

The ROYAL MARSDEN  
NHS Foundation Trust

Professional Edition

# The Royal Marsden Manual of Clinical Nursing Procedures *Ninth Edition*

Edited by **Lisa Dougherty and Sara Lister**



WILEY Blackwell



**The Royal Marsden Manual of**  
**Clinical Nursing**  
**Procedures**



Professional Edition

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*Ninth Edition*

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# Foreword to the ninth edition

As the Chief Nurse of the Royal Marsden Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, and a contributor and clinical user of the manual for many years, it is a special pleasure and honour to be asked to introduce the ninth edition of *The Royal Marsden Manual of Clinical Nursing Procedures*. The manual is internationally renowned and used by nurses across the world to ensure their practice is evidence based and effective. As information becomes ever more available to the consumers of healthcare, it is essential that the manual is updated frequently so that it reflects the most current evidence to inform our clinical practice.

More than ever in 2015, nurses need to be able to assure the public, patients and their families that care is based on the best available evidence. As nurses seeking to improve our care, it is essential that we are able to critically analyse our judgements in the light of current knowledge. For all of us working with patients and their families, there is an imperative to question and renew our practice using the many sources of knowledge available to us. In the busy world of clinical practice in a ward, unit or in the community, it can be challenging to find time to search for the evidence and this is where *The Royal Marsden Manual of Clinical Nursing Procedures* is a real practical help.

As in the eighth edition, reviewing the evidence or sources of knowledge has been made more explicit with each level of evidence graded. This grading provides the reader with an understanding of whether the reference comes from a randomized controlled trial, national or international guidance, or from expert opinion. At its best, clinical nursing care is an amalgam of a sensitive therapeutic relationship coupled with effective care based on the best evidence that exists. Some areas of practice have attracted international research such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation and infection prevention and control; other areas of practice have not attracted such robust research and, therefore, it is more of a challenge to ensure evidence-based care. Each time a new edition of the manual is prepared we reflect on the gaps in research and knowledge; this provides the impetus to start developing new concept analyses and develop further research studies. In this new edition, the chapters have incorporated risk management, and legal and professional issues, as well as more guidelines for advanced nursing procedures, e.g. intraosseous

injections. In addition, the procedures were tried out by the student nurses from Kingston University and St Georges University of London to ensure they worked in practice.

As you look at the list of contributors to the manual you will see that this edition has continued to be written by nurses who are expert and active in clinical practice. This has the double advantage of ensuring that this manual reflects the reality of practice, but also ensures that nurses at the Royal Marsden Hospital NHS Foundation Trust are frequently reviewing the evidence and reflecting upon their care.

A textbook devoted to improving and enhancing clinical practice needs to be alive to the clinical practitioner. You will see that this edition has continued the improvement in format, including many more figures and photographs to make the manual more effective in clinical care.

As I commend this ninth edition of *The Royal Marsden Manual of Clinical Nursing Procedures* to you, I am aware that it will be used in many different countries and settings. Having had the privilege of visiting and meeting nurses across the world I know that there are more commonalities than differences between us. The common theme is, of course, the need to ensure that we as nurses provide care that is individually and sensitively planned and that it is based on the best available evidence. *The Royal Marsden Manual of Clinical Nursing Procedures* is a wonderful resource for such evidence and I hope it will be widely used in all clinical settings across the world.

Finally, I would like to pay a warm tribute to the excellent work undertaken by the two editors, Lisa Dougherty and Sara Lister, and to all the nurses and allied health professionals at the Royal Marsden Hospital who have worked so hard on this ninth edition.

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# Acknowledgements

A book is a team effort and never more so than with this edition of *The Royal Marsden Manual of Clinical Nursing Procedures*.

Since the first edition was published in 1984, the range of procedures within the manual has grown in complexity, and the depth of the theoretical content underpinning them has increased considerably. Authors have, therefore, had to keep up-to-date with the ever-changing research evidence and write new, as well as update existing, material. This continues to be a collaborative task carried out by knowledgeable, expert nurses in partnership with members of the multidisciplinary team including pharmacists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dietitians, speech therapists, radiographers, anaesthetists, operating department practitioners and psychological care.

