| What to do when faced with angry family members | 1400 Rosewood Dr.  Columbia, TN 38401  **(931)388-6573** |
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| **Red telephonePhone Calls**  De-escalation starts with the employee  that answers the phone.   * Listen to what is needed. * Do not put on hold or pass off if possible. * Do not say “It isn’t my patient” or “It isn’t my job.” * Know your chain of command for difficult calls. * Do not transfer calls without alerting the person on the other end what the call is concerning. * Never raise your own voice. * Understand that frustration is not a personal attack. * Saying “I’m sorry” is not an admission of guilt.  **Face to Face Encounters**  * Safety is always priority. Alert someone if there are safety concerns with any interactions. * Choose to respond and not react to negative family interactions. * Acknowledge their feelings and comments. * Perception is reality to that person. * Look at the person speaking and pay attention to what they are saying. * Maintain good eye contact. * Do not interrupt a person speaking * Do not downplay how they are feeling. * Always respond in a calm and clear manner. * If you do not know the answer let them know and find someone who does know the answer. * Do not provide personal examples of how to manage a situation. * Saying “I’m sorry” is not an admission of guilt. | **With All Conversations**Use the SHARE acronym: **S**implicity  **H**onesty  **A**uthenticity  **R**apport  **E**mpathy  **Empathy is Powerful**  Sense a person’s emotions and validate them without showing judgement or contempt.  When a loved one is sick and not at home, family feels powerless. A family member may feel they have failed or even abandoned their loved ones when they are placed in any type of facility. Empower them with communication and education.  Sadness, guilt, and grief can sometimes be interpreted as accusatory or angry.  Provide grace and mercy where warranted. |

Boundaries

Though we are patient advocates, we still must advocate for ourselves. Do not allow yourself to be verbally or physically abused by family members. Set the boundaries and stick to them and always alert your supervisor if there are troublesome behaviors.

References

Burn, K. (2019). "alone we can do so little; together we can do so much". *ANZTLA Journal*, (19), 21–37.

Hallett, N. (2018). Preventing and managing challenging behavior. *Nursing standard*, *32*(26), 51–63.

“Patience and empathy are anger’s mortal enemies.”

Gary Rudz