## **C.A.R.E. Skills**

Although we cannot always prevent escalations, we can minimize the incidence of them.  One of the most important ways we can do this is to use C.A.R.E. with EVERY patient.  Don’t reserve your C.A.R.E. skills for difficult patients. Practice using it.  Using them may significantly minimize these types of patient outbursts.

One of the most specific ways you can operationalize prevention and C.A.R.E. skills is to identify patients who are frustrated.  Patients who are frustrated often have their arms crossed, sigh loudly, and sometimes pace.    It’s very important we intervene on this as early as possible.  We don’t have to be able to solve the problem in the moment (like the wait).  We can apologize. Ask them what is wrong, offer them water. Tell them we would feel the same. Give them some options.  Ignoring people who are giving us nonverbal frustration messages is at least disrespectful, and at most, dangerous.   It probably feels scary at first to go up to someone you don’t know who looks mad.  It’s amazing how much a kind word, an apology, saying ‘I would feel the same!’ a bottle of water, will humanize their day and yours.

Many times these patients are not angry, and this is the perfect time to use **CARE** skills by:

* **C**onnecting: saying the patients’ name, introducing yourself, shaking hands, making good eye contact;
* **A**ppreciating: apologizing, acknowledging their feelings, appreciating that they let us know;
* **R**esponding: giving choices to the patients, assuring them you will help, fixing what you can.
* **E**mpathizing: Giving the tools out when you yourself, if you were in the patient’s shoes, would feel bad, ignored, disappointed, inconvenienced or irritable due to the clinic’s system.

After using CARE skills, offering a service recovery repair tool is a great way to really provide impressive repair (see tool).