APPROACH TO THE AGITATED PATIENT

PRESENTATION
- Repetitive Motor Activity
- Repetitive Speech
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Restlessness
- Possible Aggression

Agitation is not a diagnosis, but a manifestation of many vast possible underlying pathologies.

COMMON CAUSES OF AGITATION IN THE ED
- Substance intoxication and withdrawal
- Psychiatric illness
- Delirium
- Dementia

Agitation can be very traumatizing for the patient to experience.

It is important to remember however that agitated patients can escalate to aggressive or violent behaviour posing a risk to themselves and others.

GOALS OF DE-ESCALATION
1. Ensure the safety of the patient, staff, and others in the area
2. Help the patient manage their emotions and distress, and maintain or regain control of their behaviour
3. Avoid the use of restraints when at all possible
4. Avoid coercive interventions that escalate agitation

OUR PATIENTS ARE HUMAN, AND SHOULD BE TREATED WITH RESPECT AND COMPASSION AT ALL TIMES.