

Chapter 8-Critical Thinking Questions

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1. Joanie is on the phone with Sam, a patient, when Mrs. Smith, a busybody, comes to the window to sign in for her physician's appointment. Joanie continues the conversation with Sam, who has been diagnosed as HIV positive. Mrs. Smith is the next-door neighbor to Sam and recognizes who is being discussed. When she leaves the office, Mrs. Smith tells the neighbors that Sam has AIDS and they should be very careful. What did Joanie do that was unethical and in violation of HIPAA regulations?

What Joanie should have done is first of all she should have asked Sam to come in to speak to the physician. Considering the situation, Joanie should have asked Sam if she could put him on hold, and either then taken care of Mrs. Smith, and after that returned to the call, or excused herself and gone into a more private area like another room.

2. While you are working as a medical assistant, two phone calls come in at the same time: one for an appointment, which you answer first, and one from a mother who says her child might have swallowed rat poison. How would you handle these calls to be sure the patients get the attention they need?

I would politely ask the patient on the phone if I could put them on hold, and then see if I could forward the call to another MA, and if not then I would see if I could get a callback number assuring them that I would be returning their call in just a few moments. I then would set up a conference call between the 911 operator, myself, and the mother. After I requested the number that the mother was calling from in case of disconnection. I would then stay on the line until the EMS team was contacted.

3. Mrs. Olsen calls complaining about the care that she has received and the fact that you, the medical assistant, will not give her the results of her laboratory tests or tell her what the physician thinks is wrong with her. How do you handle this call, and why is it important for the physician to know about the complaint?

The MA needs to actively listen to Mrs. Olsen and her complaint. The first thing is to apologize and let Mrs. Olsen know that you understand her frustration using a calm and mellow voice, by doing so that may allow Mrs. Olsen to start to calm her voice. Then MA needs to explain to her that all questions pertaining to the results need to be directed to the physician and that you would be more than happy to schedule an appointment. If that does

not satisfy her, then the MA could suggest that they could find the answers to her questions and call her back later on that day or possibly the next morning. While handling this phone call, the MA needs to take detailed notes so after the call is handled, then the notes can be either given or forwarded to the physician, so when they speak with Mrs. Olsen, they know what her complaint is and what the MA stated to her.