

# Speaking Up for Safety

## Speaking Up for Foley Removal – Physician Perspective

### Introduction: Using the DESC script

This activity walks you through a simulated interaction between a nurse and a physician regarding timely Foley removal. You will play the role of the physician, Dr. Garcia. To get the most out of this exercise, choose the responses that you feel you WOULD do, not what you think the best answer is.

After the simulation exercise, you will be presented with a scripted communication technique that can be used in similar situations: DESC (Describe, Express, Suggest, and Consequences) script. This technique has its roots in AHRQ's TeamSTEPPS® program, but is contextualized here for the HAI prevention context.

### 1. What do you do?

You are a physician on an inpatient unit overseeing care for a 55-year old female patient, Mrs. Li, whose chief complaint is lower extremity edema. Mrs. Li has had a Foley catheter in place for four days in order to closely monitor her fluid status. You are on a heart failure ward and you've had trouble with monitoring fluid balance in patients without Foleys in the past. A nurse on the unit, Sam, just mentioned to you she wanted to remove Mrs. Li's Foley.

Option 1: Say "I disagree. Keep it in."

Option 2: Ask her to explain why she wants to remove the Foley.

Option 3: Avoid the confrontation and tell her you will look into it later.

## 1. Answer key



**Option 1:** This response does not open up a productive dialogue and instead could make Sam feel shut down. Not only is it beneficial to discuss the pros and cons of Foley removal for Mrs. Li with her nurse, but this dismissive response could cause Sam to hesitate to speak up to you in the future, reducing your chances of catching other important patient safety issues.



**Option 2:** Great! This response opens up a respectful dialogue.



**Option 3:** The situation should be discussed with the nurse, which can allow an opportunity to gain insight that may be important for patient safety.

## 2. What do you do next?

The nurse responds with the following:

Nurse: “Dr. Garcia, our unit has an extremely high CAUTI rate and we are trying to remove Foley catheters that are no longer indicated. So, can I remove Mrs. Li’s Foley?”

You are very busy and your resident just reminded you that you need to put in admission orders on a new patient.

Option 1: Say, “I would prefer to keep her Foley in as it is important to accurately measure her urine output. I have to go admit another patient, but let’s revisit this in multidisciplinary rounds later.”

Option 2: Say, “No. I want to keep measuring her urine output. Ask me again in a few days,” and go to the physician’s work area to finish your work.

Option 3: Say, “Sam, she has heart failure. Her Foley should remain in. Now, if you will excuse me, I have other work to do.”

## 2. Answer key



**Option 1: Great! While you communicated that you could not discuss the issue right now, you assured Sam that you would revisit it at a specific time later on.**



**Option 2: This response does not invite Sam to discuss any concerns. Further, waiting a few more days to revisit the issue increases Mrs. Li's chances of a CAUTI.**



**Option 3: This response is dismissive and indicates to Sam that her insight is not important, and will likely cause her to hesitate to speak up again. This is not in the best interest of patient safety, as Mrs. Li's nurse likely has insight that would be beneficial for your decision.**

## 3. What would you say next?

At multidisciplinary rounds that afternoon, Mrs. Li is being discussed. Sam brings the Foley issue up again. She mentions that Mrs. Li is alert and oriented and can collect urine on her own, and Sam can keep close track of her weight. She states that she believes the Foley is therefore no longer indicated, and prolonged use would unnecessarily increase her chances of getting a CAUTI.

Option 1: Say, "Regardless, I'd still like to keep the Foley in."

Option 2: Say, "It is inappropriate to go over my head like this. Are you calling my competence into question?"

Option 3: Say, "Thanks for advocating for Mrs. Li. OK, let's remove her Foley."

### 3. Answer key



**Option 1:** This response dismisses Sam’s concern, and tells her that only your point of view is important. As a member of the patient’s care team, it is beneficial to consider her perspective.



**Option 2:** This response not only dismisses Sam’s contribution to the team, but makes her feel like she did something wrong. She will be less likely to advocate for patient safety in the future to avoid a response like this.



**Option 3: Great!** This statement tells Sam you respect her opinion, and appreciate her perseverance to the shared goal of patient safety. This will lead to better outcomes for Mrs. Li, and tells Sam she can bring future issues to your attention safely.

### Manage and resolve conflict

Consider using conflict resolution tools when in disagreement.

DESC Script: An approach to manage and resolve conflict.

The DESC script, a TeamSTEPPS® tool, can be helpful at a point of disagreement, such as when Sam pushed back.

### DESC script

<b>Describe</b> the specific situation or behavior; provide concrete data.	“Mrs. Li has heart failure and therefore it is essential to accurately measure her ins and outs.”
<b>Express</b> how the situation makes you feel/what your concerns are.	“I am concerned that removing her Foley will prevent us from doing this.”
<b>Suggest</b> other alternatives and seek agreement.	“If you have other ideas on how we can measure her ins and outs without a Foley, we can discuss this more today in multidisciplinary rounds. Does that work for you?”
<b>Consequences</b> should be stated in terms of impact on shared goals; strive for consensus.	“If we remove her Foley prematurely, she could have severe harm. I think we can both agree that we want what is best for Mrs. Li.”