

# How to resolve conflict in the workplace

[Life](#), [Emotions](#)



Running Head: CONFLICT RESOLUTION How to Resolve Conflict in the Workplace Abstract This paper will explore the complex topic of how to identify, approach and solve generational conflict in the workplace. It is important for nurse managers to be able to identify generational conflicts occurring among staff. Key strategies within the process model are recommended to be utilized by the nurse manager when addressing generational conflicts at the workplace.

There are four main generations focused on within this paper, showing the fundamental differences between all generations and reinforcing the importance of conflict resolution. How to Resolve Conflict in the Workplace What is conflict resolution? How does one in a managerial nursing position identify generational conflict among their staff? How does one appropriately apply the process model to solve disputes that occur in the workplace? Many questions may cross one's mind when deciding how to confront and resolve conflicts among nursing staff.

In order to being the process of rectifying intrapersonal staff conflicts, one may begin the process of answering the questions asked above. Conflict is defined by Hibberd and Smith (2006) "... as a process which begins when a person perceives that someone has negatively affected or is about to negatively affect something he or she cares about" (p. 650). Hibberd and Smith (2006) defines conflict resolution "... [as] ways in which people, groups, or institutions deal with social conflict" (p. 650).

People frequently have preconceived notions in regards to confronting and dealing with conflict, thinking that nothing constructive or good will come

from it, however according to Vivar (2006) “ behavioral scientists have studied and concluded that not all conflict is destructive and that a certain degree of conflict is essential [in life]” (p. 201). As human beings no two individuals were raised with the same values, morals and upbringing, making conflict unavoidable. As nurses, we follow our practice with the most up to date evidence based information.

Making it necessary to uphold our professional competencies continually. The nature of the healthcare system and the technology nurses use is continually changing and evolving. The result is vital and we as nurses must become adaptive to these changes. Generational conflicts may arise as a result of the constant changes. Workplace issues between nursing staff of different generation can often be unpleasant and unproductive, which may cause work conflicts, interpersonal tension, decreased productivity and employee dissatisfaction (Jaie, H 2004, p. 334).

Proper nursing management is required in order to maintain proper conflict resolution skills and strategies in dealing with generational difference among nursing staff in a acute care setting. This paper will further discuss roles of nursing leadership in identifying, confronting and managing the issue of generational conflicts among nursing staff, through the use of the process model. Differences of Generations There are four main generations. The silent generation, born between 1922 and 1942; the baby boomers, born from 1943 to 1960; generation X born from 1961 to 1980 and millennial generation, born after 1981 (Jaie, H 2004, p. 34). All four generations are fundamentally different. The silent generation is typically loyal to

authoritative figures and to their employment organization (Wiek, 2004 p. 10). Baby boomers are generally known to be workaholics perpetually concerned about their work performance, promotions and titles. Baby boomers tend to stay at one job until retirement, due to their sense of loyalty to their employer and chances of future advancement in the company (Wiek, 2004 p. 10).

Generation X seeks challenges, they enjoy working independently, using technology, and often resists authority. Generation X prefer to be treated as equals to their managers and would be more partial to think of managers as mentors who collaboratively make decisions with their staff (Wiek, 2004 p. 10). The millennial generation does not uphold the same value of job security compared to the other generation. They do not feel loyalty to themselves or to the organization; rather they feel loyalty to themselves or to the team that will help them achieve outcomes (Weston, 2006 np).

Unlike their parents, the millennial generation does not depend on one source of employment to provide the professional development they need to advance. They make themselves more marketable through furthering their education and certification (Weston, 2006 np). When the four generations work together it is almost inevitable that generational conflicts will arise. Therefore making it necessary that proper strategies and resolutions are in place to cope with the vast difference in styles amongst these four generations.

Identifying Generational Conflict All four generations possess their own work values, in addition to personal values. “ Learning to create integrated and

collegial relationships with people from different generations is a critical skill for nurses who work in multigenerational teams” (Weston, 2006 np). It may be difficult from some to work in multigenerational environments, making it important for the nurse leader to be able to identify the five stages of conflict and swiftly intervene if conflict is suspected.

Firstly conflict begins with the awareness of the conflict (Hibberd & Smith, 2006). The nurse leader should be able to recognize the dynamics of their staff and identify when generational conflicts are occurring. Secondly, validating the thoughts and emotions involved in the conflict is beneficial (Hibberd & Smith, 2006). If one does not recognize these emotions, it is impossible to substantiate their staff’s thoughts and feelings. Thirdly, in order to deal and cope with the conflict, intentions must be formed in order to address the issue (Hibberd & Smith, 2006).

Fourthly, these intentions result in behaviors that evoke a reaction (Hibberd & Smith, 2006). The reaction may change the individual’s thoughts and emotions relating to the conflict. Fifthly, outcomes such as resolution are produced as a result of discussing the conflict (Hibberd & Smith, 2006). Once a nurse manager is capable of identifying and recognizing the five stages of conflict, one can apply and utilize the process model and different leadership strategies to produce conflict resolution among their staff. Process Model

Subsequent to the nurse manager identifying the stages of conflict, it is then possible to utilize strategies from the process model to deal with the generational conflicts occurring the workplace. Many individuals believe conflict resolution is not a learnt skill but a innate behavior one is born with.

The process model created by Thomas (1992), identifies five conflict management strategies one can utilize when confronting and dealing with generational conflict. The five conflict management strategies are competing, compromising, avoiding, collaborating, and accommodating.

