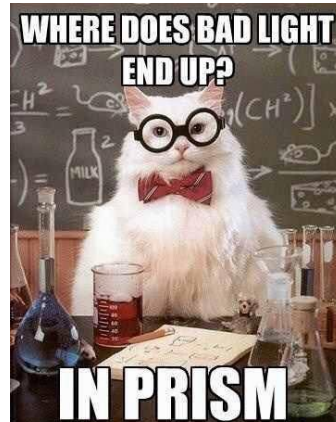


## Dealing With Difficult Patients

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### Deescalate the Situation

- Isolate the disturbance!
- Remain calm
- Remain professional
- Do not let it get personal
- We work in the healthcare industry... people have issues, they maybe having an episode
- Resolve the issue and keep the patient if possible
- Leave your attitude out of it



- "A lady worked at a meat distribution factory. One day, when she finished with her work schedule, she went into the meat cold room (Freezer) to inspect something, but in a moment of misfortune, the door closed and she was locked inside with no help in sight. Although she screamed and knocked with all her might, her cries went unheard as no one could hear her. Most of the workers had already gone, and outside the cold room it's impossible to hear what was going on inside. Five hours later, whilst she was at the verge of death, the security guard of the factory eventually opened the door. She was miraculously saved from dying that day. When she later asked the security guard how he had come to open the door, which wasn't his usual work routine.

- His explanation: "I've been working in this factory for 35 years, hundreds of workers come in and out every day, but you're one of the few who greet me in the morning and say goodbye to me every night when leaving after work. Many treat me as if I'm invisible. Today, as you reported for work, like all other days, you greeted me in your simple manner 'Hello'. But this evening after working hours, I curiously observed that I had not heard your "Bye, see you tomorrow". Hence, I decided to check around the factory. I look forward to your 'hi' and 'bye' every day because they remind me that I am someone. By not hearing your farewell today, I knew something had happened. That's why I was searching every where for you...". It was the act of kindness each day that in turn saved her life.

### Leadership Rules

- A lack of leadership is toxic to every situation
- Protects patients and staff
- Visibility is power



## Rule #1

- Most difficult situations can be avoided, so they should be avoided
- **Proper training**



## Patient Is Not Always Right

- When policy states
- Employees must support
- Leaders must support
- Change policies, don't ignore



## Don't be the target!

- If you have an employee always in conflict with others
- **Know your limits**
- Never allow yourself to be put in an uncomfortable condition
- The patient is not always right, policies protect both the staff and patient



## Rule #2

- Things are not as bad as bad as they seem
- Beware of drama kings/ queens, patients and staff



## Workplace Violence OSHA 2012

- Growing trend... **mandatory training**
- OSHA Concern
- Worker on Worker
- Patient on Worker
- Worker on Personal



### Rule #3

- Don't wish the problem away or ignore it. It is still there!
- **Address it professionally**
- Lead/resolve!



### Who is in-charge?

- **The patient is not in-charge**
- The weak staff member is not in charge
- The first person to break is not in charge
- **The person in charge will protect the practice and the patient**



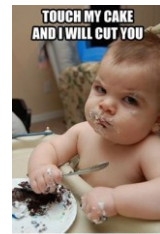
### Rule #4

- **Perspective really matters**
- Get all the info before you decide on anything



### Incident Reporting

- Important to document any incident that causes a scene in the office
- **Document:**
  - Who was present
  - What happened
  - Statements from all parties involved
  - **Records kept for 3 years**



### Different types of People

- Know-it-alls
- Passive people
- Dictators
- Large In-Charge
- Yes People
- No People
- Grippers
- Gossipers
- Problem causers
- Problem solvers

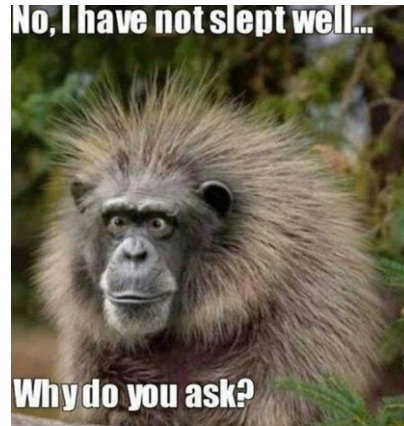


### Medical Conditions

- Multiple Sclerosis
- Diabetes
- Anxiety
- Depression



# STOP ALLOWING PEOPLE THAT ARE BROKEN BREAK YOU.



## Different types of People

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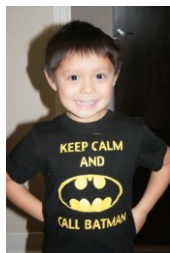
## Situational Responses

- Look at each situation as an opportunity to learn and develop the staff
- **Finish on a positive note**



## Practice Scenarios During Mtg

- **Teach the staff how to respond to situations**
- What could we better
- What did we do well
- Who to call
- When to document incidents
- When to elevate situations



