

Building a Culture of Respect and Safety

Ms Lena LIM Lee Keng

Caregiver

Member
Singapore Patient Advocacy
Network
Singapore General Hospital,
SingHealth



A ROUNDTABLE TO TALK ABOUT CONNECTING THE DOTS

ABUSE & HARASSMENT IN THE HEALTHCARE ECOSYSTEM



- Ms Lim is a dedicated caregiver to her husband, who has been living with Parkinson's disease for the past 15 years. Her unwavering commitment and compassion have shaped her into a strong advocate for those facing similar challenges.
- Beyond her role as a caregiver, Lena serves as the Chairman of the Waterfront @ Khatib Residents Network, a position she has held with distinction for 15 years. Under her leadership, the network has flourished, fostering a sense of community and support among residents.
- Lena's contributions extend to various important initiatives. She is an active member of the Singapore Patient Advocacy Network (SGH, SingHealth), where she collaborates with healthcare professionals and fellow advocates to improve patient care and support systems.



Building a Culture of Respect and Safety

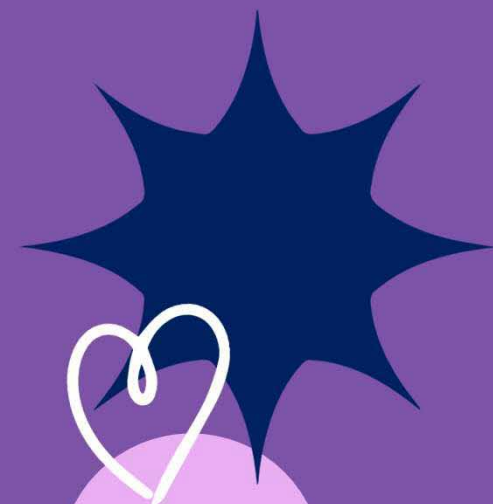
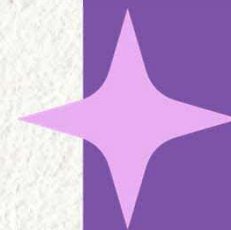
Lim Lee Keng

SingHealth Patient Advocacy Network@SGH

14 August 2024



SingHealth Patient Advocacy Network



My Story...



What Matters Most to Patients



High-Quality Medical Care:

- Accurate diagnoses
- Effective treatments
- Clear communication



Trust and Competence

- Confidence in healthcare professionals' expertise



Empathy and Compassion

- Kindness and understanding
- Privacy and dignity

Understanding Patients Before They Become Abusive



- **Emotions and Experiences**
 - High level of stress and anxiety
- **Expectations VS Reality**
 - Miscommunications, unmet expectations, feeling ignored
 - Delays in treatment or diagnosis, lack of information

Understanding Patients Before They Become Abusive



- Proactive Measures from Healthcare Workers:
 - Active listening
 - Clear and consistent communication
 - Ensuring patients feel heard and respected, acknowledge their feelings



My Personal Encounter Around Abuse


What happened?

- Long wait time at an Outpatient Appointment
- Patients are getting frustrated
 - Shouting, using vulgarity
 - Giving demeaning comments

What did staff do?

- Nurse suggested patients to go for lunch
- Promised to text them when it was their turn to see the doctor.

What did surrounding patients do?

- Provided information about nearby eateries
 - Being supportive by calming them down
- 

Impact of Patient Abuse on Healthcare Workers



Stress and mental health issue



Decreased job satisfaction/performance



Patients also feel a mix of discomfort and concern

How can surrounding patients support?

- Intervening verbally to de-escalate
- Reinforcing respect and civility

Patient Advocates Involvement

- Educational campaigns and presentations
- SPAN has worked with other SingHealth groups to co-create a “Patient and Healthcare Team Care Pledge”
- Speak up against abuse and harassment publicly via media and social media since late 2021.



AS A PATIENT, I PLEDGE TO...

AS A HEALTHCARE STAFF, I PLEDGE TO...

PATIENT AND HEALTHCARE TEAM CARE PLEDGE™

- SAFEGUARD**
Ensure the safety of all and stamp out abusive and rude behaviour
- COMMUNICATE**
Communicate respectfully and clarify concerns
- RESPECT**
Show understanding and treat you with respect and kindness
- INFORM**
Provide clear, timely and complete information for shared decision-making
- PARTNER**
Be responsible and play our part in this healthcare journey
- TRUST**
Ensure the safety of one another and trust professional standards

© 2023 Singapore Health Services Pte Ltd. All rights reserved.