So, we must thank every member of the 'team' who has helped to produce this edition, for their time, effort and perseverance. An additional challenge has been to co-ordinate the increased number of contributors to each chapter. This responsibility has fallen to the lead chapter authors, so, for this, they deserve a special acknowledgement and thanks for their ability to integrate all the contributions and create comprehensive chapters.

We especially appreciate the work done by Anne Tibbles, Senior Lecturer Nursing, and the nursing students at Kingston University and St George's University of London, who reviewed all of the procedures used by students and gave us invaluable feedback on how they work in practice. We would also like to thank some other key people: Dale Russell and the library team of the David Adams Library at The Royal Marsden School of Cancer Nursing and Rehabilitation for their help and support in providing the references required by the authors and setting up the Endnote system; Stephen Millward and the medical photography team for all the new photographs; our families and friends who continue to encourage us, especially during the last two years – the time it takes to edit the manual; and, finally, our thanks go to Martin Davies, Magenta Styles, James Schultz, Tom Bates and Helen Harvey at Wiley-Blackwell for their advice and support in all aspects of the publishing process.

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# List of abbreviations

<b>AAC</b>	augmentive or alternative communication	<b>CVA</b>	cerebrovascular accident
<b>AAGBI</b>	Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland	<b>CVAD</b>	central venous access device
<b>ABG</b>	arterial blood gas	<b>CVC</b>	central venous catheter
<b>ABPM</b>	ambulatory blood pressure monitoring	<b>CVP</b>	central venous pressure
<b>AD</b>	autonomic dysreflexia	<b>CXR</b>	chest X-ray
<b>ADH</b>	antidiuretic hormone	<b>DBE</b>	deep breathing exercises
<b>ADR</b>	adverse drug reaction	<b>DIC</b>	disseminated intravascular coagulation
<b>A&amp;E</b>	accident and emergency	<b>DKA</b>	diabetic ketoacidosis
<b>AED</b>	automated external defibrillator	<b>DM</b>	diabetes mellitus
<b>AIDS</b>	acquired immune deficiency syndrome	<b>DMSO</b>	dimethylsulphoxide
<b>ALARP</b>	as low as reasonably practicable	<b>DNA</b>	did not attend
<b>ALS</b>	advanced life support	<b>DNAR</b>	do not attempt resuscitation
<b>ALT</b>	alanine aminotransferase	<b>DPI</b>	dry powder inhaler
<b>ANH</b>	acute normovolaemic haemodilution	<b>DRE</b>	digital rectal examination
<b>ANP</b>	atrial natriuretic peptide	<b>DRF</b>	digital removal of faeces
<b>ANS</b>	autonomic nervous system	<b>DVT</b>	deep vein thrombosis
<b>ANTT</b>	aseptic non-touch technique	<b>EBN</b>	evidence-based nursing
<b>AP</b>	alkaline phosphatase/anteroposterior/alternating pressure	<b>EBP</b>	evidence-based practice
<b>APTR</b>	activated partial thromboplastin ratio	<b>ECF</b>	extracellular fluid
