

# Managing conflict in the workplace

[Health & Medicine](#), [Nursing](#)



## Managing Conflicts in the Workplace

Managing Conflicts in the Workplace  
Introduction According to Brinkert , " Recognition of conflict as normal makes it acceptable, arguably even obligatory, to directly address conflict and treat it as a significant matter" (p. 152). Each and every employee has his or her own diverse viewpoints or opinions when it comes to addressing issues in the workplace. As a result of this diversity therefore, conflicts are inevitable. It is important to assert that conflicts have the potential to negatively affect productivity in the workplace if not addressed properly. It is the obligation of the Nurse manager to deal with conflicts when they occur in an effective manner. This paper offers a brief overview of a conflict I have observed in my workplace and how it impacted the work environment. A script on how to give feedback to employees when conflicts arise is also outlined in this paper, as well as ways I would enlist HRs help in managing this situation.

### Conflict example

Two of the nurse in my workplace were once involved in a conflict. It happened that one of the nurses had forwarded an email consisting of pornographic material and the recipient of the email found it inappropriate. The recipient of the email responded through confronting the sender and this turned into a heated argument. The recipient felt embarrassed and felt insulted. What followed is the two nurses could not even engage in a decent conversation as a result of the argument. Teamwork is highly valued in my workplace and hence the two nurses at one point had to work together. Their engagement was low as communication was limited between them solely as a result of the argument they had.

### Script

As a nurse manager, it was my obligation to give feedback to the sender of the email in regard to the unacceptable behavior in the workplace. The steps involved in giving feedback as outlined by Manion (2011) include " Stating your positive intention, sharing your observation, including impact of an action, asking the intent, adding empathy, and indicating what needs to change" (p. 340) respectively . A script of the conversation I would have with the sender of the email would be as follows:

Positive intention: You are one of the top performers in this department and your contribution is highly valued. This department highly relies on you to be a role model for our newly employed nurses.

My observation: Yesterday you sent a pornographic email to your colleague and she felt embarrassing hence she confronted you for an explanation. I am sure you two are finding it difficult to engage in your activities as a team.

Intent: What was your intent?

Empathy: I agree that you may find some pictures funny and would like to share the joke with your friends.

Needed change: Sending pornographic materials to you co-workers can be viewed as sexual intimidation and abuse and disciplinary measures can easily be preferred against you. You should be considerate of the feeling of your co-workers in your future endeavors and hence I expect you to refrain from sending any emails that may offend your colleagues in future.

Involving the HR

Sending provocative emails to co-workers can be termed as bullying.

Bullying as explicated by Barton et-al (2011) can negatively affect productivity through affecting employees morale. The HR can bring in the

legal perspective in this scenario in regard to bullying and sexual abuse in the workplace. Seeking the help of the HR in explaining the legal implications of sexual abuse would help avert similar incidents in future. In a nutshell, giving feedback regardless of whether positive or negative is imperative in nursing. Giving feedback helps nurse managers understand the cause of conflict and hence offer relevant advice on how to prevent similar incidents in future. Additionally, giving feedback acts as the basis for the creation and implementation of strategies aimed at preventing conflicts in the workplace.

#### References

Barrett, A., Piatek, C., Korber, S., & Padula, C. (2009). Lessons learned from a lateral violence and team-building intervention. *Nursing Administration Quarterly*, 33(4), 342-351.

Brinkert, R. (2010). A literature review of conflict communication causes, costs, benefits and interventions in nursing. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 18(2), 145-156.

Manion, J. (2011). *From management to leadership: Strategies for transforming health care* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.