR.

2. **At-Risk Behavior Example:**

A DO skips reviewing patient history in order to save time.

- **Coaching Action:** Discuss the risks of missing critical patient information and guide the DO on how to balance thoroughness with time management.

3. **Reckless Behavior Example:**

A DO disregards a known safety protocol for manual therapy, despite multiple reminders.

- **Coaching Action:** Firmly address the behavior, highlighting the importance of patient safety, and, if necessary, take disciplinary action.