

Patience with Patients

Introduction:

This game is about giving doctors experience in dealing with anger in mental illness patients. One player will be a doctor new to the hospital and another player will be a long-term patient; additionally, there will be a third player acting as the Game Master, whose role is to act as an arbitrator in the game. The doctor is visiting the patient because of a recent situation at the hospital; both players want the situation resolved with the patient happy, but they need to reach common ground before they can agree on a solution. Additionally, the patient has a personality based on his or her past which the doctor doesn't know at the start of the game. The goal is to resolve the situation before security arrives and restrains the patient.

Players:

This game is for 3 players, a doctor, a patient, and one Game Master (GM).

Materials:

- 15 Patient Action cards. These can be played by the patient to affect the game.
- 15 Doctor Action cards. These can be played by the doctor to affect the game.
- 18 Word Constraint cards used for constraining responses.
- 6 Patient character sheets. These describe the personality and background of a patient in the hospital.
- 6 Patient situation cards, each with a description of the situation.
- An Unguessable Words sheet containing words which cannot be guessed during the game

You Will Also Need:

- 3 blank sheets of paper (one "conversation sheet" and two "guess sheets") and pens to write down your responses.
- A 2 minute timer.
- Some sort of counter (such as a 6 sided die) to keep track of the escalation level.
- Some sort of counter (such as a 12 sided die) to keep track of the number of responses.

Game Setup:

Shuffle the Word Constraint deck and the two Action card decks separately, and place them within reach of each player. The patient randomly chooses a patient character sheet and shows it to the GM. The patient reads his or her character's name aloud, but keeps his or her background secret from the doctor. The patient's background constrains his or her answers for the rest of the game; his or her responses must align with his or her personality. The GM draws a

situation card and reads out the description, which is written from the patient's perspective, to both players. The escalation level of the encounter begins at 3; the GM should take note of the escalation level with some sort of counter. Each player draws two Action cards from their respective piles; these start in the players' hands. The doctor starts play with the "conversation sheet" and each player takes a "guess sheet".

Action Cards:

Each turn, one of the two players will draw an Action card, depending on the response given. Note that there are two decks of Action cards, one for the patient and one for the doctor. Each card has requirements describing when it can be used and an effect. A player may use *up to one* action card per response. If the player correctly incorporates the card's requirements into his or her response (this is up to the discretion of the GM) and subsequently chooses to play the card after reading his or her response, the effect takes place and the card is put into the appropriate discard pile beside the corresponding action pile. Example: the patient has a "Getting Upset" card, and raises his or her voice in his or her response when talking about the anger that he feels. The GM decides this is sufficient to show that the patient is "Getting Upset" and allows the patient to play the card, which raises the escalation by 1.

Escalation Level:

The escalation level represents how emotionally charged the conversation is. It may be raised or lowered by playing action cards, or if the GM decides a turn of conversation is particularly emotive. The GM should keep track of the escalation level with some sort of counter which is visible to both players. Here is an example of what the conversation might be like at different escalation levels:

0 and below: The doctor has forced the patient to be quiet, ending the conversation. The game enters the concluding phase as described in the "Ending the Game" section.

1-2: This level of escalation means the patient is probably withdrawn because the doctor has calmed the patient or the doctor is in complete control of the conversation

3-4: This level of escalation means the patient and the doctor are on even ground; neither is likely to give in to demands at this point, but are willing to agree on a joint solution.

5-6: This level of escalation means the patient is very charged up and is displaying his or her emotions. He or she is much more likely to attack or threaten the doctor at this level.

7 and up: The patient has made a move towards attacking the doctor, and the doctor has no hope but to call security; the game enters the concluding phase as described in the "Ending the Game" section.

