

Pro-Active Staff Safety Interview

The CMP Advisory Group has recommended routine pro-active safety interviews of staff with specific questions about controlled substances. These interviews work best when they are completed at specific intervals (e.g. a specific number of nurses (or clinicians) are interviewed each quarter.)

The goal of the safety interview is to analyze current controlled substance process in each facility, looking for opportunities to make the process safer or more intuitive. Each leader will have a different approach to this interview, but it is intended to be an information-gathering event, not an “interrogation.”

Interview Tips:

1. Choose the leader who has the best rapport with the staff, and conduct these interviews informally.
2. Interviews should be short and completed individually.
3. Consider completing a walking interview, including medicine storage areas, med carts, documentation areas, and destruction/waste area.
4. Be prepared to make changes to make sure employees know their voices and perspectives matter.
5. These interview are **much** more effective if you do not coach the employee during the interview. If it becomes apparent that the employee needs education related to a policy or process — or is unaware of a resource that exists, wait until the end of the interview — or another time — to have the conversation.
6. Interviews may not have immediate benefit, but once staff understand you are serious about obtaining their feedback at regular intervals, they will be more likely to bring issues to your attention.

Sample Questions:

1. What about our set-up makes it difficult to safely follow controlled substance process?
2. Have you ever been in a situation in our facility where you have felt like you *can't* follow narcotic processes even if you wanted to and/or that our system has set you up for failure?
3. What of our controlled substance processes make you nervous?
4. Which specific residents are you concerned about from a controlled substance perspective?
5. What are the loopholes in our system that could be exploited if someone wanted to?
6. Do you have any other safety concerns about our narcotic management system?

Finish the interview by thanking the employee for their honesty, give them a plan for follow-up of issues they mentioned, and let them know you are available for additional conversation if they think of anything else.