COVID-19: Five key goals in managing an obstetric emergency

1 Teamwork
Assign team roles and help each other to get ready:
- Decide who goes in first
- Assign a ‘clean’ runner who does not go into the room
- Help colleagues to don PPE

2 Transitions
Be aware of transitions of staff and equipment between ‘dirty’ and ‘clean’ zones:
- Clearly mark contamination zones
- Doff gloves and gown inside the room, masks outside
- Use a COVID-19 transfer plan

3 Communication
Recognise and manage communication challenges caused by wearing PPE:
- Give priority to effective and respectful communication with the woman/partner
- Use labels to identify staff wearing PPE (eg senior midwife)
- Use agreed, standardised ways to communicate among the team

4 Design and layout
Organise work flows and equipment to make the right way the easy way:
- Display posters with national guidance for donning and doffing
- Apply human factors principles to donning station (eg items placed in sequence of use)
- Have a single-use grab bag with standard design and contents
- Make treatment algorithms easy to read and use
- Use wide-mouth, fully opening bins

5 Debrief
Take the opportunity to debrief as a team:
- Make sure the whole team can provide feedback and learn from the event
- Ensure psychological safety and take a problem-solving approach with shared goals, shared knowledge and mutual respect
- Refine, test and train procedures for managing obstetric emergencies in your unit

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