

Communication and problem solving



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The Role of Conflict in the Health Care Environment Conflict in the health care environment, and the way it is resolved, gives an indication of the health of the team as a whole. It serves to spotlight areas that need more clarity and definition as well as those affecting the quality delivery of service. The way an organization manages conflict is a strong indicator of their commitment to excellence as a team, as well as to the organization. Health care is very demanding and conflicts of this nature frequently occur in even the most balanced offices. Some of the most innovative processes resulting in high team satisfaction have resulted from creativity in conflict resolution by dedicated team members seeking to create a culture of mutual respect combined with effective communication.

In the article by Ken Pierce (p. 60), the conflict arose as a result of building tension between an office scheduler and one of the physicians regarding a perceived negligence on the part of the physician to adequately carry his workload of patients. Lack of effective communication between them led to a breakdown of working cooperation which eventually involved management. There are actually several components to this particular conflict. The staff scheduler has made assumptions regarding the physician, “ since the weather is nice, Jones is taking off with a couple of colleagues to go sailing or play a round of golf. After all, he always sports a dark tan, comes to clinic late and leaves early.” She sounds resentful at feeling forced to assume an extra workload as the result of his choice not to see patients, “ having cancelled clinic twice this month already”. She also has internal filters that judge his level of commitment to the team. She appears to be operating from a position of intolerance and micromanagement. The scheduler, feeling manipulated and disrespected on several levels, opts not to show him the <https://assignbuster.com/communication-and-problem-solving/>

professional courtesy of discussing the situation with him by involving management to resolve the issue.

The physician appears to act from a position of insensitivity and disrespect. He is insensitive to the needs of his patients, the seemingly unnecessary workload for the scheduler, and disregards what is involved in rescheduling the patients more than one time in a month. He exhibits disrespect for her position in asking her to breach trust with the patients and lie to them about why he can't see them, and, possibly disrespect for his fellow team members, as well as the business, in not honoring his commitment to see patients. This is evident in his statement to her to “smooth things over. Just tell them that I got called to an emergency.”

Effective communication between Dr. Jones and Cindy could have resolved this conflict before supervisors were involved. First of all, they would both have to speak from a position of mutual respect and cooperation in seeking to understand each other in expressing their needs and goals. Secondly, they should work together to find a resolution that would create a win-win situation for their dilemma. Lastly, perhaps either one or, both could be innovative in proposing acceptable changes to the current protocol that would alter operations positively to make the team, as a whole, stronger and more effective.

Emotion and fear based cultures are not conducive to healthy, positive teamwork. According to Manoj, (2007) there are three vital areas that must be addressed in order to have a healthy teamwork environment: 1) develop a process focus, 2) ensure alignment of purpose, and 3) foster effective communication. In developing a process focus, one must acknowledge internal filters and agendas, think and act from a place of curiosity, learning,

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growth, and change, and more importantly, communicate when not emotional. To ensure the alignment of purpose, one must try to understand team members, clarify roles and expectations, and reveal how team goals align with individual values, goals, and interests. Effective communication can occur only when there is mutual respect for all parties as well as an open framework for discussion based on the balance of advocacy and inquiry (Manoj, 2007).

In conclusion, conflict resolution is vital for teamwork in any organization. It is crucial that an organization has effective processes in place for dealing with conflict, clearly defined roles and expectations, as well as an environment of mutual respect that provides for clear communication. Effective and mutually respectful, clear communication remains at the center of every successful conflict resolution. Team productivity is enhanced, team members feel valued and respected for their contributions to the team, and there is less employee turnover. (Flanagan, 2009).

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