

Navigating Difficult Parental Interactions

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Disclosure

I have no financial interests or relationships to disclose.



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Outline

Convince you these concepts will change your life

Talk about us and how we contribute to conflict

Specific tools from teachers and principals

De-escalation pearls

Specific case scenarios

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According to the Doctors...

75%

5

According to the Patients...

21%

6

Everyone has blind spots

FEEDBACK

7



87% of Clinicians
Think They Are
Good Listeners...

8

Time Until Interrupted A Patient...



16 SECONDS



...MAYBE LESS

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- I would like to go into
 - Emergency Medicine...
 - *But I don't want to hate my patients*
- Med student applicant
and ED scribe

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Assume Parents Are Doing the Best They Can

given their circumstances
(poor conflict resolution, poor role
modeling, stressful circumstances)

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VALIDATION

Is De-escalation

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Communication Concepts

Ladder of inference (the story you are telling yourself)

→Emotional reaction

What is **the delta between the facts and the story?**

Change your response

- Changes the other person
- Doesn't give negativity power over you

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A Patient/Parent Might Hear...

-  How you deliver information
-  What information you deliver
-  Things they don't understand
-  Is there an explanation for why they don't feel well?
-  Is there a treatment?
-  What else?

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And All This Is Heard Through...

Mental Illness Ownership Overall Impression of Healthcare Systems

Isolation Work Difficulty

Anxiety Vulnerability Secondary Gain

Lack of Resources Pain Appeasing Family

Fear Discomfort Impression of Specific Physician/Nurse/Provider

Frustration Stress

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Mr. Gilmore

Jihan Akhtar, MD: The Difficult Patient
Medical Economics Physician Writing Contest
Honorable Mention

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Wise Principal's Advice

“You don't have to prove who is in charge, everybody know who is in charge.”

You will never win an argument with argumentative person (they are good at it)

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Zorro's Circle of Influence

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Verbal De-escalation

A victory for everyone

Team approach

Requires *training* and *practice*

>90% of Emotion and >50% of What Is Spoken Is Communicated Non-verbally

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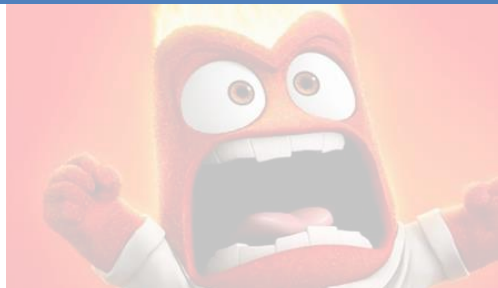
Verbal De-escalation

Empower patients to **calm**
themselves

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Verbal de-escalation

Having a **positive regard** for the patient
is *more effective* than *any*
method/tool/formula...



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Verbal De-escalation

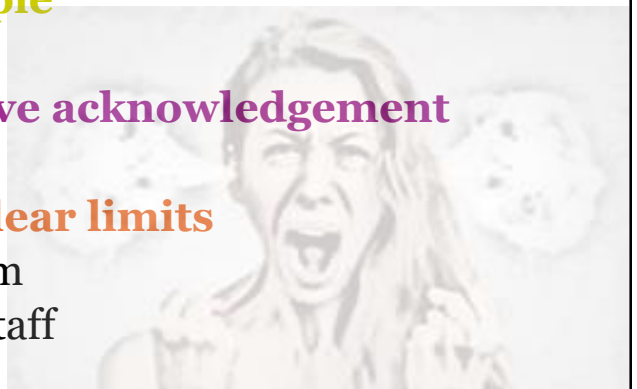
Empathy



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10 Domains of Verbal De-escalation

1. Respect **personal space**
2. Do not be **provocative**
3. Establish verbal contact
4. Be concise and keep it **simple**
5. Identify wants and feelings
6. Listen to the patient and **give acknowledgement**
7. Agree or agree to disagree
8. Lay down the law and set **clear limits**
9. Offer **choices** and optimism
10. **Debrief** the patient and staff



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2. Do Not Be **Provocative**

Avoid iatrogenic escalation

Calm voice

Align and create **common goals**

Empathy

Sensitivity to humiliation

Treat them as a person worthy of your respect

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7. Agree...or Agree to Disagree

Agree with the **truth**

Agree with the **principle**

Everyone should be treated with respect

Agree with the **odds**

There are probably other patients who would be upset

Empathy

Validation can de-escalate

Patient gains respect

Or, agree to disagree

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Tips from Teachers



- Lower your voice
- Do not be bullied (do not physically retreat)
- Look parents straight in the eye (a sign of confidence)

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Phrases to Use

I can tell that you **really care** about your child

Tell me more about your concerns

What is your **greatest fear**?

What do you think **would help** address your concerns?

I am sorry that happened

I am sorry that you feel we haven't addressed your needs



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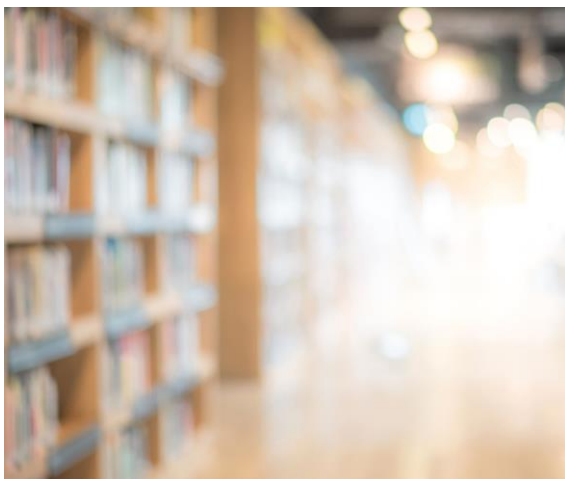
Case 1

Minor head injury—
PECARN negative but
parents really want the
scan



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Case 2



Parents are disrespectful
of you, your knowledge,
your credentials...

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Case 3

Mom is MAD that dad allowed you to perform a urinary catheter and she is coming in hot in five minutes...

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Case 4

A parent discovers an error in management

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Case 5

Patient is critically ill and father is physically in the resuscitation team's space



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Take Home Points

- We control more of these interactions than we think
- Our response is the only thing that we can control
- Empathy for parents
- It's not about us

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