Chapter 22
Psychiatric Emergencies

Introduction
• EMTs often deal with patients undergoing psychological or behavioral crisis.
• Crisis might be the result of:
  – Acute medical situation
  – Mental illness
  – __________________________ substances
  – Stress

Myth and Reality
• At some point, most people experience an emotional crisis.
  – Does not mean that everyone develops mental illness
• Only a small percentage of mental health patients are ________________.
• Perfectly healthy people may have symptoms occasionally.

Defining Behavioral Crisis (1 of 3)
Behavior:
• What you can see of a person’s __________________________ to the
  environment and his or her actions
Behavioral crisis or Psychiatric Emergency:
• May involve patients who exhibit agitated, violent, or uncooperative
  behavior or who are a danger to themselves or others.
• EMS is called when behavior has become unacceptable to patient,
  family, or community.

Defining a Behavioral Crisis (2 of 3)
• If an abnormal pattern of behavior lasts for at least a month, it is a
  matter of concern.
• Chronic depression is a __________________________ feeling of sadness
  and despair.
• May be a symptom of a mental or physical disorder

Defining a Behavioral Crisis (3 of 3)
• When a psychiatric emergency arises, the patient:
When a psychiatric emergency arises, the patient:
– May show agitation or violence
– May become a threat to ____________________ or others

7. The Magnitude of Mental Health Disorders (1 of 4)
   • Mental disorders are common throughout the United States, affecting tens of millions of people each year.
   – A psychiatric disorder is an illness with psychological or behavioral symptoms that may result in impaired ____________________ .

8. The Magnitude of Mental Health Disorders (2 of 4)
   • Anxiety disorders:
     – Generalized anxiety disorder
     – Panic disorder
     – Social and other ____________________
     – Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
     – Obsessive–compulsive disorder

9. The Magnitude of Mental Health Disorders (3 of 4)
   • The US mental health system provides many levels of assistance.
     – Most psychological disorders can be handled through ____________________ visits.
     – Some people require hospitalization in specialized psychiatric units.

10. The Magnitude of Mental Health Disorders (4 of 4)
    • Psychiatric disorders have many underlying causes:
      – Social and situational stress such as divorce or death of a loved one
      – Diseases such as ____________________
      – Physical illnesses such as diabetic emergencies
      – Chemical problems such as alcohol or drug use
      – Biological disturbances such as electrolyte imbalances

11. Pathophysiology
    • 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:

- ____________________
- Functional

12 **Organic Brain Syndrome**

- A temporary or permanent dysfunction of the brain caused by a disturbance in the physical or physiologic functioning of the brain tissue.
- Causes may include sudden illness, traumatic brain injury (TBI), seizure disorders, drug and alcohol abuse, ____________________ , withdrawal, and diseases of the brain.

13 **Functional Disorders**

- A physiological disorder that impairs bodily functions when the body seems to be structurally normal.
- Examples include ____________________ , anxiety conditions, and depression.
- There may be a chemical or physical cause, but it is not well understood.

14 **Safety Guidelines**

1. Be prepared to spend extra time.
2. Have a plan of action.
3. Identify yourself.
4. Be ____________________ .
5. Be direct.
6. Assess the scene.
7. Stay with patient.
8. Encourage purposeful movement.
9. Express interest.
10. Do not get too close.
11. Avoid fighting.
12. Be honest and reassuring.
13. Do not ____________________ .

15 **Scene Size-Up**
Scene ____________________
Is the situation unduly dangerous 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 legal issues involved?

Primary Assessment
ABCs
Avoid ____________________ the patient without permission
Be prepared for changes in patient’s behavior

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?
SAMPLE history

Secondary Assessment (1 of 2)
Physical Exam:
A conscious patient may not respond at all to your questions.
Obtain vital signs when doing so will not exacerbate the patient’s emotional distress.
Make every effort to assess blood pressure, pulse, respirations, skin, and pupils

Secondary Assessment (2 of 2)
Transport decision
Have law enforcement or firefighters ____________________ you if possible.
Take the patient to a facility capable of caring for patients with psychiatric problems.
Transport the patient by ground.
20 Reassessment (1 of 3)

- Never let your guard down.
  - Many patients will act ____________________.
- If restraints are necessary, reassess and document every 5 minutes:
  - Respirations
  - Pulse and motor and sensory function in all restrained extremities

21 Reassessment (2 of 3)

- Interventions
  - ____________________ and control the situation.
  - Intervene only as much as it takes to accomplish these tasks.
  - If you think a pharmacologic restraint is necessary, request ALS assistance as early as possible

22 Reassessment (3 of 3)

- Communication and documentation
  - Give the receiving hospital advance ____________________ of the psychiatric emergency.
  - Document thoroughly and carefully.
    - If restraints are used, identify which types and why they were used.

23 Acute Psychosis

- Psychosis is a state of delusion in which the person is out of touch with ____________________.
  - Affected people live in their own reality of ideas and feelings

24 Schizophrenia (1 of 2)

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

25 Schizophrenia (2 of 2)
Persons with schizophrenia experience symptoms including:
– Delusions
– __________________________
– A lack of interest in pleasure
– Erratic speech

Guidelines for Dealing With a Psychotic Patient
– Determine if the situation is dangerous.
– 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 trusts, such as family or friends, to gain patient cooperation.

Excited Delirium
– Delirium is a condition of impairment in cognitive function that can present with disorientation, hallucinations, or delusions.
– __________________________: behavior characterized by restless and irregular physical activity.
  – Patients may strike out irrationally.
  – Your personal safety must be considered.

