

Conducting an Immediate Post-Incident Debriefing

Anyone can call for a debriefing. Basically a debriefing is conducted when something out of the ordinary occurs in the work environment and involves 2 or more people. This is especially important when multidiscipline are involved.

Debriefings are critical to continued growth in our professions, communicating our needs, and improving safety and positive outcomes.

A post-incident debriefing can last anywhere from 2-10 minutes. They should be quickly called, provide input and a voice to everyone, respectful, and allow for honest feedback and critique of the incident in a safe environment without judgement.

1. Invite everyone to the conversation

Employees who witnessed or participated in the incident should be invited to the debriefing. The debriefing should take place in an area that allows the conversation to be held privately, away from patients and visitors.

2. Have a questioning attitude

a. What happened?

- i. A quick re-cap of the incident from various perspectives

b. Why did it happen?

- i. Were there any indicators?

c. Where did it happen?

- i. Was there a choice of locations?
- ii. If so, was this the safest location, or if in the future can we choose another location?

d. Who was involved?

- i. Did we have opportunity to remove others who did not need to be involved?
- ii. Did we have opportunity to invite others who were not involved?
- iii. Who was injured? Is everyone okay?

e. When did this occur?

- i. Was there an opportunity to delay and call more resources?

f. How

- i. How did it go? What went right, what went wrong, and what are our opportunities for improvement?

3. Going forward

- a. Do we need to develop a safety plan?
- b. Do we need to involve other leadership?
- c. Use what works and change what doesn't.
- d. Do we need additional debriefings (this is usually in a more scheduled, controlled, and measured response for emotionally fraught events)