



Negative Review Tip Sheet for Healthcare Practitioners

This is an extra resource to go along with the original article:
[When should you respond to bad online reviews of your practice?](#)

If responding to negative online reviews feels like a minefield for you, don't worry. Follow these simple guidelines and you'll be able to respond to almost any review in a professional yet personal manner.

1. Check review sites for multiple postings

Sometimes a reviewer won't just post to one site, so you want to respond to the review in all the places it's posted. It's also good practice to check review sites for potentially damaging reviews so you can mitigate any negative perceptions before they harm your reputation.

Check practitioner review sites like:

- [Angieslist.com](https://www.angieslist.com)
- [HealthGrades.com](https://www.healthgrades.com)
- [Local.yahoo.com](https://local.yahoo.com)
- [RateMDs.com](https://www.ratemds.com)
- [Revolutionhealth.org](https://www.revolutionhealth.org)
- [Vitals.com](https://www.vitals.com)
- [Yellowpages.com](https://www.yellowpages.com)
- [Yelp.com](https://www.yelp.com)

2. Read the review carefully

Don't assume you understand what the reviewer is saying. Make sure to read (and re-read) the review and ask any office staff (if necessary) to explain the situation in more detail. If you or staff members are unaware of the complaint described, respond to the review anyway and ask for clarity.

3. Keep your cool and be self reflective

Assess the situation objectively and ask yourself if there are any valid reasons why this complaint would have been made. Be as self reflective about the practice's organization and the staff's personalities as possible. Is staff short on time? That might contribute to complains about short tempers, rushed appointments or long waiting times. If possible, address those concerns with staff. If you're overwhelmed by emotion, wait until you cool down to respond.

4. Find more information about the complaint/situation in question

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If you're not sure what happened to give the reviewer a bad experience, and the reviewer either doesn't respond or can't give more specific details, ask questions of your staff to verify whether or not they remember the encounter or contributed to the situation. Make it clear to the reviewer that you are looking into the situation and make sure you follow through on that promise.

5. Provide an honest opinion to the reviewer

Responding to a negative review doesn't mean having to placate a reviewer in every situation. You are allowed to correct any misconceptions and present your side of the situation (as long as it doesn't violate HIPAA). Be open and honest about you and your staff's experience and what you're doing to resolve the issue. Include any anecdotes or examples if necessary.

6. If the complaint is resolved, ask the patient to leave another review

Don't ask the reviewer to remove their review (unless it violates HIPAA and/or contains offensive language or is otherwise legally slanderous). If the situation is resolved, ask them to post another review or revise their review with an update. This gives you the chance to prove to others that you do value their opinions and that you are working to resolve any issues that might affect them, too.

7. Ask satisfied patients to leave positive reviews

You don't want to pressure patients into leaving positive reviews, but if you know of patients who are happy with their time spent in your office, encourage them to post online. Oftentimes a slew of positive reviews may outweigh one or two negative ones, especially if you've already responded to the negative reviews publicly.