<b>ARDS</b>	adult respiratory distress syndrome	<b>ECG</b>	electrocardiogram
<b>ART</b>	assisted reproductive techniques	<b>ECM</b>	extracellular matrix
<b>ASA</b>	American Society of Anesthesiologists	<b>EDTA</b>	ethylenediamine tetra-acetic acid
<b>AST</b>	aspartate aminotransferase	<b>ELISA</b>	enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
<b>AT</b>	anaerobic threshold	<b>EMR</b>	endoscopic mucosal resection
<b>AV</b>	atrioventricular	<b>ENT</b>	Ear, Nose and Throat
<b>AVPU</b>	alert, verbal, pain, unresponsive	<b>ESD</b>	endoscopic submucosal dissection
<b>BAL</b>	bronchoalveolar lavage	<b>ESR</b>	erythrocyte sedimentation rate
<b>BIA</b>	bio-electrical impedance analysis	<b>ETT</b>	endotracheal tube
<b>BiPAP</b>	bilevel positive airway pressure	<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>BLS</b>	basic life support	<b>EWS</b>	early warning scoring
<b>BME</b>	black and minority ethnic	<b>FBC</b>	full blood count
<b>BMI</b>	body mass index	<b>FEES</b>	fibreoptic endoscopic evaluation of swallowing
<b>BNF</b>	British National Formulary	<b>FFP</b>	fresh frozen plasma
<b>BP</b>	blood pressure	<b>FRC</b>	functional residual capacity
<b>BSE</b>	bovine spongiform encephalopathy	<b>FVC</b>	forced vital capacity
<b>CAUTI</b>	catheter-associated urinary tract infection	<b>FWB</b>	fully weight bearing
<b>CCU</b>	coronary care unit	<b>GCS</b>	Glasgow Coma Scale
<b>cfu</b>	colony-forming unit	<b>GFR</b>	glomerular filtration rate
<b>CHG</b>	chlorhexidine gluconate	<b>GGT</b>	gamma-glutamyl transpeptidase
<b>CJD</b>	Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease	<b>GI</b>	gastrointestinal
<b>CLP</b>	continuous low pressure	<b>GMC</b>	General Medical Council
<b>CMV</b>	cytomegalovirus	<b>GM-CSF</b>	granulocyte macrophage-colony stimulating factor
<b>CNCP</b>	chronic non-cancer pain	<b>GSL</b>	general sales list medicine
<b>CNS</b>	central nervous system	<b>GTN</b>	glyceryl trinitrate
<b>CO</b>	cardiac output	<b>HBPM</b>	home blood pressure monitoring
<b>COAD</b>	chronic obstructive airways disease	<b>HBV</b>	hepatitis B virus
<b>COPD</b>	chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	<b>HCA</b>	healthcare assistant
<b>CPAP</b>	continuous positive airway pressure	<b>HCAI</b>	healthcare-associated infection
<b>CPET</b>	cardiopulmonary exercise testing	<b>HCP</b>	healthcare professional
<b>CPNB</b>	continuous peripheral nerve block	<b>HCV</b>	hepatitis C virus
<b>CRP</b>	cardiopulmonary resuscitation	<b>HDU</b>	high-dependency unit
<b>CRP</b>	C-reactive protein	<b>HEPA</b>	high-efficiency particulate air
<b>CSF</b>	cerebrospinal fluid	<b>HFEA</b>	Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority
<b>CSP</b>	Chartered Society of Physiotherapy	<b>HFOT</b>	high-flow oxygen therapy
<b>CSU</b>	catheter specimen of urine	<b>HIV</b>	human immunodeficiency virus
<b>CT</b>	computed tomography	<b>HLA</b>	human leucocyte antigen
<b>CTZ</b>	chemoreceptor trigger zone	<b>HME</b>	heat and moisture exchanger
		<b>HOCF</b>	Home Oxygen Consent Form

