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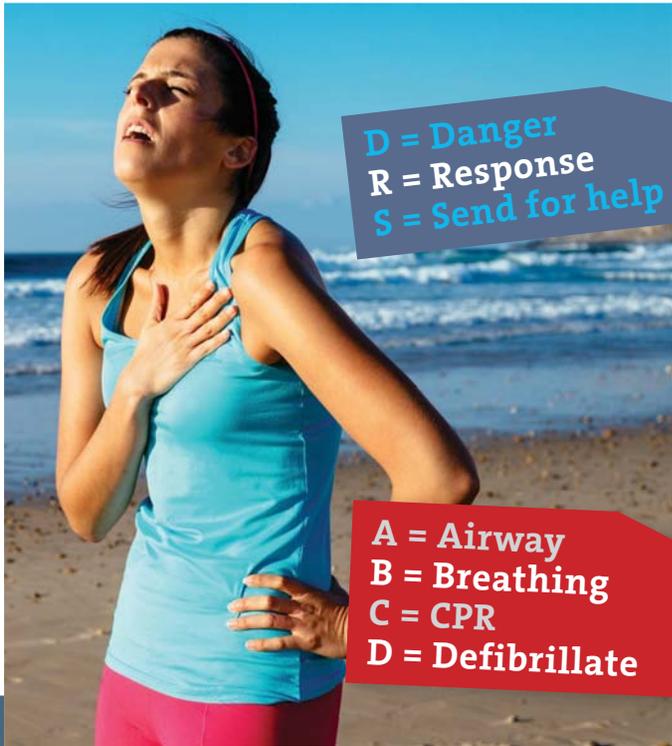
PROFESSIONAL

TRAINING THE TRAINER

Are you familiar with *DRS ABCD*? If not, it's time you are!

BY SHARON NEISH





D = Danger
R = Response
S = Send for help

A = Airway
B = Breathing
C = CPR
D = Defibrillate

The day a member approached me, claimed her friend “wasn’t feeling well” and asked if I could help her is a day that will be eternally etched into my mind. On this particular day the gym was buzzing with activity. My diary was fully booked with clients and I’d managed to schedule myself a quick 20-minute break. It was just as I was heading off the floor to my break that I was approached. I was tempted to direct her request to reception, but turned on my heel and headed toward her friend. At this point she was sitting motionless on the rower, silvery-cheeked, with grey lips and bravely holding back tears. Her hand was clutching her left shoulder. She was in excruciating pain and deteriorating – fast.

My questions came out rapidly. What is your name? Have you eaten today? Do you have any pre-existing health conditions? At this point I asked the shocked reception staff to call for an ambulance. Unbeknown to them, this woman’s life was in critical danger. I remember clearly that she squeezed my hand, looked directly into my eyes and whispered, “don’t let me die, I have three kids”. She was barely conscious, with laboured breathing.

Fortunately, this incident has a happy ending. This unsuspecting, otherwise healthy mum was born with an underlying heart condition that until then had gone undetected. The condition when coupled with physical exertion ended with a massive heart attack. Quick thinking and treatment saved her life! Today she enjoys an active life, including regular gym visits and three high-intensity cardio training sessions such as BodyAttack every week.

Incidents like these are becoming more prevalent in our ever-

growing fitness industry. We are witnessing life-threatening cases ranging from cardiac arrests to major anxiety attacks and heart palpitations. These torturous imbalances are often side effects to the stresses that are continually put upon our bodies, both physically and mentally. Teamed with a mix of pre-sup workout concoctions, the body becomes a cocktail of chemicals-adrenaline-endorphins just waiting to detonate. Cardiac arrest is relatively rare in young people, but unfortunately it has recently become more common in a gym or workout environment. Having well-trained first aiders available improves the survival rate just as quick access to a defibrillator is vital to saving lives at any age.

As fitness professionals, we most commonly treat sprains, strains, hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar levels), asthma and hyperventilation. However, we are unfortunately hearing of more cases of cardiac arrest in the gym environment. There was a recent case in a smaller gym where a gym member collapsed without any signs of distress as he was training. He had stopped breathing and there were no signs of life. Within 30 seconds two staff members who had recently refreshed their training put their skills into action.

They went through the DRS ABCD protocol, providing a head tilt and chin lift to ensure an open airway. Their hands became his heart, and they sustained him until paramedics arrived. In my personal experience, it is often the basic, uncomplicated skills that can help save lives. The KISS principle is so important: Keep It Simple, Stupid. Basic skills can be the difference between life and death.

On the flipside, we’ve seen a massive increase in the number of gyms (including 24-hour facilities) proudly opting for a wall-mounted Automatic External Defibrillator or AED. This now raises the question: do you know how to use an AED? Is your insurance valid? Are you insured if your CPR or first aid qualifications have lapsed? It’s recommended you refresh your CPR skills every 12 months and first aid every three years to remain current. If you need to refresh these skills or take a full course, you can now begin the course at home and complete the prac with an Allens Training Partner.

Allens Training is an industry leader in providing first aid courses. They have simplified the process and cater for busy fitness professionals by creating flexibility in their range of course options. Just log on to www.allenstraining.com.au for more info. It’s never been easier or more accessible to gain these life-saving skills. **UFM**

Sharon Neish operates a successful private PT studio north of Brisbane. A contributor to Ultra FITNESS and a passionate internationally certified Les Mills instructor in three modalities, Sharon is a proud partner and trainer for Allens Training, teaching first aid/CPR among fellow fitness-loving colleagues. You can connect with Sharon via email at sharon@sharonneishpt.com.au or on Facebook: Sharon Neish Personal Training. >

