

The ANGRY patient or relative

An 11 year old child with asthma (Josh) has presented with severe breathing difficulties to PED, his father told staff that he was extremely worried as a family member with asthma had passed away five years ago. After Josh's condition is stable, his father continues to insist that a doctor needs to check him over. As time goes on he begins pacing and becomes agitated, eventually he begins yelling loudly and threatening the nurses.

If one person in the conflict is determined to resolve it, then de-escalation is possible.....

Assess what's behind the anger:

Anger is often an expression of an underlying emotion (e.g. fear or sadness). What is Josh's dad trying to communicate to us?
Is Josh's dad worried, fearful for his son's life given a member of his family has died from asthma?

Gauge how you are feeling:

Are you feeling anxious? Annoyed? Angry?
How might this appear to Josh's dad and be impacting on his aggression?

Respond from a reasonable distance:

Talk to the person using their name in a calm tone of voice.
Use open questions (how, what, when, where) – avoid asking why?
I can see how worried you are for Josh, Mr Smith. How about you tell me your concerns and then I can talk to the doctor for you.

Observe verbal and nonverbal cues:

Is the situation de-escalating?
Josh's dad stopped pacing as he began telling the nurse what was worrying him.

+ Plus positive reinforcement:

When the situation is de-escalating reinforce positive behaviour.
It's much easier for us to help you now that you're calmer Mr Smith.

AGRO+ training is now being provided to staff, please contact Emma Hanieh ext. 17227 if you are interested in a booking.