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<b>HOOF</b>	Home Oxygen Ordering Form	<b>NWB</b>	non-weight bearing
<b>HPA</b>	Health Protection Agency	<b>ODP</b>	operating department practitioner
<b>HPV</b>	human papillomavirus	<b>OGD</b>	oesophagogastroduodenoscopy
<b>HR</b>	heart rate	<b>OSCE</b>	objective structured clinical examination
<b>HSE</b>	Health and Safety Executive	<b>OT</b>	occupational therapist
<b>HTLV</b>	human T cell leukaemia/lymphoma virus	<b>OTC</b>	over the counter
<b>IAD</b>	incontinence-associated dermatitis	<b>P</b>	pharmacy-only medicine
<b>IASP</b>	International Association for the Study of Pain	<b>PACU</b>	post-anaesthetic care unit
<b>IBCT</b>	incorrect blood component transfused	<b>PAD</b>	pre-operative autologous donation
<b>IC</b>	inspiratory capacity	<b>PART</b>	patient-at-risk team
<b>ICF</b>	intracellular fluid	<b>PCA</b>	patient-controlled analgesia
<b>ICP</b>	intracranial pressure	<b>PCEA</b>	patient-controlled epidural analgesia
<b>ICS</b>	intraoperative cell salvage	<b>PDPH</b>	post-dural puncture headache
<b>ICSI</b>	intracytoplasmic sperm injection	<b>PE</b>	pulmonary embolus
<b>IM</b>	intramuscular	<b>PEA</b>	pulseless electrical activity
<b>INR</b>	international normalized ratio	<b>PEEP</b>	positive end-expiratory pressure
<b>IO</b>	intraosseous	<b>PEF</b>	peak expiratory flow
<b>IPCT</b>	infection prevention and control team	<b>PEG</b>	percutaneous endoscopically placed gastrostomy
<b>ISC</b>	intermittent self-catheterization	<b>PEP</b>	post-exposure prophylaxis
<b>ITDD</b>	intrathecal drug delivery	<b>PESA</b>	percutaneous epididymal sperm aspiration
<b>ITU</b>	intensive therapy unit	<b>PGD</b>	Patient Group Direction
<b>IV</b>	intravenous	<b>PHCT</b>	primary healthcare team
<b>JVP</b>	jugular venous pressure	<b>PHN</b>	post-herpetic neuralgia
<b>LA</b>	local anaesthetic	<b>PICC</b>	peripherally inserted central cannula
<b>LBC</b>	liquid-based cytology	<b>PN</b>	parenteral nutrition
<b>LCT</b>	long-chain triglyceride	<b>PNS</b>	peripheral nervous system
<b>LMA</b>	laryngeal mask airway	<b>POA</b>	pre-operative assessment
<b>LMN</b>	lower motor neurone	<b>POCT</b>	point-of-care testing
<b>LOS</b>	lower oesophageal sphincter	<b>POM</b>	prescription-only medicine
<b>LPA</b>	Lasting Power of Attorney	<b>PONV</b>	post-operative nausea and vomiting
<b>MAOI</b>	monoamine oxidase inhibitor	<b>PPE</b>	personal protective equipment
<b>MAP</b>	mean arterial pressure	<b>PRBC</b>	packed red blood cell
<b>MAR</b>	medicines administration record	<b>PrP</b>	prion protein
<b>MC&amp;S</b>	Microscopy, Culture and Sensitivity	<b>PSCC</b>	primary/benign spinal cord compression
<b>MCT</b>	medium-chain triglyceride	<b>PT</b>	physiotherapist
<b>MDA</b>	Medical Devices Agency	<b>PTFE</b>	polytetrafluoroethylene
<b>MDI</b>	metered dose inhaler	<b>PUO</b>	pyrexia of unknown origin
<b>MDT</b>	multidisciplinary team	<b>PVC</b>	polyvinyl chloride
<b>MESA</b>	microepididymal sperm aspiration	<b>PWB</b>	partially weight bearing
<b>MET</b>	medical emergency team	<b>PWO</b>	partial withdrawal occlusion
<b>MHRA</b>	Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency	<b>RA</b>	right atrium
<b>MI</b>	myocardial infarction	<b>RAS</b>	reticular activating system
<b>MIC</b>	minimum inhibitory concentration	<b>RBC</b>	red blood cell
<b>MMP</b>	matrix metalloprotease	<b>RCN</b>	Royal College of Nursing
<b>MPQ</b>	McGill Pain Questionnaire	<b>RCT</b>	randomized controlled trial
<b>MRC</b>	Medical Research Council	<b>RFID</b>	radiofrequency identification tag
<b>MRI</b>	magnetic resonance imaging	<b>RIG</b>	radiologically inserted gastrostomy
<b>MRSA</b>	meticillin-resistant <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	<b>RNI</b>	reference nutrient intake
<b>MS</b>	multiple sclerosis	<b>RSV</b>	respiratory syncytial virus
<b>MSCC</b>	metastatic spinal cord compression	<b>SA</b>	sinoatrial
<b>MSU</b>	midstream urine	<b>SaBTO</b>	Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs
<b>MUAC</b>	mid upper arm circumference	<b>SAP</b>	Single Assessment Process
<b>MUST</b>	Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool	<b>SARS</b>	severe acute respiratory syndrome
<b>NAT</b>	nucleic acid testing	<b>SBAR</b>	Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation
<b>NBM</b>	nil by mouth	<b>SC</b>	subcutaneous
<b>NEWS</b>	National Early Warning Score	<b>SCC</b>	spinal cord compression
<b>NG</b>	nasogastric	<b>SCI</b>	spinal cord injury
<b>NHS</b>	National Health Service	<b>SGA</b>	subjective global assessment
<b>NHSCSP</b>	NHS cervical screening programme	<b>SHOT</b>	Serious Hazards of Transfusion
<b>NIPEE</b>	non-invasive positive end-expiration	<b>SIMV</b>	synchronized intermittent mandatory ventilation
<b>NIV</b>	non-invasive ventilation	<b>SIRS</b>	systemic inflammatory response syndrome
<b>NMC</b>	Nursing and Midwifery Council	<b>SIU</b>	spinal injuries unit
<b>NMDA</b>	N-methyl-D-aspartate	<b>SL</b>	semi-lunar
<b>NPC</b>	National Prescribing Centre	<b>SLT</b>	speech and language therapist
<b>NPSA</b>	National Patient Safety Agency	<b>SMBG</b>	self-monitoring of blood glucose
<b>NPWT</b>	negative pressure wound therapy	<b>SNRI</b>	serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor
<b>NRAT</b>	Norgine Risk Assessment Tool	<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure
<b>NRS</b>	numerical rating scale	<b>SPa</b>	suprapubic aspirate
<b>NSAID</b>	non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug	<b>SSRI</b>	selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor

