

De-Escalation Strategies in Practice – Client's Home

Setting: Home care aide providing care for patient at client's residence

Characters: Fatima, home care aide (*she/her*); Mr. Delaney, patient (*he/him*); Michelle, patient's daughter (*she/her*); Evan, patient's son in law (*he/him*)

Fatima is a home care aide visiting her client Mr. Delaney to assist with bathing and wound care on his feet.

Mr. Delaney lives in a house with his daughter, Michelle, and her husband Evan.

Fatima has just helped Mr. Delaney with a bath when he points at a strange-looking bag on the table and says, I need to have my medicine.

The son-in-law, Evan, storms in from the next room and shouts, "No, you need to stop taking those pills."

The daughter Michelle also enters the room and says to Fatima, "No, it's okay, my father takes those to feel comfortable."

Evan glares angrily at Fatima, points at her and shouts, "You are the nurse! You should be helping him get off these drugs. If you don't help him stop this right now, I'm going to report you and get you fired."

What should Fatima do?

Text on Screen:

A: Fatima should take the ready posture and do a Point of Care Risk Assessment.

Fatima takes the ready posture and does a point-of-care risk assessment.

Fatima backs up, takes the ready posture, and says in an empathetic tone to the husband, "You sound very frustrated with your father-in-law's situation. Let's work together to support him in the best way possible."

Michelle then says, "It's fine if he takes them. It's the only thing that makes him feel better."

Evan shouts, "He needs to get off those horrible drugs. He points at Fatima and adds, And she needs to help."

Fatima recognizes that she has her own biases about the use of certain drugs, so she tries to set them aside.

What should Fatima do next?

Text on Screen:

A: Fatima should do another Point of Care Risk Assessment. If she feels safe to continue, she should show active listening. She can also suggest focusing on Mr. Delaney's health and allowing her to finish her wound care.

Fatima sees no change in Evan's behavior, and he is not escalating to a behavioral emergency.

She shows active listening by saying, "I am sorry you are dealing with your father-in-law's health."

She tries to redirect his attention to her client's immediate needs, adding, "Your father-in-law needs me to complete his wound care."

She then validates his concerns, saying, "Medication administration is not in my scope of practice. I will report your concern to my nurse supervisor, and maybe you would be willing to reach out to your father-in-law's physician as well?"

Evan nods and sits down, looking a little embarrassed.

Are there signs of tension reduction?

Text on Screen:

A: Drooped shoulders and looking embarrassed are signs of tension reduction.

Fatima sees that the husband is no longer in an emotional crisis, and she finishes her care.

She leaves the client's home. She then reports the incident to her nurse supervisor.