

Turning conflict into improvement: conflict and resolution in a healthcare facili...



Imagine being in a workplace that see dozens to hundreds of faces daily. Behind each of those faces is an ailment, a condition, or concern. It is up to the staff to communicate with each other in order to ensure the face does not become another negative statistic. In healthcare, conflict can arise in many different levels. From the board room, to the patient room, to the emergency room, conflict is inevitable, but is not always a bad thing if confronted and resolved respectfully. In the article, "Turning Conflict into Improvement," Samuel Greengard discusses how interpersonal conflict can arise in a healthcare facility and how to turn conflict into feedback to improve processes and performance in the workplace.

Samuel Greengard is an author based out of Oregon. He wrote this article for the American Association for Physician Leadership for the September and October 2018 issue of the *Physician Leadership Journal*. He has written thousands of articles for different trades (greengard.com). He holds his credibility for this article in healthcare by referencing multiple physicians, healthcare facilities, and by being trusted by an accredited association that works to improve the working environment of physicians and medical staff. Greengard's approach to interpersonal conflict in the healthcare workplace will help me understand a successful and respectable way to mediate workplace conflicts that could eventually impact the patient. I work in a healthcare facility that has been going through some conflict the past couple month, and the more knowledge I can gain on how to turn conflict into improvement, the better I can help my colleagues while keeping the patient first priority.

According to the textbook *Interpersonal Conflict* by Joyce Hocker and William Wilmot, “ Conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals.” In Greengard’s article, it is noted that conflict in the workplace can cripple morale and productivity. However, when there is a problem or when conflict occurs, it is not advised to keep these thoughts at bay:

Conflict isn’t necessarily a bad thing. It can provide feedback about things that can be improved. In fact, when it’s channeled effectively, an organization can use conflict to improve processes and performance. (Greengard, 2018)

By accessing conflict and turning it into progress, this can assist healthcare staff in maintaining the common goal of providing the best care possible to the patients. There are different approaches to turning conflict into improvement, but they all consist of “ open thinking, good communication and cooperation. (Greengard, 2018)” Throughout the article, Greengard stresses how important it is to keep patient care as the top priority in a high-pressure environment. He makes the point that different members of the staff will have different ideas about how things are ran in the clinic or hospital—these can vary from scheduling to medical application. These differences can lead to many negative actions such as hostility, second-guessing one’s thoughts, and passive-aggressive behavior. These actions can lead to a distracted work environment which can possibly lead to a lackluster experience for the patient. Greengard acquired statistics from the

British Medical Journal that stated in 2016, “ 70 percent of preventable medical errors occurs from miscommunications and poor teamwork.”

Greengard continues the article to discuss how to respond to a workplace disagreement or conflict. The theories and ideas mentioned from here on out are still connected to a healthcare facility, but are also notions that could be used in any workplace. Greengard pulled information from directors and physicians at Harvard, University of Washington Medicine, DaVita, and University of Utah Health Care. His research lead him to a theory of “ 5 Ways to Defuse a Conflict”:

1. Gather all stakeholders...Assemble all the involved parties and get the issues out into the open in an unbiased, nonjudgmental way.
2. Listen...Provide undivided attention to all participants in a dispute.
3. Acknowledge...Communicate an understanding of the fundamental issues.
4. Validate feelings...Understanding the issues that lead to a conflict isn't the same as acknowledging the feelings behind them.
5. Apologize...For mistakes, errors and problems helps people move on and let go of resentment and anger.

From here, Greengard continues to define how interpersonal conflicts are revolved around certain scenarios in the workplace including differences, insufficient information, incompatibility, and environmental stress. Because of these factors, the people in these situations may not know how to react appropriately or respectfully. Acts of hostility and aggression can lead to more than just a negative feeling toward a coworker, it can lead to passive-

aggressive behaviors that can prove to be quite detrimental in the healthcare workplace. Greengard quotes Chief Medical Director of University of Washington Medicine, “ A patient is waiting in an exam room for 30 minutes, gets upset and grumbles to the nurse. The nurse lets the doctor know. When the doctor finally steps in to see the patient, he says: ‘ I’m sorry I’m late. Nobody told me you were in here.’ What the doctor has done is undermine the nurse and the entire healthcare system.”

Another theory and key term Greengard uses in his article is the power play. Typically, the term power play has a negative connotation. This negativity is used when people use their title, seniority, or socioeconomic status to undermine others. “ Turning Conflict into Improvement” takes an interesting approach to the idea of a power play and makes it into a productive technique to combat workplace conflict: “ One important factor is that any staff member can call ‘ time out’ if he or she thinks things are going in the wrong direction. This puts any decision on pause and starts a discussion that follows set rules.” Greengard also states that other medical facilities take on a similar approach and are encouraged to question anything and everything. If something seems off or they don’t fully understand what/why something is happening, they are encouraged to speak up. Some companies destroy the word “ power” all together and allow one-to-one communication from staff member to CEO without the need for a middleman.

This article was very informative. I am impressed by Greengard’s ability to take statistics and quotes revolving around a daunting situation and turn it into an easily understandable series of information. His purpose was to inform medical facility staff that conflict occurs—and that’s okay. He

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established that conflict isn't always a bad thing and that it can be turned into a means for improvement in performance and patient satisfaction. His sourcing and error-free writing conclusively proved his credibility as a source for information.

Considering the current strain of conflicts I am personally experiencing in my workplace, I have invested time into finding information regarding how to diminish it. I can consult two other articles in which to compare "Turning Conflict into Improvement." One article written by Medical Director Allan Simpao entitled, "Conflict Management in the Health Care Workplace" states a similar theory regarding why conflict arises in the workplace. Simpao states, "Perceived incompatibility of interests, some interdependence of the parties, some form of interaction," as the three most common causes of conflict. Another article written by a registered nurse and a licensed social worker states that when involved in a conflict with someone of "power" (or anyone), the feelings around the situation should be vocalized: "Bring these forward to make her or him aware of conflict and have the chance to address it constructively. (Bowers & Ferron, 2014)" Not all parties may be aware of the emotions involved in the conflict. Both of these theories from different articles were addressed by Greengard. The ideas and statements he created from his research are comparable to others without having any contradictory ideas.

"Turning Conflict into Improvement" is a short, precise article that states accurate information from credible sources. The theories introduced correlate meticulously with other articles regarding workplace conflict, and textbooks used in conflict management classrooms. Greengard's ideas were <https://assignbuster.com/turning-conflict-into-improvement-conflict-and-resolution-in-a-healthcare-facility/>

helpful in educating me on some tactics I may be able to use in my own workplace, which means they will be able to help someone else, too. The tactics addressed in this article are clear and simple. If one wants to further their knowledge on conflict management and growth in the healthcare workplace, Greengard provides a link to a self-study course to learn more information.

Works Cited

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