



Royal College  
of Nursing



Making time for nursing teams to defuse after challenging or difficult situations can support their psychological wellbeing and enhance their self-care and management. It can also help to sustain a workforce and reinforce teamwork. It is also a perfect opportunity to share success and positive experiences.

### The purpose of defusing

- To aid communication and understanding.
- To acknowledge what has been happening.
- To celebrate success/growth.
- To maximise the functionality of individuals and the team.

Opportunities for defusing exist at the beginning (handover), during (at an agreed time) and at the completion of each shift of duty. The nurse in charge should assume responsibility for facilitating defusing activities per shift and should:

a) explain the importance of honest and open

team to connect regularly

b) plan an agreed time that the whole team can get together and connect with the nurse in charge

# Remember...

a

1

Acknowledge that it has been a

2

Emphasise areas of good practice and how well everyone has done. Thank them for

3

Ask how everyone has been feeling during the shift and how they are feeling now.

4

If any strong feelings or opinions are expressed, just let this happen. Don't feel that you have to rationalise these or come up with the answer. The simple message should be, 'it's okay to have feelings and it's okay to express them.'

5

any reactions, thoughts or feelings they may experience ie, normal reactions of normal people to extreme and busy circumstances.

6

If any physical interventions were used during the shift, check the physical

## Suggested content of a more detailed defusing session after a particularly

points or observations they want to make about anything that has happened during the shift or any problems eg, racial abuse, threats, procedure or equipment. Don't try and sort these out now. Comment or explain if you can but make it brief.

clinical supervision.

perspective and control over what has been happening during the shift.

feelings, others will prefer not to talk about what happened, both at the time

existing supervision arrangements and

support and also as a way of supporting each other.

Finally, emphasise areas of good practice again and how well everyone has done. Thank them for their





For further information and  
advice please go to:  
[www.rcn.org.uk/time-and-space](http://www.rcn.org.uk/time-and-space)

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