Patient Advocates Involvement

给医护人员应有的尊重

梁秀莲

“你到底会不会的，你受过训练吗？”

的焦虑，我们都不难理解，但医护人员的情绪与辛劳，也应该得到谅解。

疫情已经给医疗机构与医护人员带来极大的

不是短时间内能够解决的问题

The Sunday Times says

Unacceptable to abuse healthcare workers

Healthcare workers here and around the world have been lauded for their dedication to combatting the ravages of this long-running Covid-19 pandemic. From working long hours to sacrificing family contact to risking their lives to care for the ill, they have been – and still are – the front line

of the Ministry of Health, there were 1,000 cases reported at public healthcare institutions in 2008. The number rose to 1,200 in 2009 and to 1,300 last year. Evidently, the pandemic was not the only thing going on in hospitals. Cases have ranged from verbal abuse to outright violence, including

was reported in this paper about a patient who grabbed a nurse's breast. Healthcare workers already suffer burnout, with some 1,500 staff quitting in the first half of this year compared with 2,000 a year before the pandemic. The public healthcare sector has raised salaries, but this is

likely to be any way, they should be treated like any healthy person who breaks the rules, and be subject to the laws that govern civil behaviour. There are already laws that protect public servants from verbal and physical abuse. If they can open a road to justice and sue those who should be able to sue in any court of law.

长期信
及家属
容忽视
与医护
可加强
与病患
要选排
挥正

THE STRAITS TIMES

Friday Dec 03, 2021

Healthcare workers • Say no to abuse and speak up for them

The abuse of healthcare workers is a matter of great concern.

As patients and family caregivers, we believe kindness to healthcare professionals is critical.

The pandemic has put a great strain on healthcare services. Many healthcare workers have quit, adding to the burden of those remaining. This bodes ill for patients and families.

We cannot control the adverse impact of Covid-19, but we can change the way we respond to the healthcare teams.

While we want and expect compassionate care from healthcare workers, it is equally important for us to be respectful, courteous and understanding, to help create trust and build rapport.

After all, it takes two hands to clap and we are all humans driven by emotions.

We desire well-considered advice and treatment, delivered compassionately.

challenging and vulnerable times.

When we receive less than ideal care and service, we may get angry or irritated.

Can we empathise with healthcare workers, who are stressed and struggling with a heavy workload made worse by these uncertain times? They are also worried for their own health, and that of their family.

Or, just like any of us, they may have had a bad day.

Whatever the reason, abusive behaviour by patients and families is not acceptable.

Be it abusing staff verbally or physically, or making snide remarks like “Are you formally trained?” or “Go back to your country”, such behaviour has no place in any hospital, nursing home or clinic.

Say no to abuse and if you see it, speak up for the healthcare worker or call security if needed.

Hospitals should take strong actions to stem abuse. We have the power to create

所保集团患者倡
一致呼吁病患、看
护人员更多的话

Healthcare workers • Pre-empt incidents that can lead to abuse

Recent letters have articulated the need to address the rising abuse of healthcare workers (Create proper system and laws to better protect healthcare workers, Dec 1; Show respect and appreciation for healthcare workers, Dec 1; and Say no to abuse of healthcare workers and speak up for them, Dec 3).

Hospitals are places that people visit for treatment. Pain and fear arising from their illnesses can lead to stress, anxiety and frustration. As a result, patients who are normally calm may quickly become abusive.

While it is good that the

Ministry of Health has a policy of zero tolerance towards abuse and harassment of healthcare staff and will act against people who are abusive, more should be done to address the root cause of such cases.

According to hospitals here, some patients, while waiting to access healthcare services, have been led by frustration to abuse healthcare workers (Incidents leading to abuse of healthcare workers, Nov 28).

Patients are reminded to turn up on time for consultations. But they end up waiting, often for hours. This falls short of having

the patient's interests in mind, a core value of many hospitals.

Software can be used to analyse each doctor's consultation pattern and allocate the average time between patients. If a long wait time is unavoidable, having a process that considers the patient's interests helps.

When I turned up on time at Hougang Polyclinic, the nurse immediately pre-empted any issues by letting me know that there were six patients ahead of me and that I would have to wait for at least two hours. She then asked if there was anything I could do in the meantime, and

said she would text me when I was next in the queue. Now that's what I call having the patient's interests in mind.

Patients also deal with various healthcare workers during each visit. Proper communication between healthcare workers along the chain can help them be clearer about the patient's previous procedures before their encounter with him. Having this total picture would let them improve the patient's experience and allow many of the incidents leading to abuse to be pre-empted.

Liu Fook Tim



Conclusion

- Creating the respectful and supportive environment is a shared responsibility and commitment
- Key Reminders - empathy, clear communication and mutual respect
- Encouragement to speak up and support one another.

