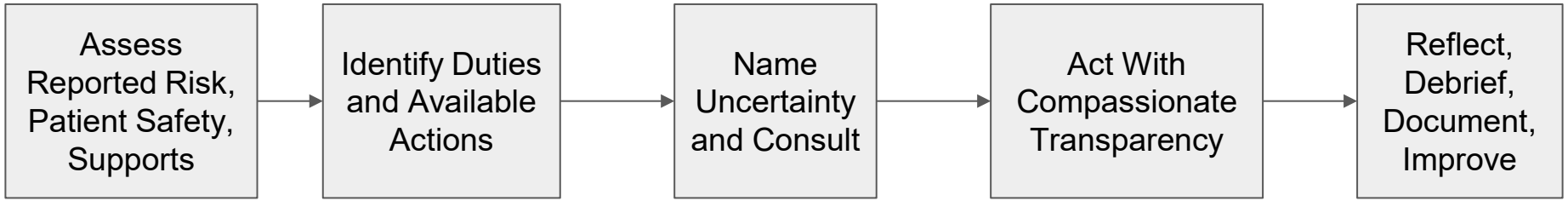
5-Steps to Compassionate Action For 3rd-Party Risk Concerns



Assess Reported Risk, Patient Safety, Supports

Who may be at risk and how soon? What indicates risk concerns of the 3rd party?

What is the patient's current risk?

What supports does the patient currently have access to?

What did the patient actually report?

What is known, inferred or missing?

How much is the patient willing to share?

Is the patient distressed by the risk information they have?

Identify Duties and Available Actions

Who is the patient, who is the third party?

Whose information is protected?

What confidentiality and reporting rules apply?

What institutional procedures apply?

What is required vs recommended?

What protective options are permitted or required?

What is most clinically indicated? What is required by law/ethics?

What addresses human suffering?

What options exist that achieve all the above?

Name Uncertainty and Consult

What don't you know? Missing facts? Missing cultural context?

Unclear legal thresholds?

What emotions, limits, vulnerabilities exist for the clinician?

Does the clinician need additional supports?

Where and can you receive consultation?

Has the consultation clarified the decisions?

Act With Compassionate Transparency

Transparently explain the safety concerns and limits of confidentiality?

Ask what the patient fears (if anything)? Aim to address the fears within the action plan

Offer choices within the safety/reporting limits

Ask for feedback on the choices and additional similar options that may not have been discussed

Create a specific plan to reconnect after the intervention

Reflect, Debrief, Document, Improve

Document the report, assessment and areas of uncertainty/unknowns

Document the consultation and rationale for the action taken

Reflect and debrief on patient impact and clinical outcomes

Reflect and debrief on clinician impact and any additional supports needed

Reflect and address system processes access to consultation, supervision and resources

O'Brien, Blumkin, Bonavitacola, Vijay, & White, ABCT 2026 Annual Convention

What Are My Next Steps? What Am I Leaving Out?

Assess Reported Risk, Patient Safety, Patient Supports		Act With Compassionate Transparency	
Identify Duties and Available Actions		Reflect, Debrief, Document, Improve	
Name Uncertainty and Consult			

What Do I Need to be able to Access in the Moment?

Assess Reported Risk, Patient Safety, Patient Supports		Act With Compassionate Transparency	
Identify Duties and Available Actions		Reflect, Debrief, Document, Improve	
Name Uncertainty and Consult			