Team Dynamics

As a BLS provider, you may be involved in a multirescuer resuscitation attempt. Effective team dynamics increase the chances of a successful resuscitation. Everyone on the team must understand not just *what* to do in a resuscitation attempt but *how* to communicate and perform effectively as part of a multirescuer team.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this Part, you will be able to

- Describe the importance of teams in multirescuer resuscitation
- Perform as an effective team member during multirescuer CPR

Elements of Effective Team Dynamics

A successful resuscitation attempt depends on high-quality resuscitation skills, good communication, and effective team dynamics. All rescuers on the team must be able to respond rapidly and effectively in an emergency situation. Effective multirescuer team dynamics help give victims the best chance of survival.

Team dynamics during a resuscitation attempt include 3 elements:

- Roles and responsibilities
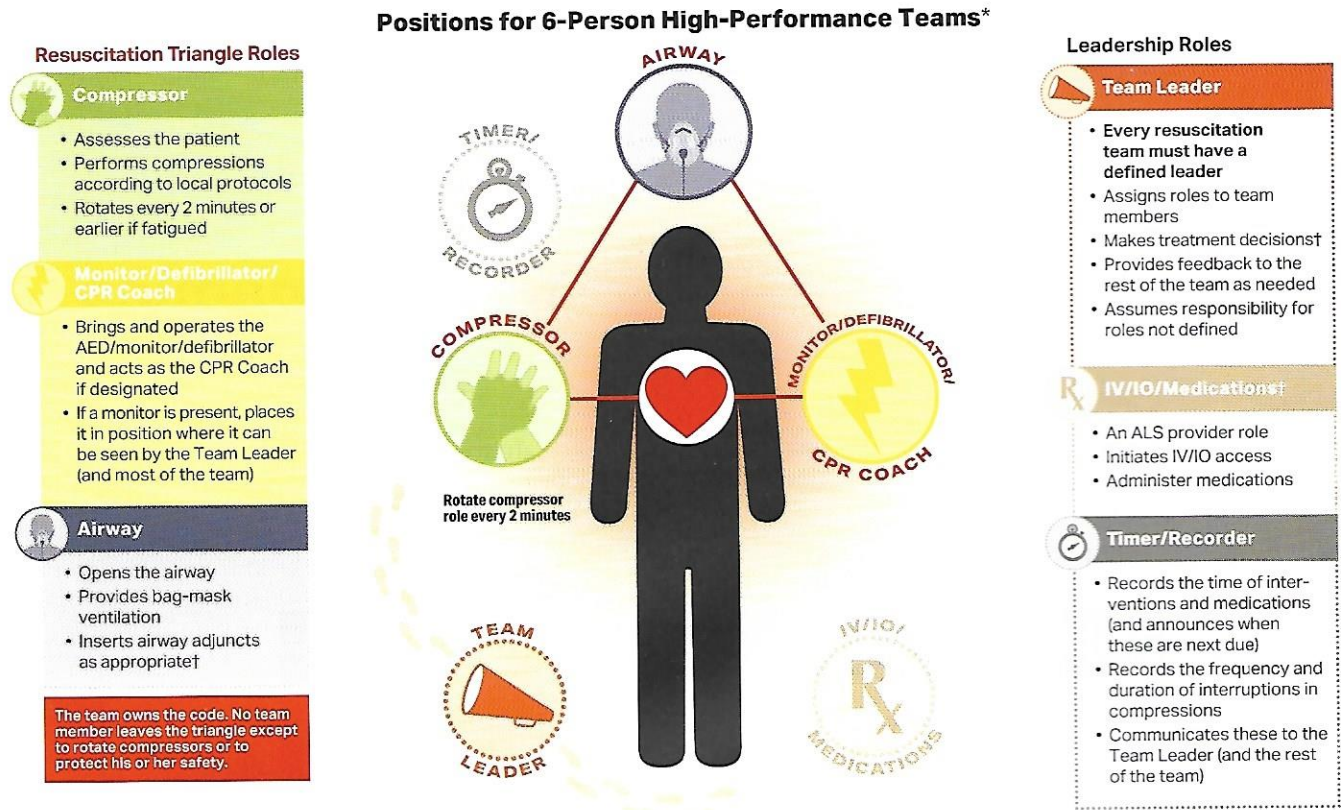- Communication
- Debriefing

Roles and Responsibilities

Because every second matters during a resuscitation attempt, it is important to define clear roles and responsibilities as soon as possible.

Assign Roles and Responsibilities

When all team members know their jobs and responsibilities, the team functions more smoothly. Rescuers should clearly define roles as soon as possible and delegate tasks according to each team member's skill level. As soon as the victim is identified as *pulseless*, the CPR Coach will identify themselves and prompt the Compressor to begin chest compressions.

Figure 26 shows an example of a team formation with assigned roles.

Figure 26. Team diagram, including both BLS and advanced provider roles.

Positions for 6-Person High-Performance Teams*

Resuscitation Triangle Roles

Compressor
- Assesses the patient
- Performs compressions according to local protocols
- Rotates every 2 minutes or earlier if fatigued

Monitor/Defibrillator/ CPR Coach
- Brings and operates the AED/monitor/defibrillator and acts as the CPR Coach if designated
- If a monitor is present, places it in position where it can be seen by the Team Leader (and most of the team)

Airway
- Opens the airway
- Provides bag-mask ventilation
- Inserts airway adjuncts as appropriate†

The team owns the code. No team member leaves the triangle except to rotate compressors or to protect his or her safety.

