



Danielle's Law Training

**Identifying  
Life  
Threatening  
Emergencies**



# Responsibilities & Quality of Care

- **You have an important role in caring for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities**
- **Recognizing medical issues and obtaining appropriate care is vital**
- **Good communication and monitoring of individuals you are assisting provides quality of care**
- **Your actions can save a life**



# Identifying Life Threatening Emergencies

- **Life Threatening Emergencies are potentially fatal**
- **Not all medical situations are life threatening emergencies**
- **Need to identify those situations that are life threatening emergencies**



## Health Threatening Conditions

- **Some medical situations may be health threatening, but not life threatening**
- **Obtain appropriate medical care for health threatening conditions, such as calling a doctor**
- **Always follow established medical protocols for any individual you support, such as checking blood sugar or providing PRN asthma medication**
- **Report all health conditions to your supervisor and monitor the condition**



# Health Threatening Conditions

- **Examples of Health Threatening Conditions:**
  - **Sprained ankle**
  - **Bleeding controlled with pressure**
  - **Seizures typical to the person that last under 5 minutes**
  - **Minor burns/cuts**
  - **Flu symptoms**
- **If the health threatening condition worsens or becomes life threatening, call 9-1-1 immediately**



## Identifying Life Threatening Emergencies

- **Life threatening emergencies are those situations when immediate intervention is necessary to protect a person's life or if serious impairment or dysfunction of a person's body functions or organs/parts may occur**



# Identifying Life Threatening Emergencies

- **Examples of life threatening emergencies include, but are not limited to:**
  - **Unconsciousness**
  - **Persistent chest pain or discomfort**
  - **Not breathing or trouble breathing**
  - **Severe bleeding**
  - **Severe, persistent abdominal pain**
  - **Stroke symptoms**
  - **Serious head injury**
  - **Shock**
  - **Some seizures**



# Identifying Life Threatening Emergencies

- **Seizures that may be life threatening:**
  - **First time seizure**
  - **Lasting longer than 5 minutes**
  - **Back-to-back (3 or more in a row)**
  - **Result in serious injury**
  - **Person is not breathing once seizure stops**
  - **Occur in someone who is pregnant**
  - **Occur in someone who has diabetes**





# Identifying Life Threatening Emergencies

- **Some questions to determine if 9-1-1 should be called:**
  - ✓ **Could this condition be potentially fatal?**
  - ✓ **Could the condition get worse and become life threatening if you drove the person to the hospital?**
  - ✓ **Could moving the person on your own cause further injury?**
  - ✓ **Does the person require the skills/equipment of emergency medical personnel?**



## Identifying Life Threatening Emergencies

- **If you identify a life threatening emergency, CALL 9-1-1 immediately**
- ***Don't* call a supervisor or co-worker first when a life threatening emergency exists**
- **If you are not sure if the situation is life threatening, call 9-1-1**



## Calling 9-1-1

- **Tell the 9-1-1 Operator:**
  - ✓ **Your name and number**
  - ✓ **Location of incident**
  - ✓ **What happened**
  - ✓ **Condition of person including any special conditions**
  - ✓ **Care being provided**
- **Don't hang up until the dispatcher instructs you to do so**



## Danielle's Law and End of Life

- **DDD interprets “life-threatening emergency” not to include issues that arise related to the terminal condition of an individual at the end of life receiving hospice or palliative care**
  - **Staff does not need to call 911 for an individual receiving end-of-life care when issues arise related to the medical condition; a violation of Danielle's Law will not have occurred**



## Danielle's Law and End of Life (cont.)

- **Individuals at the end of life should be permitted to have their and their guardians' decisions regarding medical treatment followed**
- **Appropriate medical care must always be provided**



## Danielle's Law and End of Life (cont.)

- **Staff must call 911 if a “life-threatening emergency” does occur**
  - **An event not related to the end-of-life condition – for example, an injury leading to excessive bleeding**
  - **If the individual has a Practitioner Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) or Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order, this should be provided to emergency personnel**