<b>SV</b>	stroke volume	<b>UTI</b>	urinary tract infection
<b>SVC</b>	superior vena cava	<b>VAD</b>	vascular access device
<b>swg</b>	standard wire gauge	<b>VAP</b>	ventilator-associated pneumonia
<b>TACO</b>	transfusion-associated cardiac overload	<b>VAT</b>	Venous Assessment Tool
<b>TA-GVHD</b>	transfusion-associated graft-versus-host disease	<b>VBG</b>	venous blood gas
<b>TB</b>	tuberculosis	<b>vCJD</b>	variant Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease
<b>TCA</b>	tricyclic antidepressant	<b>VDRL</b>	Venereal Disease Research Laboratory
<b>TED</b>	thromboembolic deterrent	<b>VEGF</b>	vascular endothelial growth factor
<b>TENS</b>	transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation	<b>VF</b>	ventricular fibrillation
<b>TESE</b>	testicular sperm extraction	<b>VPF</b>	vascular permeability factor
<b>TIVA</b>	total intravenous anaesthesia	<b>V/Q</b>	ventilation/perfusion
<b>TPI</b>	<i>Treponema pallidum</i> immobilization	<b>VT</b>	ventricular tachycardia
<b>TRALI</b>	transfusion-related acute lung injury	<b>VTE</b>	venous thromboembolism
<b>TSE</b>	transmissible spongiform encephalopathy	<b>WBC</b>	white blood cell
<b>TSS</b>	toxic shock syndrome	<b>WBIT</b>	wrong blood in tube
<b>TTO</b>	to take out	<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>TURBT</b>	transurethral resection of bladder tumour	<b>WOB</b>	work of breathing
<b>TURP</b>	transurethral resection of prostate	<b>WR</b>	Wassermann reaction
<b>UMN</b>	upper motor neurone		





