Lecture 2

Importance of Assessing the Situation in First Aid

In any emergency, one of the first and most important actions a first aider must take is **to assess the situation**;

- For ensuring both personal safety and the safety of the injured or ill person
- To determine how severe the injury or illness is. This helps make informed decisions about what kind of necessary first aid and whether emergency medical services are required
- For providing appropriate care that can significantly improve the chances of a positive outcome

Importance of Remaining Calm and Focused

In any emergency, **staying calm** is one of the most important skills a first aider can have. Panicking can make the situation worse and cause unnecessary stress to both you and the injured person.

1. **Clear Thinking:** Staying calm helps think logically and assess the situation properly. This allows to prioritize actions and use first aid knowledge effectively.
2. **Reassurance to the Injured Person:** If the person sees that you're calm, it will help them feel more at ease, which can reduce their anxiety and prevent them from worsening the situation through panic.
3. **Effective Communication:** Being calm allows you to communicate more effectively with both the injured person and anyone around you. Clear instructions can help prevent confusion and ensure everyone knows their role in helping.

Techniques for Staying Calm:

- **Deep Breaths:** Take slow, deep breaths to help reduce anxiety and clear your mind.
- **Positive Self-Talk:** Remind yourself that you are capable and that you know how to handle the situation.
- **Focus on One Step at a Time:** Break down the emergency into manageable steps rather than feeling overwhelmed by the whole situation.

Primary Assessment (primary survey): Checking for Danger, Responsiveness, Airway, Breathing, and Circulation (DRABC)

The DRABC are a systematic way to check the person's condition and prioritize care:

1- Danger

How to Assess the Environment for Danger?

Safety First

Before rushing to help someone, it is crucial to assess the environment for any potential risks or hazards that could cause harm to you or the injured person. If the scene is unsafe, do not attempt to help. Instead, call emergency services immediately. Your role is to ensure that you, and anyone else around, is out of harm's way.

1. **Look for Immediate Dangers:**
    - **Traffic:** If the injury occurs near traffic, make sure there's no risk of being struck by a vehicle. If necessary, move the person to a safer area.
    - **Fire or Smoke:** Check for any signs of fire, smoke, or burning. If there is a fire, your priority is to get yourself and the injured person away from the danger and call for professional help (e.g., fire services).
    - **Electrical Hazards:** Watch out for exposed wires or anything electrical that could cause further injury, such as electrocution.
    - **Toxic Spills or Gas Leaks:** If you suspect toxic chemicals, gases, or leaks, it's important to move away from the area and call for professional help (e.g., fire services).
2. **Assess the Terrain:**
    - If the ground uneven, any obstacles or debris that could cause additional injuries if you move the person.
3. **Consider Weather Conditions:**
    - Extreme temperatures, like heat or cold, could worsen the person's condition. Always consider whether the environment is contributing to or complicating the injury (e.g., hypothermia in cold weather, dehydration in heat).
4. **Crowd Control:**
    - Ensure that the crowd around is not creating additional risks.

Personal Safety and Using Protective Equipment

A first aider should always prioritize own safety to avoid becoming a second victim.

- **Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**
  - **Gloves:** to prevent contact with blood, bodily fluids, or other contaminants.
  - **Face Shield or Mask:** If needed to perform CPR or come into contact with bodily fluids (e.g., when someone is vomiting or bleeding from the mouth), to reduce the risk of transmission of diseases.
  - **Eye Protection:** If the situation involves potential exposure to harmful substances (e.g., chemicals, blood splatter).
- **Avoid Direct Contact with Hazardous Materials:**
  - If the person is in contact with hazardous substances like chemicals, toxins, or bodily fluids, avoid direct contact. Use cloth or available materials to help move them or call for professional assistance if needed.
- **Infection Control:**
  - **Hand Hygiene:** Always wash hands thoroughly before and after providing care to prevent the spread of infection.
  - **Disinfect Equipment:** After using tools like scissors or tweezers, clean them thoroughly with antiseptic wipes or disinfectant.

2- Responsiveness

Check for Consciousness:

Gently tap or shake the person's shoulder and ask loudly, "Are you okay?"

Conscious state: check the conscious state every few minutes and note any changes. Use the **'AVPU' code**:

- **Alert**: The patient is alert (fully awake) and responding
- **Voice**: The patient responds to voice
- **Pain:** The patient responds to a painful stimulus
  - If they respond (e.g., speak or move), they are conscious, and continue to monitor their condition.
- **Unresponsive**: The patient is unresponsive to any matter done
  - If there is no response (unconscious), call for help and proceed to check their **A**irway, **B**reathing, and **C**irculation.

3- Airway

Ensure the Airway is Clear:

- **Head-tilt, Chin-lift:** If the person is unconscious, tilt their head back gently and lift their chin to open the airway. This helps prevent the tongue from blocking the airway.
- **Check for Obstructions:** Look inside the mouth and throat for any visible obstructions, such as food, vomit, or debris. If there is something, try to clear it with a finger (if possible).

4- Breathing

Check for Breathing:

- **Look, Listen, and Feel:** Place your ear near the person's mouth and nose, look for chest rise, and listen for breathing sounds. Feel for air movement on your cheek for up to 10 seconds.
- **Normal Breathing:** If the person is breathing normally, keep them in a stable position **(recovery position)** while monitoring their breathing.
- **No Breathing:** If there is no breathing, start CPR (if trained), and call emergency services immediately.

5- Circulation (Pulse and Bleeding)

Check for a Pulse

- If the person is conscious, check their pulse at the wrist (radial pulse). If they are unconscious, check for a pulse at the neck (carotid pulse). A pulse check of 5-10 seconds is standard for determining the presence of a pulse in unresponsive patient.
- **Severe Bleeding:** If the person is bleeding heavily, apply pressure to the wound immediately to control the bleeding while waiting for medical help.