



The Need for all Health Care Workers to be Able to Control their Temper at all Times: Always Cheerful!

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It goes without saying that health workers are human beings facing the same issues and challenges as everyone else. These workers mostly work under the expectations by the general public to deliver answers to all of their health needs. Thus, such workers on whom public have placed such “divine” expectations on must be seen to be humble and temperate at all times. It will not be acceptable to see these groups of workers to be unnecessarily angry, aggressive, shouting, temperamental, easily aroused to anger, and worse still, physically involved in a combat. The observing public must be able to trust these workers and see them as mild tempered individual, who can reason with them, not appear as all knowing, not aloof nor proud. These personal attributes often put people off and the expert capabilities of these physicians may thus not impact on the needy(ing) populace. Healthcare providers must be easily approachable, with no obstruction or restraint, and be seen to be happy to help persons in quest for answers to their challenges. Even in the face of the inadequacies that are encountered regularly in all or probably in most of our health facilities, providers or workers must be seen to be tolerant, cool headed and not to vent their frustrations on the innocent populace.

They too are probably equally frustrated by the near total breakdown in the health sector: viz-a-viz- expensive medications that are probably counterfeited and adulterated and therefore ineffective, high cost of treatment in both the private and public hospitals, poorly staffed and therefore overworked and stressed workers, lengthy waiting times experienced by the patients who mostly do not have any other choice nor plan B. There are too many reasons for all workers to be angry at every turn they make. Poor power supply, poor or no water supply, decayed or decaying infrastructure with poor maintenance culture in place, no budget

to replace or to repair damaged or missing instruments, worse still, the system may not recognize that an essential aid for diagnosis and treatment has gone missing – poor inventory taking by a colluding or angry staff. The national economic situation is probably heavily contributing to the nervous stimulation of not only the healthcare worker but also just about anyone else.

The situation is enough to make ones palm to sweat!!!

The cost to rent a decent apartment in a good neighborhood has gradually crept to an unaffordable level. If you decide then to dare the landlords and build your own house, you may just be frightened off even before you convince yourself to think of the project. The cost of a piece or plot of land is such that you might need to get a cash loan from the ever willing co-operative societies and then get your remaining salary tied down to paying back the loan. This takes a while to achieve. If you scale past this hurdle, you then have to face the exorbitant costs of building materials, cost of architectural design for the building plan, pay the builders, and get a certificate of occupancy. None of these comes cheap. And you then have to contend with the ever-present societal “area boys” who demand usually violently for “deve” (development) levy that you must pay on demand if you want both peace and work to start and to continue on your site. These fellows are almost above the law. Who can help the helpless worker and yet the public expects him to put up a cheerful face!

Another source of stress concern to the health worker is the road network in the communities which are not motorable and while in some cases necessitate that you have to park your vehicle a distance away from your home and then walk the remaining distance only because you are not accessible by road. This situation becomes pronounced during the raining season when every road becomes water logged. And we are approaching this season with no government works done on any of these roads. A nightmare to everyone!!

The monetary demand on the healthcare worker could be quite alarming! – From the nuclear family to the paternal to maternal extended families.



After all, he is a heavily paid civil servant! Nobody ever bothers to ask uncle/aunty how much they really earn. Is our uncle/aunty not a doctor! A pharmacist! General Nurse, midwife! A biomedical engineer! Earning salaries only comparable with petrochemical oil workers who are paid in foreign currencies; whether this assertion is true or not, nobody wants to know. This dangerous, kidnapping encouraging information/assertion is occasionally made worse during trade disputes when government officials go public on daily tabloids and publish assumed salaries of different categorized of workers especially that of doctors ⁽¹⁾.

This is usually done to disdain the doctors in the eyes of usually condemning public eyes who view doctors as earning so much and yet are asking for more. In the public domain just to belittle the already stressed out doctors. There is no avenue to retrain the workers who actually needs such training to keep abreast and remain current, up to date with the level of knowledge and development in the health sector. The worker struggles with old residual knowledge to remain relevant and not rusty. Meanwhile retaining of workers is entirely for the benefit of the population-patients.

A nation where the sanctity of a healthcare worker who is on an essential duty may not be recognized; and such personnel may be brutalized and traumatized by Law enforcing agents is rather unfortunate. One such worker was forced into an extremely dirty, stagnant gutter by gun-trotting security agents only for daring to answer to a call of medical emergency of a distressed patient during the just concluded Covid-19 lockdown.

