

A mir case

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In the Case, "A Mir Case" there are many Organizational Behavioural issues involved. There was no team cohesion amongst the researchers and this was in a large part due to the composition of the team. This composition in itself created many cross cultural, gender and communication issues, which resulted in the conflict amongst the individuals. One factor that influences team cohesion is the members' similarities and in this case we see the Russians forming their own group (due to their similarities and cultural beliefs and views) and the new international researches forming another group amongst themselves. Another division amongst the group was due to the language barriers. . Language differences are a huge source of communication noise as it lessens effective communication as words and meanings can be easily misunderstood. Along with the language barrier, there was also cross cultural and cross gender communication issues. The Japanese and Austrian saw the inclusion of the female participant to be positive and treated her with respect, the Russians felt she had to be endured and looked at her as a sex-symbol and not a team member. There were also cultural differences as the Russian were seen to be more aggressive and dominating and while the Austrian, the Japanese and the French researcher saw the kiss as a form of sexual harassment, the Russians saw nothing wrong in this "stolen kiss." These actions by the Russians (which were due in part to the cultural differences) now has serious repercussions as the other researchers now felt as though they were in a hostile environment which in turn leads to high levels of stress. To make matters worse, there was no intervention by a mediatory or leader from IBMP to help resolve the conflict which only further escalated the problems. Within the individuals there was no emergence of a leader and no one to take

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charge of the situation and work towards resolving the conflict. In essence, the lack of team dynamic and cohesion and the cross cultural differentiation all escalated to a conflict that was never resolved or addressed rather it was avoided by Moscow's Institute for Biomedical Problems (IBMP), who classes the conflict as all a part of the experiment. As mentioned in the case, the purpose of the experiment was to learn about the dynamics of isolation, as they would apply this knowledge to the International Space Station, who would be sending people into space for long periods of time. For this to work, the group would really need to learn how to work effectively as a team and how to overcome conflicts that would naturally arise. In this situation, the individuals really need someone to step up as a leader and take charge of the situation. This would be a positive step, as the leader can work with the individuals to form a cohesive team and initiate some conflict resolution. However this solution will be challenging as the Russians will probably not want to listen to someone who is not Russian and due to their aggressive nature, the other researchers may not want a Russian as their team leader either. As a result it would really take an understanding, open, motivated and influential person to take charge of this team. The individuals also needed conflict resolution. The company should have looked at third party conflict resolution as a means of working through this issue. This would be best as it would be an outside person who is able to be neutral and help the conflicting parties resolve their differences. However this mediator would interfere with the experiment, because if this incident did take place in space, there would be no mediator to send. Due to the fight and the kiss, this conflict escalated to a very high level as one individual felt violated. As a result conflict management is definitely needed. Though IBMP did not want

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to intervene, sexual harassment is a serious claim and needed to be addressed. A mediator needed to get involved to work through this crisis. A mediator will not only help to diffuse the issue but will show the researchers who were upset with the incident that the company is not avoiding the issue but is taking it seriously. That mediator would first off have to look at ways to reduce differentiation by creating common experiences. The mediator would have to find a way to show the cross cultural differences and show the Russians that what is acceptable in their culture is not in others and vice versa. The researchers need to find the commonalities within each other in order to live and work more effectively. After differentiation has been reduced the mediator would also have to look at ways to improve communication and understanding. Through this experiment IBMP would be able to tell the International Space Station (and implement in future experiments) that you cannot isolate people with different genders, cultures, languages together without first giving them a chance to get to know one another. The group should be asked to choose a team leader first and given some time to form their team dynamics. The group should be able to socialize together, learn about each other's' cultures and lifestyles and go through the team processes of storming and norming before being isolated in space. The group should also be given some regulations to follow, as ambiguous rules tend to lead to conflict. Certain common norms, for example, that sexual harassment and violence will not be tolerated should be instituted. Of course due to the different cultures, it will have to be clarified what is meant by sexual harassment and violence. With a good group dynamic, with a clear team leader and some rules in place the group should be able to reduce conflict and function more effectively.

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