



Beyond the Books

By Mike Smith, BS, MICP

Back to ICARE

...extending the reach of the ICARE philosophy

Ed's note: In the July BTB column, we introduced the concept of ICARE (Integrity, Compassion, Accountability, Respect and Empathy) and offered a free poster to classroom instructors and other interested EMS providers. The response was overwhelming! This month, Mike continues to promote the ICARE philosophy.

By the time I got to Las Vegas for EMS EXPO, we had already passed the 400 mark of agencies, providers and EMS educators nationwide who had requested and received their ICARE posters in the mail. By the end of EXPO, only a handful of the ICARE posters we had printed remained at our booth. Hopefully by now your ICARE poster is framed and on display. Mine is prominently displayed in my EMS classroom at Tacoma Community College.

In any case, it's one thing to say that your office, station or classroom is an ICARE place, but this is not just about a poster on display. One of the key parts of this process is to extend the reach of ICARE

among the ranks of our fellow providers. Ultimately, the goal of ICARE is to further improve the way we treat our patients. It truly is a case of walking the walk, not just talking the talk, if we really want to make ICARE work.

While I was in Las Vegas, I had a chance to chat with Chris Le Baudour about how to extend ICARE's reach. (You may recall that it was the students in one of Chris's EMT-B classes who conceived and developed the concept of ICARE.)

One possible scenario for creating the growth of ICARE follows:

As an instructor, I ask for one student volunteer from each of two skills labs to preview a new piece of equipment, then return to their respective lab groups and give a brief in-service about the use and operation of the device. After their respective presentations, I have both students join me in front of the classroom, and I describe to the class how each student volunteered to do this extra work, then followed through on their commitment. I identify the ICARE quality exemplified by their endeavor; in this case, accountability. Both volunteered for duty above and beyond simply being a student, did the necessary work and completed their task. With that, I present each student with an ICARE pin. Once they've been pinned, either of these students can continue

the process and "pin" another student...but only if they are willing to repeat the process of standing in front of the class with the respective recipient and identify to all present what ICARE behavior their student colleague has displayed to earn his or her ICARE pin.

This is just one example of how to extend the reach of ICARE. Whether the process is initiated by an EMS instructor, supervisor or provider makes little difference. What matters is that the process makes sense, and it will work if we choose

to make it work. Imagine the potential if we slowly but surely spread the ICARE philosophy. As we each earn our ICARE pins, we move through this rite of passage by stepping up and publicly recognizing the exemplary behavior of our colleagues. As we are recognized, so we may recognize others, and so it goes. In time, I hope you will see ever-increasing members of our profession proudly displaying their ICARE pins. And when you see a provider with an ICARE pin, I hope it truly

has meaning. More specifically, it will represent another in our profession who embraces the ICARE philosophy and treats each and every patient they encounter accordingly.

I remain fixed in my opinion that this gift of ICARE from Chris's talented and visionary EMT-B class needs to be recognized for what it is—an incredibly succinct expression of what we ALL need to embrace in order to provide our patients with the best medical experience we can on some of the worst days of their lives.

For more information on obtaining ICARE pins, contact Chris Le Baudour at chris@icarevalues.org or go to ICARE.org. Again, it is essential to recognize that ICARE means little to nothing if it is just a collection of words. On the other hand, if ICARE takes hold and EMS providers, instructors and administrators all get on board, I can only imagine how our patients will ultimately benefit when cared for under the ICARE umbrella.

Until next month... ■

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The ICARE poster is now available to download as a pdf file from EMSResponder.com.

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