

Rapid Response

Research shows many patients exhibit signs and symptoms of increasing instability for several hours prior to a cardiac arrest. A Rapid Response Team, generally critical care specialists, intervene before a potential code situation, based on the bedside nurse's sensitivity to a patient's deteriorating condition and call to action. A *Rapid Response* article is designed to give the nurse the assessment, critical thinking, intervention and communication skills needed to respond appropriately and effectively.

Below is the format for *Rapid Response*. Address each point below, with the total word count around 600. Typically, the scenario will take place in a non-acute care setting, such as a med-surg unit, labor & delivery, orthopedic unit, and the like.

- Describe the series of events/assessments from the nurse's perspective (include diagnosis, hospitalization status, and any significant history issues), beginning with the first encounter until the call for a rapid response. Be sure to start with vague complaints, including a valuable assessment finding, if possible, that makes the nurse more concerned and warrants a closer follow-up (nurse's intuition).
- As the patient's condition worsens, describe the nurse's actions taken to modify her assessment, increase surveillance, (intervene or treatment steps until team arrives) touch base with the PCP, and other measures demonstrating critical thinking and communication skills.
- Include detailed step by step intervention/treatment steps that were taken by you or the RRT to derail further deterioration including drugs, doses, routes, etc.
- Provide an outcome/explanation for the scenario with the patient either stabilizing or being transferred to the appropriate acute care setting (ICU, CCU, OR).
- Give a brief overview of the issue that threatened, e.g., as in anaphylaxis – what it is – how it occurs, etc.—what could have happened if you did not foresee, treat, etc. Please keep explanation short to paragraph or so.
- Offer patient/family education--or even for the reader (such as clues to assessment findings or lab values)

Again, the scenario doesn't always have to be about a nurse calling the Rapid Response Team, but it should demonstrate how the nurse's assessment skills, intervention, critical thinking abilities and effective communication contribute to positive patient outcomes.