

CASE STUDY - MEDICAL

EVEN WITH LIMITED MEDICAL SKILLS YOU CAN STILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

On January 8, 2011, U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords and eighteen others were shot by a single gunman during a constituent meeting held in a supermarket parking lot in Casas Adobes, Arizona.

Daniel Hernandez a young intern working for politician Gabrielle Giffords quickly rushed in. With limited medical training he was able to help the badlywounded Gifford. He saw many people lying on the ground, including a young girl. Some were bleeding.

"I moved from person to person checking pulses. First the neck, then the wrist."

He saw one man was already dead. Then he saw Giffords. She had fallen badly and was lying contorted on the sidewalk. She was bleeding but miraculously, still alive.

Using the palm of his hand, Hernandez applied direct pressure to the entry wound on her forehead and held it there.

He then pulled her into his lap, holding her upright against him so she wouldn't choke on her own blood. Giffords was still conscious, but quiet. His quick thinking was credited with saving the congresswoman's life. He waited and comforted the senator until the emergency services arrived

Hernandez said afterwards "You just have to be calm and collected, You do no good to anyone if you have a breakdown, in fact you can make things far worse"

A person can bleed to death in less than 3 minutes. if an **artery** is severed or lacerated. Rapid loss of just two pints (20%) or more of the total blood volume, often leads to irreversible **Hypovolemic** shock and eventually death.

Learning Points Recap

Direct pressure. By placing pressure on a bleeding wound will constrict the blood vessels manually. This helps to stem blood flow and something that can be done without any medical training.

Apply steady, direct pressure and elevate the area, if you can, for a full 15 minutes. Resist the urge to peek after a few minutes to see whether bleeding has stopped. If blood soaks through the cloth, apply another one without lifting the first. If there is an object in the wound, apply pressure around the object, not directly over it.

When someone chokes on their own blood its because the blood quickly clots in their throat and so cuts off the air supply and leads to unconsciousness and then death.

By getting the casualty to sit up Hernandez was able to allow the blood to empty from their lungs and gain those precious extra minutes until the emergency services arrive.



I noticed Gabby was on the floor and she was asphyxiating. There was one shot wound above her left eyebrow.

I was trying to communicate with her and keep her calm. When one has a brain injury, you need to keep them alert and engaged.

Daniel Hernandez,
Intern for politician Gabrielle Giffords
& first responder