Playing the Game:

On each turn, there is a *responding Player* and a *listening Player*. The players

alternate turns as the responding player and the listening player (starting with the doctor as the responding player). The responding player has the conversation sheet and the listening player has their guess sheet. The responding player randomly selects 3 words from the word deck and chooses 1 of them. The responding player then has 2 minutes to write a response to the current state of the game, which includes the situation, the conversation up to this point, the escalation, and the patient's personality (in the case that the responding player is the patient). In addition, he or she must use the chosen word in his or her response. The responding player is encouraged to keep the conversation relevant and true to his or her character. While the responding player is writing, the listening player secretly writes down 5 words on his or her guessing sheet that he or she believes the responding player will use in his or her response (note that these words cannot be from the included unguessable words sheet).

After the 2 minutes are up, the responding player reads his or her response aloud. If the listening player matches any of the words in the response, he or she gets to draw an action card out of his or her action card pile. Different tenses of the same word count as one word; if the listening player guessed "talked" and the responding player used "talk", the listening player gets to draw a card. Note that even if the listening player guessed more than one word, he or she gets to draw only one action card.

The GM should keep track of the number of responses completed with some sort of counter which is visible to both players.

If the GM decides that an end condition has been met, the game enters the concluding phase as described under "Ending the Game".

Game Master (GM) Rules:

The GM's job is to keep the game flowing smoothly (help shuffle word cards while the players are writing, etc), keep time during response writing, resolve any questions of whether an action card can be validly played, and to act as arbitrator in resolving the conclusion of the scenario. Additionally, the GM has the ability to change the escalation level as appropriate for any particularly emotional or calming responses. The GM's arbitration is final and cannot be contested by the patient or the doctor.

It is the GM's responsibility to encourage the players to play within the spirit of the game, which means writing responses which respect the context of the scenario and the patient's background, include all constraint words in responses, and take into account the effects of any action cards. If, in the GM's opinion, a response fails to meet these criteria, the GM should point this out and award the other player an action card. The GM can and should use action cards as rewards and penalties depending on if players are roleplaying well.

Ending the Game:

The players stop writing responses when one of the following end conditions is met:

- 12 responses have been written, regardless of how many each individual player made. This results in hospital security automatically arriving and restraining the patient, regardless of the responses up to this point.
- The escalation level is at 0. This results in the patient no longer being agitated.
- The escalation level is at 7. This results in the patient becoming too agitated for the situation to de-escalate and most likely becoming violent.
- Doctor calls security through writing "I'm calling security" or the equivalent. This results in hospital security coming and restraining the patient. If the escalation level is high, the patient may become violent before security arrives.
- Patient and doctor mutually decide that an acceptable compromise has been reached.
- The GM decides that a players' response has forced the conversation to a stopping point.

After an end condition has been met, each player has one minute of concluding time to talk about what they feel outcomes for the patient and the doctor would be at this point, given the course of the responses. This discussion may be out of character; the players are simply talking about how the game went. The GM takes into account the summaries from the two players, along with their responses, and gives his or her final opinion on what they think the outcome of the situation would be. This concludes the game.

Example of a Turn:

Here is an example of a single turn within a game that is already in progress. The doctor and patient have responded to each other a few times and it is now the doctor's turn to act as the responding player. The GM draws three words from the word deck. The doctor chooses the word "Room" from the three choices and shows it to the patient. The doctor then takes the response sheet, the GM sets the timer for two minutes, and the doctor begins writing his or her response. Here is the doctor's response:

Doctor: I'm going to have to ask you to stay in your room for the time being. We have to wait just so we can be sure this behavior is not going to repeat itself. What can I do to make sure this doesn't happen again? I want to be a facilitator in this process.

The patient, acting as the listening player, wrote these words on his or her guess sheet: father, childhood, home, stay, and house. Since the doctor included the word "stay" in his or her response, the patient gets to draw an action card this turn. However, the GM decides that the Doctor's response was especially calming and rewards the doctor by lowering the escalation level by

one. This turn is now over and on the next turn the patient will be the responding player.

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CMS.608 / CMS.864 Game Design
Fall 2010

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