
Critical Thinking Exercise – Respiratory Therapist

Situation: You are a respiratory therapist giving a treatment to a 4 year-old child in the Pediatric Unit. You have noticed on the chart that the father is restrained from visiting. As you are assessing the child's breath sounds, you feel her tense her body and her respirations become rapid and very shallow.

You look up and see a man you recognize as her father standing by her bedside. You ask him to step out of the room while you finish her treatment and put the call light on at the patient's bedside. The patient's father refuses to leave and begins to yell at you accusing you of poisoning his child. His speech is slurred, his voice is loud, his face is flushed and he is weaving while holding on to his child's bed.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is your first priority in this situation?
2. What assumptions did you make in this situation?
3. How did you validate those assumptions? What formed the basis of your decision to ask the father to leave the room? Why did you put on the call light?
4. Were there any biases that influenced your thinking?
5. What was your frame of reference in determining an action plan?
6. What is your next step? Why?
7. What will you do if no one responds to the call light right away?
8. What other members of the team can you call on to respond immediately and how would you reach them without increasing the father's agitation?
9. Do you have any fears about your own personal safety in this situation?
10. What rights does the father have in this situation?

Instructor's Guide-Critical Thinking Exercise – Respiratory Therapist

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Discussion Questions:

1. What is your first priority in this situation?
 - *The child's safety and well-being*
2. What assumptions did you make in this situation?
 - *The father of the patient is drunk*
 - *You and the child may be in danger (accusation by father of you poisoning his daughter)*
3. How did you validate those assumptions? What formed the basis of your decision to ask the father to leave the room? Why did you put on the call light?
 - *Assumptions are validated sufficiently by patients behavior*
 - *Asking the father to leave the room is based on the restraining order. The patient's tension as her father entered the room is also sufficient to ask him to leave the room.*
 - *Call light was turned on to alert other staff that you need help.*
4. Were there any biases that influenced your thinking?
 - *Open dialogue is necessary here, but the behavior alone is sufficient to form the decision.*
5. What was your frame of reference in determining an action plan?
 - *The frame of reference used in determining an action plan was that of a health care worker providing compassionate care for the patient.*
6. What is your next step? Why?
 - *The next step is to firmly repeat the direction to leave the room*
7. What will you do if no one responds to the call light right away?
8. What other members of the team can you call on to respond immediately and how would you reach them without increasing the father's agitation?
 - *Use the phone in the room to call Security*
 - *Turn on the emergency call light*
9. Do you have any fears about your own personal safety in this situation? *Open dialogue*
10. What rights does the father have in this situation?
 - *None. There is a legal order restraining him from visiting.*