

Refining skills of communication in more complex situations
MANAGING A COMPLAINT FROM A PARENTS
Role play – Preceptee with Parents

PURPOSE OF SCENARIO: Practice communicating with people who are angry

PARTICIPANTS: Nurse and parents of baby Lily

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Demonstrate the following skills:

- listening
- rapport and empathy
- explanation
- resolution

SETTING: At the nurse's station.

SCENARIO:

You are at the nurse's station on the neonatal unit looking for some paperwork for a baby who has just been admitted to the unit. It is nearly the end of your 12-hour shift and this is the first opportunity you have had to sit down all day. It has been really busy, and you only managed a short lunch break much earlier in the day. There are three staff nurses looking after 6 intensive care babies, and a very extreme pre-term baby has just been admitted to the unit, which has necessitated transferring a baby to a different room. It has been a difficult and challenging shift. One of your colleagues left two hours ago as she was unwell, so another nurse has been overseeing her patients.

You need to get the paperwork done quickly as you then need to take the observations of a baby (Lily) who deteriorated earlier in the day, before handing over to the night shift. Lily had been looked after by your colleague Marta, who has gone off sick. You do know that Lily is now stable, having been re ventilated at lunchtime.

Lily's mother has been with Lily all afternoon and Lily's father has been by Lily's cot side for the last hour. You've not had a chance yet to speak with either of them. As you sit completing your paperwork, both David and Kate approach the desk.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR THE ACTORS PLAYING LILY'S PARENTS DAVID AND KATE:

David:

It is 7.00 pm and you arrived on the unit to visit your daughter Lily and hour ago. You are anxious and worried as your wife seems to be confused as to what is wrong with Lily and doesn't really understand what has been happening. You are also frustrated as you've been away at a conference and have had difficulty in trying to get hold of anyone on the telephone to talk to you. When the phone was eventually answered this morning, it was just a "hello" on the other end of the phone. This seems to always be the case, you don't know who you're talking to; whether it's the cleaner or the consultant.... You were put through to another room and again the phone was just answered buy a 'hello'. You couldn't even understand that person, they had such a strong accent. Also, they were very unforthcoming with information and treated you with no respect, as though you knew nothing.

Your wife has been very upset, you've tried asking her what's happening, she'd said it had been an awful day. Lily has felt chilly and you noticed that she was naked except for her nappy and that she was back on the ventilator – when did that happen? And why did that happen? No one has told you or your wife.

You also noticed that she had a cannula in her wrist and that she was on lying on a plain sheet - which didn't seem very personal. There was some blood on the sheet as well, which was frightening and horrible to look at.

You know that Lily had been unwell when you visited last evening. Her heart rate had slowed, at one point she'd stopped breathing, and she was blue at times – which was terrifying for you and your wife. You expressed your concerns, but you feel you were brushed aside and felt that nobody was listening to you. No one listened to you then and no one is listening now.

Another thing that has concerned you, you're not a medical person, but earlier this week, you witnessed a new nurse ignoring the alarm on Lily's monitor when her... whatever you call them... *saturations* were really low, but nobody responded or appeared to care and now Lily is really sick.

You are angry and very worried, but you do not shout. You let the nurse speak. You are basically reporting how you and your wife have been treated in regard to communication, to Lily's chilliness, and you want to know if it is acceptable for nursing staff to ignore-alarms on monitors.

You are also very angry about the fact that nobody listened to your concerns last night.

You really want something to be done about this and you expect this nurse to take it further.

You are considering complaining to the Chief Executive – how do you go about doing that?

Kate:

Tearful, leaning on husband, share the talking but let David do most of it.

If offered a seat take it.