



Code at home: chaos and crisis

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Events of September 2022

Boredom: Emails, football/golf on TV on a rainy Sunday afternoon.

Discovery: Partner VSA in bathroom??

Fright/paralysis: Partner VSA in bathroom (WTH right brain screaming)!!

Flight/action: Do the job. ABC, CPR. Call 911 (left brain engaged, right turned off). “Where’s my stethoscope (not really needed)?” Why are pupils already big?!? No IV/O₂/monitor/POCUS in our bathroom?!?

Frustration: “Do you know how to do CPR?” Yes; after 5 years residency training, 25 years clinical experience, teaching ACLS, etc., I KNOW HOW TO DO F’N CPR (which I didn’t yell back to dispatcher).

Rescue: EMS arrival, clear the room, collect up the dogs (going crazy with all commotion).

Seeker: Get her meds together.

Anticipation 1: EMS updates = ETT, IV lines, meds, CPR ongoing, asystole on monitor. “Okay” like I’m hearing a weather report...

Anticipation 2: No ROSC/rhythm change, calling base hospital for further direction. “Okay” knowing how this will end...

Resignation: No ROSC, termination of resuscitation. “Okay.”

Bewilderment: WTF just happened?!?

Dread: Need to call sister and mother to share the worst news anyone will ever hear...

Anticipation: What will coroner do/say upon arrival? Will they investigate??

Meltdown: Sister, mother distraught on arrival. Do the job = prep for what they will see. Inevitable catastrophic meltdown. Provide comfort (as per the job)... How am I doing THIS speech AT HOME?!?

Trepidation: When are they coming to get her?

Breakdown: Can’t keep it together upon body removal; the dam bursts.

Guilt: What did I do wrong? How could I not save HER, after hundreds saved over 25 years?!? How did I not hear her go down; was the TV too loud? Were the dogs barking and I missed something until too late? Why do I not have an AED/cardiac monitor/crash cart in the house? Endless similar pointless ruminations...

Trepidation: Now what?

Anxiety: What do I have to do tomorrow, then next day, and the next? And forever after this??

Resignation 2: Lotta tasks to do next few days, care for dogs, paperwork + + ...Where’s her will/documents??

Resolution (or lack thereof) 5 months later: Coroner’s report in, CoD undetermined?!? Closure for me/sister/mother?!?

Data availability Data can be made available.

Declarations

Conflict of interest This is a sole-author submission, and I declare no financial/academic conflicts of interest for this work.

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