Chapter 20 Psychiatric Emergencies

Introduction

- EMTs often deal with patients undergoing ____________________ or behavioral crisis.
- Crisis might be the result of:
  - Emergency situation
  - ______________________ illness
  - Mind-altering substances
  - ______________________

Myth and Reality

- ____________________ has some symptoms of mental illness at some point in life.
  - Does not mean that everyone develops mental illness
- Only a small percentage of mental health patients are violent.
- Perfectly healthy people may have ____________________ occasionally.

Defining Behavioral Crisis (1 of 3)

Behavior:
- What you can see of a person’s response to the environment and his or her actions

Behavioral crisis:
- Any reaction to events that ____________________ with activities of daily living or that becomes unacceptable to the patient, family, or others
- A ____________________, not an isolated incident

Defining a Behavioral Crisis (2 of 3)

- Usually, if an abnormal pattern of behavior lasts for at least a ____________________, it is a matter of concern.
Chronic depression is a persistent feeling of sadness and despair.

May be a symptom of a mental or ________________________ disorder

6 Defining a Behavioral Crisis (3 of 3)
- When a psychiatric emergency arises, the patient:
  - May show agitation or ________________________
  - May become a threat to ________________________ or others

7 Pathology (1 of 4)
- An EMT is not responsible for diagnosing the underlying cause of a behavioral crisis or psychiatric emergency.
- You should know the two basic categories of diagnosis a physician will use:
  - Organic
  - Functional

8 Organic Brain Syndrome (1 of 2)
- A temporary or permanent dysfunction of the brain caused by a disturbance in the physical or physiologic functioning of the ________________________ tissue.
- Causes include ________________________ illness, head trauma, seizures, intoxication, and diseases of the brain

9 Organic Brain Syndrome (2 of 2)
Altered mental status can arise from:
- Low level of blood ________________________
- Lack of oxygen
- Inadequate blood flow to brain
- Excessive heat or ________________________

10 Functional Disorders
- Abnormal operation of an organ that cannot be traced to
an obvious change in the organ itself
● Examples include _________________________, anxiety conditions, and depression.
● There may be a _________________________ or physical cause, but it is not well understood.

11 Safety Guidelines
● Be prepared to spend extra _______________________
  
  ● Have a plan of action.
  ● Identify yourself.
  ● Be _______________________.
  ● Be direct.
  ● Assess the _______________________.
  ● Stay with patient.

2 Encourage purposeful movement.
  ● Express interest.
  ● Do not get too _______________________.
  ● Avoid fighting.
  ● Be honest and reassuring.
  ● Do not _______________________.

12 Scene Size-Up
● Scene safety
  ● Is the situation unduly ______________________ to you and your partner?
  ● Do you need immediate law enforcement backup?
  ● Does the patient’s behavior seem typical or normal for the circumstances?
  ● Are there _________________________ issues involved?

13 Primary Assessment
● ABCs
• Avoid _______________________ the patient without permission
• Be prepared for _______________________ in patient’s behavior

14 History Taking
Consider three major areas:
• Is the patient’s _______________________ functioning properly?
• Are hallucinogens, other drugs, or alcohol a factor?
• Are psychogenic circumstances, symptoms, or an illness involved?

_____________________ history

15 Secondary Assessment
Physical Exam:
• A _______________________ patient may not respond at all to your questions.
• Obtain vital signs when doing so will not _______________________ the patient’s emotional distress.
• Make every effort to assess blood pressure, pulse, respirations, skin, and pupils

16 Reassessment
• Never let your guard down.
  - Many patients will act spontaneously.
• If _______________________ are necessary, reassess and document every 5 minutes:
  - Respirations
  - Pulse and motor and sensory function in all restrained extremities
• Try to give the receiving hospital _______________________ warning of the psychiatric
Acute Psychosis

- is a state of delusion in which the person is out of touch with reality.
- Causes include:
  - Mind-altering substances
  - Intense _______________________
  - Delusional disorders
  - Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia (1 of 2)

- A complex disorder that is not easily defined or treated.
- Typical onset occurs during _______________________.
- Influences thought to contribute include:
  - _______________________ damage
  - Genetics
  - Psychological and social influences

Schizophrenia (2 of 2)

- Persons with schizophrenia experience symptoms including:
  - Delusions
  - _______________________
  - A lack of interest in pleasure
  - Erratic _______________________

Guidelines for Dealing With a Psychotic Patient

- Determine if the situation is _______________________.
- Identify yourself clearly.
- Be calm, direct, and straightforward.
- Maintain an emotional distance.
Do not _______________________ .
Explain what you would like to do.
Involve people the patient _______________________ , such as family or friends, to gain patient cooperation.