According to Cavanagh (1991), competitive style of conflict management is almost always observed when an individual puts his or her own needs and goals ahead of others (p. 1256). A positive attribute of competing style is that the method easily deals with issues that necessitate quick decisions, through the use for example of vote (Hibberd & Smith, 2006). Compromising entails both individuals to make a decision they both find acceptable. The compromising style is often not a long-term solution.

Avoiding style, occurs when neither individuals want to pursue resolving the issue; negatives that result from confronting the conflict often outweigh the positives. Cavanagh (1991) views avoidance as a means for individuals to remove themselves from the conflict, or to cause distance between the individual they are in conflict with (p. 1256). Collaborating is similar to compromising, however it is more effective for long term solutions because both individuals work together to come up with a solution they are both satisfied with (Hibberd & Smith, 2006).

Accommodating, occurs when one individual compromises their own concerns to please the other individual's concerns, this strategy is often used when one individual is in error, however if accommodation is frequently used, it can lead to disappointment (Hibberd & Smith, 2006). " Further more, accommodation is characterized by the belief that the maintenance of

harmonious interpersonal relationships is more important than creating disagreement between co-workers" (Cavanagh, 1991 p. 1255).

It is the role of the nurse leader in when dealing with conflicts to feel a sense of control over ones feelings regarding the issue, gather all appropriate facts concerning the issue, becoming aware of effective manners on how to approach the conflict, determining if interventions are needed, creating resolutions and evaluating the outcomes. Recognizing and appreciating different generational perspectives can both decrease tension and enhance personal and professional growth (Weston, 2006 np). Within the process model, there are various leadership and management tyles that determine your managerial conflict resolution styles. Leadership & Management Styles The nurse leaders play a focal role in creating a workenvironmentthat values generational differences and supports the needs of each individual nursing staff member, regardless of age. It is important that the nurse manager recognizes and acts on generational differences in values and behaviors (Sherman, 2006 np). As a nurse leader, one is in the ideal position to organize their collegial nursing staff member in order to establish effective opencommunicationchannels between themselves and their staff.

By doing so, one facilitates open communication and provides socio-emotional support. There are many different styles the nurse manager should become adaptable for due to the different scenarios they may encounter when dealing with generational conflicts. An autocratic leader exerts high levels of power over his or her team members (Hibberd & Smith, 2006). A bureaucratic leader manages their staff according to procedures

and policies. This leadership style enforces the rules at all times (Hibberd & Smith, 2006). A democratic leader often involves other staff members to contribute to the decision making process.

This typically increases work satisfaction and facilitates open communication (Hibberd & Smith, 2006). Laissez-faire leadership style literally translates into leave it be. This leadership style relays on their staff to resolve their own conflicts (Hibberd & Smith, 2006). It take confidence, people skill, motivational skills, responsibility and integrity for a nurse leader to effectively manage their nursing staff in situations of generational conflict. According to Arnold and Boggs conflict can be healthy and lead to growth and teamwork.

In knowing this a nurse manager should be in a neutral position to examine explore the conflict before he or she intervene. Conclusion Generational conflicts many times are unavoidable. “ Each generation of professional nurses brings different generational influenced strengths and values to the workplace. It is a professional responsibility [of the nurse manager] to become knowledgeable regarding these differences in strengths and values and to use them as a fulcrum to increase mutual respect” (Kupperschmidt, 2006, p. 6). There are different strategies in dealing with staff generational conflicts.

According to Baker (1995) developing appropriate conflict resolution skills among all team members is imperative.... in a team environment (p. 296).

References Arnold, E. , & Boggs, K. (2003). Interpersonal relationships: Professional communication skills for nurses. (4th ed). Missouri: Saunders.  
Baker, K. (1995, October). Improving staff nurse conflict resolution skills.

<https://assignbuster.com/how-to-resolve-conflict-in-the-workplace/>



Nursing, 13(5). Retrieved May 15, 2009 from MEDLINE database. Cavanagh, S. J. (1991, October). The conflict management style of staff nurses and nurse managers. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 16(10), p. 1254-1260. Retrieved May 15, 2009 from MEDLINE database.

Hibberd, J. M. , & Smith, D. L. (2006). *Nursing leadership and management in Canada* (3rd ed. ). Toronto: Elsevier Canada. Jie, H. , & Herrick, C. , & Hodgins, K. (2004, November). Managing the multigenerational nursing team. *The Health Care Manager*, 23(4), p. 334-340. Retrieved May 15, 2009, from MEDLINE database. Kupperschmidt, B, R. (2006). Addressing multigenerational conflict: mutual respect and carefronting as strategy. *Nursing*, 11(2). Retrieved May 15, 2009, from CINAHL databse. Sherman, R, O. (2006). Leading a multigenerational nursing workforce: issues, challenges and strategies.

*Nursing*, 11(2). Retrieved May 15, 2009 from CINAHL database. Vivar, C. G. (2006, April). Putting conflict management into practice: a nursing case study. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 14(3), p. 201-206. Retrieved May 15, 2009 from CINAHL database. Weston, M, J. (2006). Integrating generational perspectives in nursing. *Nursing*, 11(2). Retrieved May 15, 2009 from CINAHL database. Wieck, L. K. (2005, March). Nursing that works. Generational approaches to current nursing issues: how younger and older nurses can coexist. *Colorado Nurse*, 105(1), p. 10-13. Retrieved May 15, 2009, from CINAHL database.