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Resource 3 Case Study 2            Healthcare systems across the country are increasingly strained. Many hospitals and emergency rooms are underfunded and understaffed.

The situation encountered by Joe could occur in any of the nation’s thousands of emergency rooms. Joe’s plight is one shared by countless medical professionals across settings and specialties. He faces a crossroad about how best to pursue his career.            Although Joe reportedly started his shift with a positive attitude and open mind, no information is available about his recent activities. Was this his sixth night on duty with little rest or relaxation? When not working, was Joe actively focused on physical, emotional, and spiritual methods to recover? Joe’s job is extremely demanding in all of these domains and it is essential that he factor recovery into his busy schedule to prevent burnout.            The incident in the waiting room could be evidence of burnout or simply an inability to cope under pressure.

While Joe empathized with the young man in the waiting room, he became overwhelmed when confronted. At that moment, Joe’s priority should have been getting his patient medical attention as soon as possible. Joe is not responsible for maintaining safety in the emergency room. At the moment of confrontation, Joe should have immediately alert security and other hospital staff to provide the assistance he needed to get the elderly man care.            In a profession that literally saves the lives of countless people every day, it can be too easy to forget no one is super human.

Doctors, nurses, and hospital staff need to work as a team, especially during challenging times. It’s only natural for traumatic injuries to have an effect on the team members who treat them. Providing support and offering to help a struggling staff member is imperative to maintaining the mental health of medical team and the physical health of the patients.            Following this disturbing incident, the best course of action for Joe is to revisit his hospital’s policies regarding belligerent patients and family members.

While Joe’s compassion led him to understand the young man’s desperation, it doesn’t change the interruption to care the elderly man experienced. The young man’s outburst could have cost the older patient his life. It may be helpful for Joe to stay focused on the most equal and fair way to triage patients, from most to least severe. It’s an unfortunate that most emergency rooms require a long wait, but it is the only way to save as many lives as possible.            Experienced veterans of the hectic emergency room environment can also serve as helpful resources for Joe during this challenging time. Everyone from the guest services attendant to the chief physician has probably found effective ways to deal with difficult patient, stressful cases, and overwhelming emotions. Joe should learn from his colleagues, trust his decisions, and be confident in his choices. His intentions to be a competent and compassionate professional are clear.

With the right cultivation and fortification of his coping abilities, his skills will be even more impressive.