**Description:** Use this leader discussion guide with your team. If your group is large, divide in small groups and assign situations to each group to discuss what information might be exposed and how to handle the situation. Use the corresponding handout for your team to fill in the blanks during the discussion.

| **Situation** | **What confidential information** **might be exposed?** | **How the situation might be handled?** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Phone message to a physician lost in stairway contains patient’s name and diagnosis
 | Patient’s name and diagnosis | * If you are able to read the name of the physician or person who took the message then contact them to let them know you found the message.
* If unable to give the message to the physician then place it in a shredder bin.
* Don’t leave the message lying there!
 |
| 1. Medical records are left in a conference room after a meeting
 | All of the information contained in the patient’s records including, but not limited to, name, diagnosis, demographics, and sometimes social security number. | * If it appears that the patients are being seen by one physician or clinic then contact that person or clinic to let them know they were found.

OR* Contact the Privacy Office so they can retrieve the records and investigate.
* Don’t leave the records lying there!
 |
| 1. A paycheck stub is left next to the copier
 | Personal information contained on the employee’s paycheck stub. | * Return the paycheck stub to the person it belongs to if possible.
* Don’t leave it lying there! If unable to return to the person it belongs to then shred it.
 |
| 1. Fax with health records is sent to the wrong fax number
 | Patient information would be disclosed to someone who shouldn’t have it. | * If you receive a misdirected fax containing confidential information alert the person that sent the fax that it went to wrong number.
* Dispose of the fax in a shredder bin (never a trash can). Don’t leave it lying on the fax machine!
* If you happen to discover that YOU sent the fax to the wrong number notify the recipient to shred it and verify you have the correct number prior to resending.
 |
| 1. Residents rounding enter the patient’s room while he is getting a sponge bath
 | Patients have a right to personal privacy and a respect for their individual dignity. | * Knock prior to entering a patient’s room, identify yourself, and ask permission to enter.
 |
| 1. Copy of a grant proposal is left in the restroom of the Library
 | Confidential information about details related to the grant. | * Notify someone mentioned in the proposal that you have found it.

OR* Contact the Privacy Office so they can retrieve the proposal and investigate.
* Don’t leave it lying there!
 |
| 1. A patient’s electronic medical record in full view at the check-in desk for the clinic
 | Information contained in the patient’s record will be exposed to anyone standing at the check-in desk. | * Always turn computer monitors so that patients and visitors cannot see the information.
 |
| 1. A resume of a job applicant who is an internal candidate is left lying on the desk
 | The internal candidate may not want others to know he/she is applying for another job. | * Notify the job applicant that you found their resume.

OR* Dispose of the resume by placing it in a shredder bin.
* Don’t leave it lying there!
 |
| 1. Your neighbor’s wife was taken to the hospital last night. As a resident, you have access to patient records.
 | The patient’s wife may not wish for the resident to know about her condition. | * Unless the resident is involved in providing care to the neighbor’s wife it would be a privacy violation for him to access her records without her (documented) permission.
* If asked by his neighbor to access the patient’s record the resident should refer the neighbor to his wife’s physician.
* Remember the wife may or may not want the husband to receive information about her condition. Her permission should be obtained prior to disclosure.
 |
| 1. Email sent to staff in a department mentioning the recent diagnosis of a coworker and asking for donations to help with the cost of her care.
 | Co-worker’s diagnosis will be revealed to all the staff in the department and anyone else who might receive a forwarded email from one of the staff. | * Email containing information related to a staff member’s illness presents many privacy concerns since there is no control over what happens with an email once it has been sent.
* Emails of this type should never be sent out without first obtaining the staff member’s permission and explaining to him/her of the related privacy risks.
* Documentation should be kept within the department that the staff member’s permission was obtained.
* Specific details including a diagnosis should not be included in the message but more general wording, for example, “as you may know Mary has been seriously ill”.
* The email should mention that *permission has been obtained from the staff member prior to sending the message* so that recipients of the email won’t think the staff member’s privacy has been breached.
 |
| 1. A research assistant from your lab had surgery last night. Since you know this surgeon, you call to get the details.
 | The research assistant may not want you to know anything about his/her surgery. | * Specific procedures have been implemented for finding out information about a patient. Even if you personally know the patient or someone who is involved in the care of the patient you should either contact the patient directly to find out how they are doing or call hospital information. Unless the patient is registered as a No Information patient the hospital operator may tell you the patient’s location and their general condition.
* In this situation calling the surgeon to ask about the research assistant’s surgery places the surgeon in an awkward position as he/she would not be allowed to disclose any information without first knowing that they have permission from the patient.
 |
| 1. A patient being transferred by ambulance on a stretcher has been only partially covered as she is pushed out of the elevator
 | Patients have a right to personal privacy and a respect for their individual dignity. | * Make sure the patient is fully covered by a sheet or blanket during transport.
 |
| 1. (Add your own situation here)
 |  |  |