

The Panic Button



Everyone has a panic button. It is a natural protective internal system that causes us to react in life threatening situations. First aid situations can trigger a person's panic button.

Did you hear about the paramedic that came upon the scene of a rescue in progress by a bystander who was performing CPR on an unconscious casualty? The bystander was doing chest compressions and "practice breathing" into the casualty. One would question why anyone would "practice breathe" in a real emergency scenario. Chest compressions alone would be more advantageous as they would not interrupt the flow of blood to the vital organs. However, if you understand the dynamics of the average person who is thrown into an "un-average" situation, the reasons become clearer.



Emergencies quite naturally induce the feeling of panic among those that are not highly trained or experienced. Panic can interfere with the thinking process causing the responder to revert to a more robotic mode which copies the movements learned in the first aid class. First Aid Instructors that do not want to clean and sanitize manikins or do not have enough manikins available for the whole class may tell their students not to breathe directly into them during training. Instead, they may tell them to, "practice breathe", whereby the student simulates a breath to the side of the manikin face.

Unfortunately, this training style does not provide the responder with the best opportunity of success in an emergency situation.



Another example of panic inducing responders into robotic mode occurred at a plant in Mississauga. An employee experienced a severe laceration on the hand that caused a significant amount of blood spillage. The trained responders bandaged the wound to stop the bleeding but did not take off the paper wrapping from the gauze bandage pads. The employees reported that in their first aid class they practiced bandaging using gauze pads that were still in their paper wrapping.

If you are booking first aid training for your employees, check to make sure your provider of choice will have enough manikins so that everyone in the class can practice the skills exactly as they would of a real situation occurs. Training kits with protective barriers and bandages should also be provided to each

student so that practice is as realistic as possible, ensuring that even if the panic button is stimulated and robotic memory takes over, the end result will be as successful as possible.

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