

Pandemic: Communication in Stressful Situations

Stressful Situations: Video 2

Mother:

I can't believe what's going on.

Journalist:

Excuse me - can I get your opinion?

Mother:

The line hasn't even moved, and these are our families here. And the staff here? Where does she get off? All she cares about is her overtime. Is there anyone here who knows anything that's going on, because nothing is getting done. And she is just useless.

First nurse:

Who the heck does she think she is? Like I control how long the line-ups are. We're working our butts off over here! Did you hear her?! "Where does she get off" - I'm not going to make it through.

Host:

Is anyone in this situation wrong? Is anyone right? Do you feel an alliance with either the healthcare professional or the mother? As a health professional you may understand the stress related to urgent healthcare events affecting patients and their families. As a family member, you may relate to the fears and frustration expressed by the mother who is terrified for the safety of her son. Or perhaps you understand the perspective of both.

What escalated the tension in this scenario? Can you imagine a more satisfying resolution to this interaction. Tone, words, and body language play a crucial role in how we approach challenging interactions. Let's consider another approach.

Second nurse:

I know. It's nuts!

First nurse:

What do they expect us to do? This is just the beginning!

Second nurse:

We don't have enough masks for this shift.

Mother:

Enough!

Second nurse:

Oh oh. Here we go.

Mother:

My son has this thing. He needs help now. Can you see how sick he is? We've been here - look, if something happens to him, I swear you are out of a job.

First nurse:

Ma'm - ma'm, please...

Mother:

All of you do your job! What the hell is wrong with you? How can you do nothing?

First nurse:

Look, when you do that - you can't - I know it's crazy. It's a long wait.

Mother:

I wouldn't have brought him here if I'd known.

First nurse:

Is that your son? How long has he been in that state? You must be frantic.

Mother:

He is so weak now.

First nurse:

It makes it worse. I see you have a blanket. Do you have water? Well if you need anymore water we'll see what we can do. I hope it doesn't take much longer. It's hard to wait when you're worried. We're moving as quickly as possible, I promise.