## Scenarios Activity

- **Get into small groups**
- **Determine if each situation is a life-threatening emergency requiring a 9-1-1 call**
- **Decide how you would handle the situation**
- **Choose a group leader as a spokesperson to report your group's decisions**



# Responding to Life Threatening Emergencies

- **CHECK** the person to determine if he/she is experiencing a life threatening emergency
- **CALL 9-1-1 IF the condition is life threatening**
- **CARE** for the person until help arrives

*You are not required to call 9-1-1 in non-life threatening situations, but appropriate medical care is **always** required*



## Who is Danielle?



- **32 year old Danielle Gruskowski lived a full and active life as a member of her family and of the Carteret, NJ community**
- **She founded the “Carteret Specials” group dedicated to enriching the lives of local children with developmental disabilities, which is still active today**

## Danielle's Law



- **Danielle's Law was named in her memory to increase necessary 9-1-1 calls for life threatening emergencies**
- **The law emphasizes the importance of staff calling 9-1-1 in life threatening emergencies for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities or traumatic brain injuries**



## **It's the Law: Staff Responsibilities**

- **Anyone who works with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities or traumatic brain injury must call 9-1-1 in the event of a life threatening emergency**
- **Not calling 9-1-1 or delaying the call in a life threatening emergency is a violation of the law**



# Employer/Provider Responsibilities

- **Ensure staff are trained to identify life threatening emergencies and know when to call 9-1-1**
- **File an incident report according to Division procedures**
- **Maintain a record of all 9-1-1 calls**



## Department of Human Services Responsibilities

- **Ensure training is provided to service providers**
- **Maintain records of provider calls to 9-1-1**
- **Review potential violations of Danielle's Law**
  - Situations where a reasonably prudent person did not act in a life threatening emergency
- **Maintain records of violations**



## Penalties for Non-Compliance with Law

- **If you do not call 9-1-1 in a life threatening emergency, penalties may include:**
  - **Termination from employment**
  - **Fines up to \$25,000**
  - **Loss of license (for healthcare professionals)**



## How are Danielle's Law Violations Reviewed?

- **Reviewed by OPIA & DDD Risk Management Staff**
- **Criteria:**
  - **Was the condition a life threatening emergency?**
  - **Would a reasonably prudent person have known at the time of the incident that the condition was life threatening?**
  - **Outcome of incident not considered**
- **Recommendation made to Assistant Commissioner for final decision**

## Review & Quiz

- **Review of health threatening conditions**
- **Review of life threatening emergencies**
- **Frequently Asked Questions**
- **Quiz**



**For  
Life Threatening  
Emergencies**





## Quiz Question: True or False?

- **Direct care staff often know the person best, so their input into medical conditions is important.**

***TRUE OR FALSE?***



## Quiz Question: True or False?

- **All medical situations and conditions are life threatening emergencies.**

***TRUE OR FALSE?***



## Quiz Question: True or False?

- **All 9-1-1 calls must be for life threatening emergencies.**

***TRUE OR FALSE?***



## Quiz Question: True or False?

- **A health threatening condition may need immediate medical care such as driving someone to the doctor's office or an emergency room.**

***TRUE OR FALSE?***



## Quiz Question: True or False?

- **Examples of life threatening emergencies would be a heart attack or stroke.**

***TRUE OR FALSE?***



## Quiz Question: True or False?

- **An example of a health threatening condition would be seizures typical for the person lasting less than 5 minutes.**

***TRUE OR FALSE?***



## Quiz Question: True or False?

- **If someone is having trouble breathing, but is conscious and able to talk to you, it would be safe to drive them to the hospital yourself.**

***TRUE OR FALSE?***



## Quiz Question: True or False?

- **When you identify a life threatening emergency, you should call 9-1-1, provide care and then call your supervisor to report the situation.**

***TRUE OR FALSE?***





## Quiz Question: True or False?

- **Health threatening conditions are not emergencies, however appropriate and prompt medical care is always required, such as calling a doctor.**

***TRUE OR FALSE?***



## Wrap Up

- **Questions?**
- **Acknowledgement of Training Form**

***Thank You!***