

Critical Reflection (Borton 1970) : Reasonable Adjustments

You are a student nurse on placement at a general practice. You witness this scenario.

Simon is 21 years old and has autism and mild communication difficulties. He lives at home with parents and younger brother. Simon likes to be independent and has a part-time job working at the local library during the week. At weekends Simon goes out with his support worker. He has a routine which he likes to follow and any disruption to his routine can have a huge impact on his mood. He's recently been diagnosed with vitamin D deficiency and has been advised to start a course of B12 injections, however, Simon has a phobia of needles and has been known to get very anxious and agitated before injections or blood tests.

When booking Simon's first appointment, his Mum requested an afternoon slot as this would be least disruptive to Simon's routine, however, the only available appointment was at 10:45am, meaning that Simon would not be able to go into work that day.

On the day of his appointment, Simon became very agitated as he was used to going into work. Simon was accompanied by his Mum to the surgery and went to check in with the receptionist. The receptionist asked for his date of birth but due to his levels of anxiety Simon struggled to remember. Getting impatient, the receptionist just spoke directly to Simon's Mum and ignored Simon which added to his agitation.

The waiting area was extremely loud, with babies crying and people coughing. One of the ceiling lights was broken and kept flickering on and off. This sensory overload increased Simon's every growing anxiety about his injection. When Simon's name was finally called 45 minutes later, he was finding it very hard to focus and remain calm, despite his Mum's best efforts. The consultation room had no windows which caused Simon to become very distressed and disruptive, pacing the room. His Mum asked if it was possible to perform the procedure in another room, however, the Nurse said there were no other rooms available. The nurse told Simon that she had lots of patients waiting and could he stop wasting everyone's time and sit down. When he didn't cooperate, the nurse became frustrated and told them she was unable to give the injection and they'd have to come back another day.

What: Consider how this situation was managed : i.e. What happened here?

So What: What is the potential impact this may have had on Simon and what reasonable adjustments should have been made to ease Simon's anxiety? And by whom?

Now What: What might you do differently in your future practice having read this scenario?

Bortons' 1970 Framework Guiding Reflective Activities in Jasper M (2003). Beginning reflective practice. Cheltenham: Nelson Thorn.