

Competing priorities and team situational awareness Knowledge Check

1. In a labour and delivery unit, a team has adopted the phrase “Let’s chat” to signal that whoever says this wants to have a quick word away from the patient to discuss concerns or questions about what is happening. When someone says “Let’s chat,” both team members step into the hall to discuss the concern.

This process is an example of:

- a. Common or shared language
- b. Escalating a concern
- c. Debrief
- d. Unscheduled huddle

The correct answer is A. The use of “Let’s chat” is an example of a team behaviour that signals a need to re-examine everyone’s understanding of a given situation. It has been established in this labour and delivery unit that when you hear those words, you step in the hall to have a quick discussion.

2. An obstetrician is about to start a Caesarean section for a patient with arrested dilation at 6 cm with a normal fetal heart rate. As the obstetrician is moving the patient into the OR, the midwife calls for a consultation because the patient she is caring for has arrested dilation at 8 cm.

Which of these statements would be the **BEST** next step for the obstetrician?

- a. Ask the nurse to tell the midwife that they are unavailable since their patient needs a Caesarean section.
- b. Proceed with the Caesarean section and see the midwife’s patient once they have finished.
- c. Provide the midwife with an estimated timeline about how long the current Caesarean section will take and ask if her patient can wait until the obstetrician has finished the surgery.
- d. Notify the nursing lead to call another team in case there is a need for two potential Caesarean sections.

The correct answer is C. It is important for the obstetrician to communicate with the midwife before proceeding with their surgery. By telling the midwife how long the surgery is expected to take, the midwife can decide if their patient can wait or if they need more urgent attention.

3. A patient presents to the unit where you are the OB on call. They are G1P0 at 33 weeks and state they have a placenta previa and are now bleeding. The new ward clerk is unable to locate any antenatal records for the patient. Which of the following will help improve team situational awareness in this situation?

Choose the **BEST** response.

- a. Call anaesthesia to let them know of the possibility of a Caesarean section.
- b. Work with the nurse in charge to find a more experienced team member who may be able to locate the antenatal records.
- c. Ensure that everyone has a break before the surgery.
- d. Raise your voice to ensure that everyone can hear you.

The correct answer is B. The new ward clerk in this scenario is unable to locate the antenatal records and the team is working with incomplete information. This may have occurred due to lack of training about how to search for or access this information.

4. True or False:

Calling out the elapsed time every 15 seconds once the head is out in a difficult shoulder dystocia situation can help maintain individual and team situational awareness.

The correct answer is TRUE. Awareness of the passage of time can help to prevent task fixation and alert the team that another approach may be needed.

5. True or False:

A post-procedure debrief provides an opportunity to celebrate “good catches” where effective teamwork and communication prevented potential harm.

The correct answer is TRUE. Debriefs following a procedure or intervention *are* valuable in celebrating “good catches” as a result of effective teamwork and communication. Debriefs and identifying “good catches” are an important part of team learning that help to promote team situational awareness and enhance safe care.