It did not matter that the involved worker presented his official government approved valid identification card and proved that he was going to see patients on admission in a government hospital. * * *

In another report, doctors in a federal government hospital in Delta State embarked on an indefinite strike just because their security was not anymore ensured. They highlighted series of persistent harassment from the very people who should ensure their security and safety ^(2,3,4).

And he is expected not to get angry or show once in a while that he is a human being!

Most intimidating challenges such as school fees for his own children, then for nephews, nieces, and cousins from all short and distant relations. And he does not say no, or his long suffering spouse is labeled a bad spouse, a witch who is now controlling "our son" and wants to eat (chop) all the millions of money that our son is making!!

And you are saying that the health worker should not be temperamental? Is it not a wonder that the man has not completely gone bonkers, lost it, broken down and has to be seen by a psychiatrist colleague who most probably is facing the same dilemma. A situation of who can rescue who! Who needs more urgent attention!

Who can bail this group of workers out of the grim situation that they find themselves in? The society expects so much from these personnel and unwittingly puts nerve- wrecking pressure on them to attain a level of material gains, luxurious lifestyle that is solely determined by the general public. And the worker may innocently fall into this trap of trying to please the patronizing society and may fall into error. Contentment is key. If you have clothing to cover and a roof to cover over your head, you ought to be contented. You must not destroy your health while trying to meet public dictation. His non-enviable position is made worse by the news of a massive exodus of both junior and senior colleagues overseas for the much media hyped greener pastures. He is daily regaled via the ubiquitous social media of the highly improved volume of foreign currencies that those escaped lucky ones earn overseas. These mouth watering currencies when converted to the local equivalents amount to huge sums.

And you want the long suffering doctors/ healthcare workers who have elected to stay back at home, or who may not have been able to escape or emigrate out like the others have, not to be dissatisfied and therefore temperamental?

Yes, he must learn not to show anger on his trusting patients, who might not trust his judgment and treatment if they perceive anger in him. He is judged as not been able to concentrate, and may not be able to pick up details while conducting examinations on them. Again, why will he not



be angry and his temper short-fused when he hardly sleeps well at night. If not the ever biting mosquitoes of different species, it is due to fear of house-break at night by the hoard of night marauders that are now all over the places. He is almost taut with fear when he is travelling on the road even when on his way to work daily. He is never sure if the next well appareled security force men at the road block is manned by truly genuine force men or by fake officers on illegitimate duty. And there are many such checking points on his way to and from work daily and he gets to work and back home drained of all emotions, persistent elevated heartbeat and fast respiratory rate and tight muscles resulting from fear of the unknown. And we are saying that he should be calm!

To make his matter worse, he lives under a treat, hoping and wishing that may it not get into the mind of any of his seemingly innocent looking children not to turn into the trending get rich quick syndrome.

This ailment is now ravaging our youths and such notorious calamities may lead these affected youth to need some unfortunate somebody for money making rituals. You may say "GOD FORBID", but such horrific stories though unproven had been reported on the ubiquities social media. May this not be our portion!

But despite all these pressures, the worker is still expected, enjoined and encouraged to be cheerful, and not display animosity towards his probably equally stressed patients. A control over our anger ensures that the usual "fight or flight" response of the body to anger is not triggered. If it is triggered, there is a sudden surge of adrenaline/ cortisol hormones into our bodies- heart rate increases, blood pressure shoots up, respiratory rate is increased, body temperature rises and we sweat! ^(5,6).

Why should one allow all these to happen, when he can stay calm and cool. More detrimental health problems that can be linked to uncontrolled temper/ anger include;

- Headache
- Insomnia
- Anxiety
- Depression

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- High blood pressure
- Heart attack
- Stroke ⁽⁵⁾

Why all these calamitous problems when we can be calm and avoid situation that can get us excited ⁽⁷⁾.

We recommend the following time tested easy way to stay on top of your temper:

- Think before you speak
- Stay calm and once you have achieved your calmness, you can then slowly tell your detractor your anger towards him
- Take a time-out and if possible, do some exercise
- At all costs, make sure that you do not hold grudges
- Practice joking over challenges and simply laugh over it
- If you think that you are losing it, please seek for help from trained counselors.
- Be respectful and specific
- Do not utterly criticize always and not always place blames always ⁽⁸⁾
- Be happy and wish for the best even though the reports do not seem to suggest so. ⁽⁹⁾

Soon, the era of suffering and smiling will be a thing of the past.

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