

## De-Escalation Practice – Acute Care Facility

**Setting:** Patient is getting restless in emergency waiting room

**Characters:** Maya (*she/her*) Austin (*he/him*)

Maya is working her shift in the emergency department when a male patient in the waiting room starts having an emotional crisis.

The patient is verbally aggressive toward the triage nurse and is refusing to sit down.

Upon getting closer, Maya smells a strong scent of alcohol on the patient's breath.

What is the first thing that Maya should do?

Text on Screen:

The first thing that Maya should do is a Point of Care Risk Assessment.

Maya does a point-of-care risk assessment.

Maya takes a deep breath to self-settle. She sets aside her biases about the smell of alcohol.

She approaches the man, keeping a safe distance, and takes the ready posture before speaking to him.

Maya calmly asks the patient, "Hello sir, I'm Maya. I can see you've been waiting for a while. Can you tell me what's going on?"

The patient responds, raising his voice. "What's going on? I've been waiting over four hours. This is ridiculous."

Maya does another quick point-of-care risk assessment and observes that the patient is having an emotional crisis. However, there is no change in the patient's behaviour.

She feels safe to continue. What should Maya do to de-escalate the patient?

Text on Screen:

Maya should acknowledge and validate the patient's feelings and begin to paraphrase and clarify. She should speak in a calm voice with a friendly tone and a suitable volume to avoid escalation.

Maya acknowledges and validates the patient's feelings and paraphrases by saying, "I hear your frustration."

The patient responds, "Yeah, my name is Austin. What's taking so long? I got hit in the head and it's killing me."

What should Maya do to show she is listening?

Text on Screen:

Maya makes eye contact and nods while Austin is speaking. Then she continues to acknowledge and validate his feelings and paraphrase what he has said.

Maya paraphrases and clarifies by saying, "I see. Head injuries can be serious, Austin. We want to make sure you're taken care of properly."

Maya continues to acknowledge and validate the patient's feelings, adding, "I know the wait is frustrating, but we're doing our best to see everyone as quickly as possible, and we haven't forgotten about you."

She then asks a clarifying question. "Have you noticed any changes with your symptoms while you have been waiting?"

Austin tells Maya that the pain is the same as it was when he arrived, and agrees to sit back down and wait some more.