

Cardiac Arrest Management and AED (Focus on Empathy) Instructor Resource

Skill: Interacting and treating a patient during cardiac arrest

READ the following:

You and your partner are working on a BLS unit and are dispatched to an unconscious male at a local movie theater. There are no ALS units available at the time and you are only 2 minutes away from the movie theater. When you arrive, the theater manager meets you at the door and escorts you to the patient's location. The movie is still playing while the patient is slumped over in his seat. His wife is crying and says that he suddenly fell against her and would not respond. He is 53 years old with no known medical history, takes no medication, and is allergic to penicillin. CPR has not been initiated and there is no AED on scene. You ask the manager if he can stop the movie and turn the lights on while you and your partner move the patient to the floor. Your partner calls dispatch and asks for an ALS unit to be immediately dispatched as you check for responsiveness, a pulse, and breathing. The patient is pulseless, apneic, and unresponsive. You start compressions immediately while your partner readies the AED from your unit. The crowd starts complaining when the movie is stopped and the lights come on. The patient's wife is crying, asking if he is dead and trying to get to her husband, interfering with CPR.

REFLECT on the situation:

What emotions do you think the wife is feeling?

Uncertainty, sadness, disbelief, confusion, isolation, grief

How should the EMT respond to her question if her husband is dead?

The EMT should be honest and explain that they are doing the best they can for him, and also describe what they are doing to help resuscitate him.

What could the EMT say to keep the wife from interfering with CPR?

The EMT could explain that by her getting in their way, she is interfering with the help they are trying to provide. They could politely ask her to move back away so they have room to work on him.

What could the EMT say to the manager or to the patrons of the theater who are complaining?

The EMT could ask the manager if he could calm down the crowd, or the EMT could quickly explain that they are trying to help someone who has had a cardiac event and that they are doing their job and will be leaving shortly.

SHARE your thoughts with a peer when it's discussion time.