Rotate compressor role every 2 minutes

Leadership Roles

Team Leader
- Every resuscitation team must have a defined leader
- Assigns roles to team members
- Makes treatment decisions†
- Provides feedback to the rest of the team as needed
- Assumes responsibility for roles not defined

IV/IO/Medications†
- An ALS provider role
- Initiates IV/IO access
- Administer medications

Timer/Recorder
- Records the time of interventions and medications (and announces when these are next due)
- Records the frequency and duration of interruptions in compressions
- Communicates these to the Team Leader (and the rest of the team)

*This is a suggested team formation. Roles may be adapted to local protocol.
†Roles and tasks are performed by advanced providers.

Know Your Limitations

All team members should know their limitations. The Team Leader needs to be aware of them as well. For example, advanced life support providers may be able to perform tasks that BLS providers would not be permitted to do. Some of these tasks are administering medications and performing intubation. Each team member should ask for assistance and advice early, before a situation starts to get worse.

Offer Constructive Intervention

Whether you are a team member or the Team Leader, there may be times when you need to point out another team member's incorrect or inappropriate actions. When this happens, it is important to intervene in a tactful and constructive way. This is especially important if someone is about to make a mistake on a drug, a dose, or an intervention.

Anyone on the team should speak up to stop someone else from making a mistake, regardless of role.

Communication

Share Knowledge

Knowledge sharing is important for effective team performance. Not only can it help ensure that everyone fully understands the situation, but it can also help the team treat patients more efficiently and effectively. Team Leaders should frequently ask for observations and feedback. This includes asking for good ideas about managing a resuscitation attempt as well as for observations about possible oversights.

Summarize and Reevaluate

Summarizing information aloud is helpful during a resuscitation attempt because it

- Provides an ongoing record of treatment
- Is a way to reevaluate the victim's status, the interventions, and the team's progress within the algorithm of care
- Helps team members respond to the victim's changing condition

Use Closed-Loop Communication

Closed-loop communication is an important technique used to prevent misunderstandings and treatment errors. It consists of the sender giving the message, the receiver repeating it back, and the sender then confirming it was heard correctly. To practice closed-loop communication, the Team Leader and team members should do the following:

Team Leader

- Call each team member by name and make eye contact when giving an instruction.
- Do not assign additional tasks until you are sure the team member understands the instruction.

Team members

- Confirm that you understand each task the Team Leader assigns to you by verbally acknowledging that task.
- Tell the Team Leader when you have finished a task.

Give Clear Messages

To help prevent misunderstandings and keep everyone focused, all team members should

- Use clear, concise language
- Speak loudly enough to be heard
- Speak in a tone that's both calm and confident

Show Mutual Respect

All team members should display mutual respect and a professional attitude, regardless of each rescuer's skill level or training. Emotions can run high during a resuscitation attempt. It's especially important for the Team Leader to speak in a friendly, controlled voice and avoid shouting or aggression.

Coaching and Debriefing

Coaching and debriefing are important in every resuscitation attempt. During the event, the CPR Coach will help improve performance of compressions and ventilation by ongoing coaching. They also will work with the Team Leader to minimize pauses in compressions during defibrillation and placement of an advanced airway.

After the resuscitation event, debriefing is an opportunity for the team to discuss how the resuscitation went, identify why the team took certain actions, and discuss whether anything can be improved in future events. Debriefing can occur immediately with the entire team or be scheduled at a later time with the team and others. It is an opportunity for education, quality improvement, and processing of emotions after participation in a stressful event.

Debriefing has been shown to

- Help individual team members perform better
- Aid in identifying system strengths and deficiencies

Implementing debriefing programs may improve patient survival after cardiac arrest.

Review Questions

1. After performing high-quality CPR for 5 minutes, the Team Leader frequently interrupts chest compressions to check for a pulse. Which action demonstrates constructive intervention?

   a. Ask another rescuer what he thinks should be done.

   b. Say nothing that contradicts the Team Leader.

   c. Suggest resuming chest compressions without delay.

   d. Wait until the debriefing session afterward to discuss it.

2. The Team Leader asks you to perform bag-mask ventilation during a resuscitation attempt, but you have not perfected that skill. What would be an appropriate action to acknowledge your limitations?

   a. Pick up the bag-mask device and give it to another team member.

   b. Pretend you did not hear the request and hope the Team Leader chooses someone else to do it.

   c. Tell the Team Leader you are not comfortable performing that task.

   d. Try to do it as best you can and hope another team member will see you struggling and take over.

3. What is the appropriate action to demonstrate closed-loop communication when the Team Leader assigns you a task?

   a. Repeat back to the Team Leader the task assigned to you.

   b. Nod your head as an acknowledgment of the assigned task.

   c. Start performing the assigned tasks, but do not speak, to minimize noise.

   d. Wait for the Team Leader to address you by name before you acknowledge the task.

See Answers to Review Questions in the Appendix.