

Responding to Positive Stories

As a bespoke, relational feedback platform this document has been produced to support responding to stories on Care Opinion Australia.

Sharing feedback about an experience of care, whether positive or highlighting an opportunity for improvement, is an act of kindness in itself. At Care Opinion, we call this feedback a story. It is a brief but holistic account of an experience of care as it incorporates not just what happened, but how that felt for the person.

For some, it is an opportunity to express gratitude, and have that gratitude heard by front-line staff and management. Taking the time and putting consideration into how you respond, is a reciprocation of this kindness.

It is easy to classify positive stories as a 'nice to have' rather than an opportunity to connect with the storyteller and publicly reinforce the high-quality care staff provide to those under their care. Here are some tips on how to construct your response to get the most out the opportunity a story shared on Care Opinion Australia presents.

These tips have been drawn from academic research into factors considered helpful to writing quality responses to patient feedback by Rebecca Baines et al. in the article "[Responding effectively to adult mental health patient feedback in an online environment: A coproduced framework.](#)"

Tips to Responding

1. Address and thank the author

As an anonymous platform, story authors are identified only by their username. It is best to address your response to the story author using that username as if it were their first name. Adding a sentence recognising the time they took to put their experience into writing is also important to include.

Example response

- [Positive birth programs | Care Opinion](#)

2. Introduce yourself

When in the workplace, it is considered courteous to introduce ourselves by name and job title or a snapshot of what we do when we meet someone in person or via video conferencing.

This is equally applicable when responding to a person regarding the story they shared on the platform. The storytelling and responding process is considered an online 'conversation' so it is nice for the storyteller to know who it is that is responding to their story.

Example response

- [The amazing care from SCN nurse | Care Opinion](#)

2. Personalise the response

Speaking into the specifics of the story shows the storyteller that you have heard them and what their experience was, not just the sentiments shared. It is often very effective to address the reasons they required the care in the first place and identifying with how what they went through outside of the care experience as this shows your 'human side' and creates the connection with the storyteller.

Example responses

- [Exceptional service at every step in the process | Care Opinion](#)
- [Palliative care for my wife | Care Opinion](#)

3. Use emotive words

Language is important and as a relational platform, we encourage you to use emotive words in your responses. We find this is what brings humanity to responses as it conveys sincerity and authenticity while maintaining a conversational tone.

Example response

- [Breast lump removal and mammoplasty](#)
- [Care at Cowes Health Hub | Care Opinion](#)

4. Empathise with the storyteller

Even the most positive experiences of care tend to come about when a person was in a position of needing help or support of some form which often isn't easy or pleasant. Putting yourself in the shoes of the storyteller goes a long way showing that they have not only been heard, but understood. Going that step further and personally identifying with the storyteller and what they have experienced or felt creates a connection that even those outside of the experience can feel and appreciate.

Example responses

- [Palliative care for my wife | Care Opinion](#)
- [Emergency care received | Care Opinion](#)
- [The amazing care from SCN nurse | Care Opinion](#)

5. Explain what you will do with the feedback

When the storyteller has recognised, commended or thanked staff members by name validate with the storyteller's statements by agreeing with their reflections of the staff member(s). This also serves to stand in support of staff members.

When a storyteller commends a staff member or team, they are doing so for two reasons:

1. They want the staff member to know they made a personal difference
2. They want the staff member's manager/management team to recognise the staff member for their hard work/dedication.

It is important, therefore, explain what you will do with the story (feedback) received, such as passing the feedback on to the staff member directly or via their manager and/or letting them know the staff member will be recognised in some form, such as receiving a certificate of recognition (templates of which Care Opinion can provide).

We urge you to commit to the action detailed in your response. It is also beneficial to post a follow-up response after you have taken these actions to confirm that it has occurred.

Example responses

- [Fantastic service | Care Opinion](#)
- [Came in on New Year's Day to absolutely amazing staff | Care Opinion](#)
- [How 1 person in a hospital can help | Care Opinion](#)
- [My story is about my mental health struggles | Care Opinion](#)

6. Sign your response

Regardless of whether you have a subscription and account with Care Opinion, it is best to sign your response with at least your name underneath your response content. This personalises your response and helps to demonstrate to the story author that an individual person has heard them.

If your organisation does not have a subscription with Care Opinion Australia, you will not have a profile bar containing your job title and organisation name above your response. Therefore, you may also wish to include these details in your signature at the end of the response.

Example response

- [Hope, kindness and support. | Care Opinion](#)