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# How to use your manual

## Features contained within your manual

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## Supporting the patient with human functioning

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Your manual is full of **photographs, illustrations and tables**

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Principles Table 4.8 Communicating with a depressed person

Principle	Rationale
Initiate the conversation, develop rapport.	Good communication is essential to assess and individualize support (NICE 2009a, C).
Develop a person-centred communication style.	Accepting the patient as they are without attempting to block or contain their emotions helps them to express their feelings accurately. E
Show understanding, caring and acceptance of behaviours, including tears or anger.	Promote self-efficacy. E
Encourage patient to identify their own abilities or strategies for coping with the situation.	

Problem-solving table 4.2 Prevention and resolution (Principles table 4.8)

Problem	Cause	Prevention	Action
Patient expresses ideas of self-harm or taking their own life.	Low mood, depression.	Assess for risk: this can be as simple as remarking upon the person's low mood and asking them if they have ever thought of hurting themselves. Explore any expressions of suicidal ideas for intention to act. This can be achieved by asking if the patient has a plan. Crucially you will also need to explore what stops the patient from acting and what changes might cause them to act. If you consider the patient is at risk, explain to them that you need to refer them for further support.	If you have any concerns that the patient is at risk, follow the procedure of your organization. This may include contacting psychiatric liaison services or other psychological support.

Box 4.8 Managing the patient with depression: NICE guidance, step 1

**Key questions**

- During the last month, have you often been bothered by:
  - feeling down, depressed or hopeless?
  - having little interest or pleasure in doing things?
- How long have you felt like this for?

If the patient answers 'yes' to question 1 and the time scale is longer than 2 weeks, it is important that a referral is made for further assessment by a healthcare professional with clinical competence in managing depression, such as a clinical psychologist or a registered mental health nurse, so they can determine if the patient has been bothered by 'feelings of worthlessness, poor concentration or thoughts of death' (NICE 2009a, p.4).

**Other questions should assess for the following**

- Other physical health problems that may be significantly affecting their mood such as uncontrolled pain, sleep disruption, excessive nausea and vomiting, physical limitations on their independence or body image disturbance.
- A history of psychological illness such as depression.
- A consideration of the medication the patient is taking, specifically medication for mental health problems. Have they been able to take it and absorb it or have they had any digestive issues?
- Social support for the patient: who else is around to support the person, are they isolated?

(Source: Adapted from NICE (2009a))

**Anger, aggression and violence management**

**Definition**

Anger is an emotional state experienced as the impulse to behave in order to protect, defend or attack in response to a threat or

challenge. Of itself, anger is not classified as an emotional disorder. This emotional state may range in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury and rage and becomes a problem when it is associated with poor impulse control.

**Related theory**

Nurses may be exposed to anger and aggression. Poor communication is frequently a precursor to aggressive behaviour (Duxbury and Whittington 2005). Aggression and abuse tend to be discussed synonymously in the literature and are reported to occur with some frequency in nursing (McLaughlin et al. 2009). Anger is felt or displayed when someone's annoyance or irritation has increased to a point where they feel or display extreme displeasure. Verbal aggression is the expression of anger via hostile language; this language causes offence and may result in physical assault. Verbal abuse may actually be experienced as worse than a minor physical assault (Adams and Whittington 1995).

Whatever the cause of anger or conflict, people can behave in a number of challenging ways and with varying degrees of resistance to social and hospital rules. People may simply refuse to comply with a request or may behave more aggressively, for example by pushing someone aside (without intent to harm) or by deliberately striking out at others. Mental capacity issues should be considered when assessing the causes of aggressive behaviours.

When patients do feel anger, they may feel too depleted by experiences of disease and treatment to express it (Bowes et al. 2002).

