

THE “FAVER” APPROACH: RESPONDING TO INAPPROPRIATE PATIENT REQUESTS

F	Name your <i>feelings</i> about the patient’s request — anger, fear, sadness, annoyance, etc.
A	<p>Analyze your thoughts about the request and what is fueling your feelings.</p> <p>Would fulfilling this request be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor medical care? • Illegal, dishonest, or against policy?
V	View the patient in the best possible light. Don’t assume the patient knows that what he or she is requesting is “wrong.”
E	<p>Explicitly state that the requested action would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor medical care, • Illegal, dishonest, or against policy.
R	Reestablish rapport. Use empathy and “I wish ... ” statements.

What to say when the request is:

Poor care	“It would be poor care for me to prescribe that medicine. You do not come to see me for poor care. You come to see me for my best medical judgment.”
	“It would be poor care for me to do X. Good care would be Y.”
	“I understand that Dr. X has given that to you in the past. Doctors do not always agree. You come to see me for my best medical opinion, and I believe it would not be good care for you to take X.”
Illegal, dishonest, or against policy	“I understand why you want to avoid jury duty. I wish I could help you, but it would be illegal for me to state things that are not true.”
	“We could both end up in jail if we do X.”
	“I am sorry you were not aware of those rules. We still have to follow them.”

What to do or say when a patient threatens to:

Harm you or your staff	Consult your practice policy. Assess the immediacy of the threat. When safe, dismiss the patient from the practice.
Report you	“Even if you report me, I will not do what I believe is bad for you.”
Leave your practice	“I will be sorry to lose you as a patient; however, I won’t deliver poor care to keep you here.”



FPM Toolbox To find more practice resources, visit <http://www.aafp.org/fpm/toolbox>.

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