



Safety Alert



Situation: Family member became aggressive and loud and was throwing objects when receiving news of father's passing. Patient arrived emergently. Physician involved was not the primary physician. The family member made threats of harm to caregivers and physician when receiving the news. The threat was not communicated well. This person was allowed to remain in the facility by security and police.

Outcome: Caregivers and physician were exposed to violence and were fearful for their safety.

Potential Countermeasures

1. Have Security present when delivering news of someone expiring during emergency procedures or when the physician delivering the news is not familiar with the family.
2. Move slowly. Keep your body to the side of the aggressor, stay at least 3 feet away and stay between the person and the nearest exit. Monitor your body positioning and language / tone to not seem threatening.
3. If someone's behavior causes concern, remove yourself to safety behind a locked door and call for help.
4. **Take all threats seriously. Call 911 directly.**

Key Takeaways

1. *By maintaining your awareness and being proactive, you improve your ability to stay safe.*
2. Always expect the unexpected when dealing with grieving family members.