



Fig. 1 These flowcharts depict a three-tiered approach to managing a difficult physician-patient relationship. This approach categorizes the types of problems encountered in a practice into three tiers. Tier 1 behaviors include a patient missing five appointments in 6 months or a patient using abusive language while talking with a staff member. Tier 2 behaviors include a continuation of issues identified in tier 1, or any actions that staff perceived as threatening. Tier 3 behaviors include a continuation of issues identified in tier 2, or any violent or potentially illegal actions.