



VOICES

OF INJURY PREVENTION

My name's Kurt Lager, I work for the City and County of Honolulu, Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division as a Training Lieutenant.

Not too long ago I was in my office working when I received a text message from one of our lifeguards down in Waikiki. He was actually off duty working in the water with some surf instructors when he saw a body floating and he sent this message saying hey, I saw this body floating, I grabbed him and I pulled him in and we started to work on him.



Note: Story is a transcript from recorded version

Now, before I tell you the rest of that part, let me go back to my own personal experience not too long ago. I also was working at a beach, I was at Hanauma Bay, which is one of our popular snorkeling spots.

It's kind of a tranquil calm water beach, there's not a lot of surf. I am working with my partner and all of a sudden we hear just this shriek, scream of help coming off to the side. And there's a gentleman pulling a lady out of the water. We immediately grab our stuff and we run down there as fast as we can and we start doing what we're trained to do which is CPR in that instance, right? She had no pulse, wasn't breathing, and looked lifeless. So we did CPR. And we did CPR for a little while to no avail. Unfortunately we lost that person. You know, when we weren't able to resuscitate her it kind of made you feel empty inside, a little bit depressed, sad, and angry.

You felt a little bit of everything. You kind of go through all those five stages, right? I mostly just questioned myself. I kind of took it personally. Why did that happen? And it could have been from various different reasons, of course. But I looked at myself, mostly. And then, as time went on, I started getting into the training aspect of ocean safety and life guarding.

Learning the new sciences, the new techniques and stuff, and eventually we came upon what we're calling high performance CPR and we rolled that out to our department. High performance CPR is this new advanced style CPR. Success rates, survival rates have doubled in some areas, and as well as on Oahu we have seen a higher success rate.



Now, going back to this gentleman in Waikiki, he was basically telling me that he pulled this body out and used this high performance CPR that he had just learned and actually saved this person from being pulseless, lifeless to alive and talking.

To me it's important that for ocean safety we stay on the so called cutting edge of what's happening, the new procedures whether be CPR, rescue techniques or anything else medical wise. And, as a training lieutenant, I feel it its exciting and part of my job to continue the research and have the best lifeguard department we can have.

You know our motto is if in doubt don't go out, so it's like if you have any, any kind of doubt, you should be asking someone. But be assured that our lifeguards are trained to the highest standards and they're continually trained. But there is many things that you can do on your own to protect yourself right? Simple things such as don't turn your back on the ocean, know the currents, know what the conditions for the surf are, etc, etc. But if you ever have questions, any questions at all, come to any of the lifeguards, because they're very knowledgeable and they will help out.

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