

# little c.p.r.

CPR = Cardiopulmonary  
Resuscitation

little c.p.r. = comfort  
protection  
reassurance

**O**n many emergency situations, there's not really an emergency. A true medical emergency is either life threatening or will become so if medical treatment is not given immediately. True medical emergencies most often fall into one of the Big 3 categories described earlier.

A person with a minor injury—a cut finger, twisted ankle, sprained wrist, or skinned knee—can benefit most from what I call “little c.p.r.” It stands for *comfort*, *protection*, and *reassurance*. Even in a real emergency, little c.p.r. has a critical role to play. Little c.p.r. can be useful in many places other than medical emergencies.

The three components of little c.p.r. are important things you can provide if someone is in trouble.

**Comfort.** Make sure the victim is comfortable. Does he need a blanket? Would a drink of water help? (Be sure he can swallow easily.) Is he lying on a sharp rock?

**Protection.** How can you keep the victim from further injury? Are there any immediate threats nearby? Is someone trying to move her when you know she should not be moved?

**Reassurance.** Assume an attitude (I think of it as an “aura”), through words and actions, that lets the victim know he will be okay.

### Teacher Tip

CPR, like 911, is part of the language of our culture. Even if a child has absolutely no idea that CPR stands for a medical procedure called *cardiopulmonary resuscitation*, she will still connect it with somebody being in trouble.

Ask your group, “What does CPR stand for?” After you’ve heard several answers, suggest they make up their own terms using those letters as an acronym to help remind themselves what it means if a person is hurt.

Then introduce the concept of little c.p.r. Begin with something like, “A doctor or nurse will tell you CPR stands for *cardiopulmonary resuscitation*. Today we’re going to learn another way to use those three letters to help in an emergency: *little c.p.r.*, which stands for comfort, reassurance, and protection.”





## protection

Right here is a good place for role-play, which can go something like this:

### **Comfort**

Have individuals in your group practice giving comfort to another individual. If they feel silly pretending to give comfort to another living being, have them try it with a toy stuffed animal at first. Be sure to remind them that when an actual emergency occurs, they'll need to do all they can to help and forget any self-consciousness.

### **Protection**

Simulating protection should be easier. The main thing is to keep others in the vicinity from doing anything that could make the person's situation any worse. Suggesting the rescuer act like a guard dog or policeman can get the ball rolling.

Eventually, you need to talk with your group about exactly how they would keep a well-meaning but uninformed bystander away from an injured person. It's a whole lot easier for an adult to be assertive in this situ-

ation than it is for a child. This is, of course, another good role-playing opportunity.

### **Reassurance**

At first, this concept can be difficult to distinguish from comfort. The importance of making the victim comfortable shouldn't be that hard a concept to understand. Keeping an injured person warm and dry and protected from noise and people who may be staring at the scene makes sense. But in this case, reassurance means a way of behaving toward the victim, especially while you are interacting with her. The rescuer needs to "radiate an aura" designed to convince the injured person she's going to be "just fine."

This may require a certain amount of acting, but it has a very important psychological effect on everyone involved—including the rescuer. The rescuer needs to believe things are going to get better, because he is there and is helping.



reassurance

Now that you have a better understanding of little c.p.r., here is a true story that should reinforce the concept.

## **the story...**

Jeff and his father enjoyed rollerblading together. Since they lived on a cul-de-sac, there was little traffic. The pavement in front of their house was smooth—perfect for skating fast and performing cool moves while zooming down the street.

At 13, Jeff sometimes forgot to wear a helmet while skating, but Dad was a doctor and should have known better. This day both of them left their helmets at the house. It was a mistake they would regret.

While rollerblading helmetless out in the street, Dad hit a patch of sand and slipped. His head slammed hard into the curb, and Jeff heard his father shout with pain.

Skating over to him, Jeff saw Dad holding his head. Blood was oozing between his fingers and hair. When Dad removed his hand from the wound, Jeff saw a powerful spurt of blood from Dad's head. Not good!

Think about this story, and consider how you might analyze this as a situation in which little c.p.r. was just about the only option for Jeff. Let's look at the many factors to be considered here:

- Is it safe to help?
- Is the victim breathing?
- Does he have severe bleeding?
- Does he have a possible head injury?
- Could his neck or spine also be injured?
- Is help nearby?
- What can the rescuer do to make things better for the victim?
- Is it going to be difficult for the rescuer to handle his emotions in this situation?

Little c.p.r. is a very important concept, which is why it gets a whole chapter. Sometimes, giving little c.p.r. is all a child can do to help in an emergency situation, so it deserves special emphasis.

If your group learns only two things during their entire WEMA experience, strive to make those contacting 911 and little c.p.r. Both these skills are easy to understand and execute; both lend themselves to lots of playing of the "what-if" game.

## ...the rest of the story

Mother was inside the house, saw Dad fall, and ran out to help. She had foresight enough to bring a roll of paper towels, which she used to staunch the bleeding.

Though it might have been a mistake, she had Dad sit in the front seat of the family car while she took him to the nearby Emergency Room.

Except for a few stitches (along with joking comments from his fellow physicians), Dad was fine.

### **Teacher Tip**

Place one of your group members in this situation (ask for a volunteer and you may have more than enough), then see what she would try to do if this were her father. Try this scenario 2 or 3 times. I believe you'll find each rescuer does just about the same thing. In some situations, all a rescuer can do is give little c.p.r.

It may also be appropriate to combine this concept with an emphasis on prevention. It's important for kids to learn what they can do to prevent potential accident situations, but also to be brave enough to speak up to a person who has the power to remedy the problem before it becomes an emergency.