S/S of Excited Delirium (1 of 2)
– Hyperactive irrational behavior
– Vivid hallucinations
– Hypertension
– __________________________
– Diaphoresis
– Dilated pupils

S/S of Excited Delirium (2 of 2)
– Be calm, supportive, and empathetic.
– Approach the patient slowly and purposefully and respect the patient’s territory.
– Limit physical contact.
– Do not leave the patient __________________________.
Dealing With Excited Delirium (1 of 2)

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

Dealing With Excited Delirium (2 of 2)

• If you determine the patient requires restraint, make sure you have adequate personnel available to help you or request ALS assistance so ____________________ restraint can be considered.
• If the patient has overdosed, take all medication bottles or illegal substances to the medical facility.
  – Refrain from using lights and sirens.

Restraint (1 of 8)

• Every prehospital care transport provider should create and follow a prehospital patient restraint protocol.
  – Protocols vary widely.
  – The restraint chosen should be the least restrictive option that ensures the _______________________ of the patient and providers.
  –
  –

Restraint (2 of 8)

• Personnel must be properly trained.
• If you restrain a person without authority in a nonemergency situation, you expose yourself to a possible lawsuit.
  – Legal actions can involve charges of assault, ________________________, false imprisonment, and violation of civil rights.
  –

Restraint (3 of 8)

• You may use restraints only:
You may use restraints only:

– To protect ____________________ or others from bodily harm
– To prevent the patient from injuring himself or herself

35  Restraint (4 of 8)

● Involve law enforcement if the patient is in a severe behavioral crisis or psychiatric emergency.
● Before considering physical restraint, use verbal ____________________ techniques.
● Make sure restraints do not restrict distal circulation
● Do not release until arrival at ER

36  Restraint (5 of 8)

● Process of restraining a patient
   – Carry out the decision quickly.
   – There should be 5 people to help, one responsible for each ____________________ and one responsible for the head.
   – There should be a team leader and plan of action.
   – Use the minimum force necessary.

37  Restraint (6 of 8)

● The level of force will vary, depending on these factors:
   – The degree of force that is necessary to keep the patient from injuring self and others
   – The patient’s sex, size, strength, and mental status
   – The type of ____________________ behavior the patient is exhibiting

38  Restraint (7 of 8)

● Talk to the patient throughout the process.
● Treat the patient with dignity and ____________________.
● If possible, a provider of the same gender should attend to the patient.
● Wear appropriate barrier protection.
39  **Restraint (8 of 8)**
- Avoid direct eye contact and respect personal space.
- Never leave a restrained person ________________ .
- Four-point restraints (both arms and both legs) are preferred.
- Monitor the patient closely.

40  **Use Soft Restraints**

41  **Monitor Distal Circulation**

42  **Suicide (1 of 5)**

43  **Suicide (2 of 5)**

44  **Suicide (3 of 5)**

45  **Suicide (4 of 5)**

46  **Suicide (5 of 5)**

47  **Geriatric Needs**
- Depression is a common mental status problem.
- Dementia is a ________________ change in mental status.
- Underlying conditions may cause altered behavior.
- A smile and a touch can go a long way in alleviating fear, especially with the elderly.

48  **Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Returning Combat Veterans (1 of 6)**
- PTSD occurs after exposure to, or injury from, a traumatic event.
- An estimated 7% to 8% of the general population will experience PTSD at some point in their lives.
- Military personnel with combat experience have a ________________ incidence.

49  **Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Returning Combat Veterans (2 of 6)**
- Symptoms of PTSD include feelings of:
  - Helplessness
  - Anxiety
  - ________________
  - Fear
Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Returning Combat Veterans (3 of 6)

- People with PTSD:
  - May avoid reminders of the trauma
  - Suffer constant nervous system arousal
  - Can relive the traumatic event through thoughts, nightmares, and ________________

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Returning Combat Veterans (4 of 6)

- Veterans have an increased risk of ________________ .
- Veterans may develop a variety of physical conditions related to combat injuries.
- Combat veterans have a higher incidence of traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Caring for the combat veteran (5 of 6)

- Requires a unique level of understanding
  - Be careful how you phrase your questions.
  - Use a calm, firm voice, but be in charge.
  - Respect a veteran’s personal space.
  - Limit the ________________ of people involved.
  - Ask about suicidal intentions.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Returning Combat Veterans (6 of 6)

- Caring for the combat veteran
  - Ensure that there is nothing the patient can access and use as a ________________ .
–Physical restraints may simply escalate the problem.

54  Medicolegal Considerations

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

55  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 sure about the situation, request law enforcement assistance or guidance from medical control.

56  Limited Legal Authority

• As an EMT-B, you have __________ legal authority to require or force a patient to undergo emergency medical care when no life-threatening emergency exists.
• Police may put a patient in protective 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 24 to 72 hours.

57  In psychiatric cases, a court of law would probably consider your actions in providing lifesaving care to be appropriate.

Err on the side of treatment and transport.

58  Potentially Violent Patients

Use a list of risk factors to assess the level of danger:
• Past history
• ______________________
• Scene
• Vocal activity
• Physical activity
Other Factors to Consider for Potential Violence

- Poor ____________________ control
- History of truancy, fighting, uncontrollable temper
- History of substance abuse
- Depression
- Functional disorders

Handling Psychiatric Emergencies

- Treat only life threatening emergencies.
- Do not remove 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 ____________________ .