## How to deal... **rule #1 isolate!**

- Identify opportunity in every situation
- Never act surprised at situations
- Don't make yourself a target for difficult people
- Bring out the best in people...search them out
- Watch out for hot buttons
- Never say no, give options
- Bring out the best in people
- Provide an alternative
- Stay in charge, sometimes indirectly
- Demonstrate staff unity
- Avoid excuse makers and blamers
- Document on incident report



## No Hands Policy

- Protect yourself and practice
- **Do not touch** an angry patient... keep your distance
- Be very careful allowing an angry patient to close
- Always stand closer to the door than the patient



## What are “Hot Buttons”

- This is for the audience to participate...
- What are your pet peeves?
- **What is one word that sets you off?**



## Physical Actions

- When physical actions become less than rational **do not hesitate to call 911**
- Do not risk harm to the staff or the patients
- If a patient communicates a threat document who heard it and dial 911

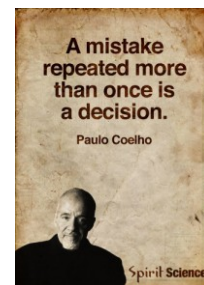
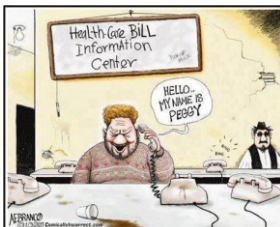


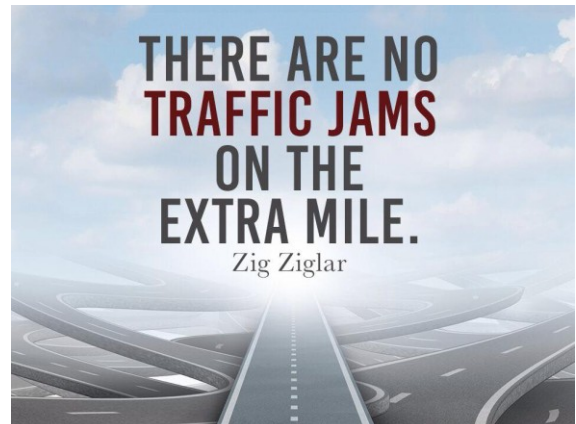
## Be Positive

- Look for an **opportunity to learn** something from the situation that you can educate the staff on

I never lose...either I win or I learn

## No Deception





## Be Ready To Engage

- If you are not prepared, you will fail, so be ready
- If it is sensitive to you, let someone else handle it
- You are never allowed to be less than a professional



## Crafting Solutions

- Greet and Identify Yourself
- Attain and Maintain Comfortable Eye Contact
- Give no sign of backing down  
**Listen ...Listen...Listen...and then....**
- Rate and Assign (0-10) a level of difficulty you are being presented with
- “Close the Distance”
- Identify your Position
- Let the patient know what you can/cannot do
- Go the extra mile...make them want to come back

## Crafting Solutions cont...

- Determine “Essential” Responsibilities
- Identify Prudent “Working” Solution(s)
- Develop a plan directed towards implementing your Solution(s)
- Follow through ... **Front Desk Dangers**

## Crafting Solutions cont...

- Execute Your Plan
- Document
- Assess the outcome from your patient’s point of view
- Assess the outcome for you and your office
- **Share your experience(s)** with all office members (staff meeting)

## Give Options

- You don't have to say no
- Tell the patient or staff member what you can do
- Give options and repeat them as often as necessary
- Stay in your lane
- **Never promise more than you can deliver**



## Prevent Stress Level To Elevation

- If you need to walk away
- If the best thing to do is listen, just listen and wait for the customer to stop talking



- **Do not allow voices to escalate volume**



## Pearls

- Set... Limits
- Use... Subtle Calming Voice
- Be ... **Mindful of your Perceived Body Language**
- Try... To place yourself in *their* situation
- Do... Allow patients the opportunity to offer solutions
- Be... An "**Active Listener**"
- Be... Sympathetic
- Do... Offer Hope
- Know.. When to "cut your losses" and release patient from your care
- Do... Contact authorities / police *without delay* when necessary

## Lynn's three rules

- Rule #1... there is NEVER a reason to be rude to patients
- Rule #2... there is NEVER a reason for patients to be rude to the staff
- Rule #3...there is never a reason for the staff to be rude to each other



## Resolve

- The ability to handle contrary and cantankerous people with determination and diplomacy is a valuable skill for anyone
- Go the extra mile
- Under promise, but over deliver
- Communicate with tact and skill
- **Never let the 211 degrees get any hotter**



## Resources:

- [www.careertrack.com](http://www.careertrack.com) 800-556-3009
- Bass, Bernard (1990) Organizational Dynamics
- Blake, Robert R. and Mouton, Janse S. (1985) The Key to Leadership Excellence
- Kouzes, James M. & Posner, Barry Z (1987) The Leadership Challenge

Thank you

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