Suicide
_______________________ is the single most significant factor that contributes to suicide.
An attempted suicide is a cry for help.
Immediate intervention is necessary.
Suicidal patients will usually exhibit ________________ signs.

Critical Warning Signs of Suicide
Does the patient have an air of ________________ , sadness, deep despair, or hopelessness?
Does the patient avoid eye contact, speak slowly, or project a sense of vacancy?
Does the patient seem unable to talk about the future?
Is there any suggestion of suicide?
Does the patient have any specific ________________ relating to death?

Additional Risk Factors for Suicide
Are there any ________________ objects in the patient's hands or nearby?
Is the environment unsafe?
Is there evidence of self-destructive behavior?
Keep in mind the suicidal patient may be ________________ as well.

Handling Suicidal Patients (1 of 2)
Assure scene safety.
Establish personal interaction with the pt.
- Visual, _______________________
- Obtain patient’s name
Do not leave patient _______________________.
Be _______________________
Be non-threatening, non-judgemental

Handling Suicidal Patients (2 of 2)
Assess and care for physical problems.
______________ off if necessary.
Do not kidnap patient, call PD.
Never _______________________ about patient’s condition.
Talk and listen to pt.
Stay calm, don’t _______________________.

Agitated Delirium
______________ is a condition of impairment in cognitive function that can present with disorientation, hallucinations, or delusions.
Agitation is characterized by _______________________
- Patients may strike out irrationally.
- Your personal safety must be considered.

S/ S of Agitated Delirium (1 of 2)
Hyperactive irrational behavior
Inattentiveness
Vivid _______________________
Hypertension
Tachycardia
_______________________
Dilated pupils
**S/S of Agitated Delirium (2 of 2)**

- Be calm, supportive, and empathetic.
- Approach the patient _______________________ and purposefully and respect the patient’s territory.
- Limit _______________________ contact.
- Do not leave the patient unattended.

**Dealing With Agitated Delirium (1 of 2)**

- Try to indirectly determine the patient’s:
  - _______________________
  - Memory
  - Concentration
  - _______________________
- Pay attention to the patient’s ability to communicate, appearance, dress, and personal hygiene.

**Dealing With Delirium (2 of 2)**

- If you determine the patient requires _______________________, make sure you have adequate personnel available to help you.
- If the patient has overdosed, take all medication bottles or illegal substances to the medical facility.
  - Refrain from using lights and _______________________.

**Geriatric Needs**

- Depression is a common mental status problem.
- _______________________ is a progressive change in mental status.
- Underlying conditions may cause altered behavior.
- A smile and a _______________________ can go a long way in alleviating fear, especially with the elderly.

**Medicolegal Considerations**
Mental ________________ may take many forms.
Once a patient has been determined to have an impaired mental capacity, you must decide if ________________ is needed.
Do not leave the patient alone.
Obtain help from law enforcement as necessary.

Consent
When a patient is not mentally competent, the law assumes that there is ________________ consent.
The matter is not always clear-cut with psychiatric emergencies
If you are not ________________ about the situation, request law enforcement assistance.

Limited Legal Authority
As an EMT-B, you have limited legal authority to require or force a patient to undergo care.
Police may put a patient in ________________ custody to allow you to provide care.
Know your local laws and protocols.
In Texas, a peace officer may sign a protective custody form and have a patient committed for _________ to _________ hours.

In psychiatric cases, a court of law would probably consider your actions in providing lifesaving care to be ________________ . Err on the side of ________________ and transport.

Restraints (1 of 2)
You cannot restrain a patient unless it is an
You may use restraints only:
- To protect yourself or others from bodily harm
- To prevent the patient from causing ________________ to himself or herself
- Transport a disturbed patient without restraints if possible.

Restraints (2 of 2)
- If you must restrain the patient, use only ________________ force.
  - Law enforcement personnel should be involved.
- At least ________________ people should be present to carry out the restraint, each being responsible for one extremity
- Make sure restraints do not restrict distal circulation
- Do not ________________ until arrival at ER

Use Soft Restraints

Monitor Distal Circulation

Potentially Violent Patients
Use a list of risk factors to assess the level of danger:
- Past history
- ________________
- Scene
- Vocal activity
- ________________ activity

Other Factors to Consider for Potential Violence
- Poor ________________ control
- History of uncontrollable temper
- Low socioeconomic status
• Substance abuse
• _______________________
• Functional disorders

Handling Psychiatric Emergencies
• Treat only life threatening emergencies.
• Do not ______________________ restraints once applied.
• Stay calm.
• Attempt to ______________________ patient.
• Do not turn your back on patient.
• Listen to patient.
• Maintain non-threatening posture.
• Maintain a means of _______________________.

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