**Evidence-based approaches**

Prevention is the most effective method of managing anger; that is, diffusing stressful or difficult interactions before they become a crisis. Understanding why angry or challenging behaviour occurs can be helpful in establishing a

Chapter 4 Communication

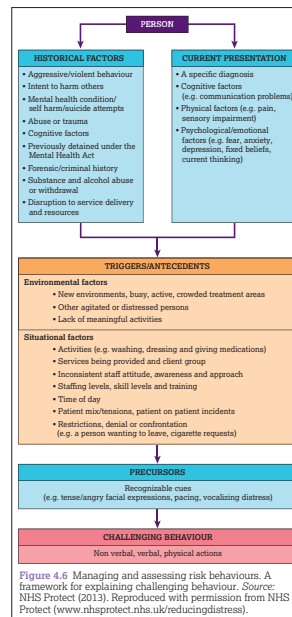


Figure 4.6 Managing and assessing risk behaviours. A framework for explaining challenging behaviour. Source: NHS Protect (2013). Reproduced with permission from NHS Protect (www.nhsprotect.nhs.uk/reducingdistress).

comprehensive approach to prevention. NHS Protect (2013) proposes a framework for explaining challenging behaviour. This includes considering:

- historical factors:** such as substance and alcohol abuse
- current presentation:** diagnosis, physical factors such as pain
- triggers or antecedents:** which include environmental factors such as other agitated individuals, busy or noisy areas and situational factors such as inconsistent staff attitude, time of day. Figure 4.6 presents this in more detail.

In some instances, challenging or difficult behaviour can be seen to be related to underlying stress and difficulty in a

person's situation. Anger, aggression and violence may have 'biological, psychological, social and environmental roots' (Krug 2002, p.25). People frequently get angry when they feel they are not being heard or when their control of a situation and self-esteem are compromised. Institutional pressures can influence healthcare professionals to act in controlling ways and may contribute to patients' angry responses (Gudjonsson et al. 2004). Patients are often undergoing procedures that threaten them and they may consequently feel vulnerable and react aggressively as a result (NHS Protect 2013). Another source of anger can be when personal beliefs in the form of rules are broken by others. We therefore need to strive to be aware of individual and cultural values and work with them to avoid frustration and upset.

People also can become angry when they feel that they have not been communicated with honestly or are misled about treatments and their outcomes. To prevent people's frustration escalating into anger or worse, health professionals need to ensure that they are communicating openly, honestly and frequently (NHS Protect 2013).

Some patients may appear or sound aggressive when they are not intending to be and the nurse must therefore use good judgement to clarify their behaviour in these instances. Nurses need to be aware of their own boundaries and capabilities when dealing with challenging or abusive situations.

Threats, uncertainty and disempowerment may predispose people to anger, and living with and being treated for any serious condition can be sufficiently threatening and disempowering (NHS Protect 2013).

**Legal and professional issues**

Nurses may be inclined to accept aggressive behaviour as part of the job (McLaughlin et al. 2009) due to being encouraged to be caring, compassionate and accepting of others. Despite this, nurses have the right to work without feeling intimidated or threatened and should not tolerate verbal or physical abuse, threats or assault. Personal comments, sarcasm and innuendo are all unacceptable.

Employers have a responsibility to adhere to Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (HM Government 2000, NHS Protect 2013). This involves providing a safe environment for people to work in and one that is free from threats and abuse. With any physical assault, the police should be involved.

**Pre-procedural considerations**

**Assessment**

Box 4.9 lists signs indicating that people may be angry. It is necessary to engage people sensitively and carefully to attempt to help them whilst maintaining a safe environment for all.

**Evidence-based approaches**

It is frequently possible to engage with and manage some of the underlying features without endangering anyone. People who are behaving aggressively probably do not normally act that way and may apologize when helped.

Talking down or de-escalation of situations where someone is being non-compliant can be achieved with careful assessment being involved.

Box 4.9 Warning signs that a patient is angry

- Tense, angry facial signs, restlessness and increased volume of speech
- Prolonged eye contact and a refusal to communicate
- Unclear thought process, delusions or hallucinations
- Verbal threats and reporting angry feelings