Objectives

- Describe conflict, healthcare workplace conflict and the conflict resolution continuum.
- Describe using mediation when working through conflict with your team and colleagues.
- Discuss the importance of facilitating/mediating a productive family meeting.
- Discuss using mediation techniques when a consensus can’t be reached between families and the health care team.

Conflict Defined

Conflict can be found everywhere, always threatening to overwhelm us, and sometimes is inevitable.

Conflict is when two or more parties are in disagreement.

In the understanding of conflict we gain insight and a positive perspective.

Fortunately, there is a continuum of methods to resolve conflict (ADR).

Success at work – CONFLICT FREE

Healthcare Workplace Conflicts

- Workforce issues
  - Staffing
  - Training
  - Time management
- Regulatory requirements
- Competitive environment
- High or unrealistic expectations
- Reimbursement Complexities

- Ethical Issues
  - Patients, families, and healthcare team involved
  - Legal ramifications
  - Constantly changing environment
  - Reducing budgets
  - Lay offs
Unmanaged conflict is the largest reducible cost in organizations today and the least recognized.

-Dan Dana

Effects of Workplace Conflict

“Why Does it Matter to your Employer?”

Cost
- Wasted time
- Lowered motivation
- Absenteeism
- Leaving employment
- Replacement

Risk
- Mismanaged or ignored conflict
- Workplace bullying/violence
- Passive-aggressiveness

Impact on Quality of Decisions
- Information distorted
- Power contest
- Poor decisions

The Impact of Conflict

48% Intentionally decreased their work effort
47% Intentionally decreased time spent at work
38% Work productivity decreased quality of their work
63% Performance declined
66% Performance declined
35% Use frustration on customers

Recognizing Conflict

When all of these conditions are present you have conflict
- People who are task interdependent
- Where one or more feel anger
- When people find fault with the other
- Use of behaviors that cause a business problem
Underlying Needs

There are six emotional needs that influence someone's behavior:
- The need to be appreciated
- The need to be cared about
- The need to be accepted
- The need to be respected
- The need to be understood
- The need to be trusted

Recognizing Behaviors Indicating Conflict is Present

- Distancing - Walk Away (Flight)
  - Avoidance
  - Withdrawal
  - Withholding information
  - Not returning
  - Messages
  - Silent treatment

- Coercion - Power Play (Fight)
  - Threats
  - Pre-Empting
  - Getting others to take sides
  - Shouting
  - Hostile gestures

- Unintentional
  - Facial expressions
  - Body posture
  - Fidgeting
  - Sweating

A Successful Strategy to Resolve Conflict

A very successful process – over 90% effective in the workplace.

A better strategy is to use The Essential Process of Mediation. This includes talking face-to-face about the problem, without interruption, long enough to find a solution.

The Joint Commission (formerly JCAHO) recommends mediation to address conflict and collaboration.

Self-Mediation with your Colleagues

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Why</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>What</th>
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<td>Used to solve a business problem that is creating workflow issues between you and team members.</td>
<td>Used in situations where there is an ongoing, interdependent relationship and in low risk situations.</td>
<td>Helps you and your team members reach a consensual and voluntary agreement.</td>
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Self-Mediation – A Strategic Overview

1. Plan an approach, the time, the place, and the conversation.
2. Open the conversation and set ground rules.
3. Talk it out – validate, take risks, be vulnerable, offer apologies, and take accountability.
4. Break through shift – from you against me to us against the problem. The shift from conflict to harmony begins.
5. Discuss options and solutions.
6. Create an agreement and set time for periodic review.

Practicing Preventative Mediation – Making Important Relationships Work!

Preventative mediation is a life skill that will improve relationships to become more satisfying, enjoyable, and positive.

When no conflicts are occurring, preventative mediation skills can be practiced throughout the day to maintain a healthy environment.

Preventative Mediation Skills

1. Be proactive instead of reactive.
2. Be slow to anger.
4. Look for common ground as soon as possible.
5. Admit when your wrong.
6. Avoid passive-aggressiveness.
7. Mend fences as soon as possible.

Mediation in Health Care: The Family Conference

Why is it important? Why is it so difficult? When is the right time?
What Is A Family Conference Mediation?

*Family Conference Mediation* can be defined by the following aspects:
- A form of **assisted negotiation** whereby the mediator maintains a neutral position.
- An informal process, with a goal of **providing an environment devoid of intimidation and coercion**.
- Assists with helping families **find a common ground** in solving a problem.

The goals of Family Conference Mediation are always:
- To **problem solve and collaborate** with a family and the team.
- To **work towards a consensual agreement** between all parties.

Preparing For Family Conference Mediation

- Review the **medical records**.
- Review family psycho-social **issues, goals, and wishes**.
- Coordinate medical opinions with team.
- Decide who will **participate**.
- Evaluate self.

Setting The Proper Environment

- Reserve a private room.
- Have everyone sit down, ‘avoid take sides’.
- Remove distractions, such as cell phones, radio, children, etc.
- Utilize video or phone conferencing only if absolutely necessary
- Keep a resource for note-taking

Opening The Conversation

- Introduce yourself and allow everyone to introduce themselves and their relationship to the patient.
- Review the goals of the meeting.
- Establish ground rules.
Talk It Out – Start the Discussion

– Let silence do the heavy lifting.
– Give the patient and family time to react and ask questions.
– Acknowledge and validate their reactions.
– Encourage feedback from everyone.
– Read the room and react accordingly.

Breaking Through

– Creating an atmosphere of trust
– Look for opportunities to set a plan
– Try to summarize statements made into steps.
– Paraphrase using family statements.
– Always clarify, never make assumptions

The Best Outcome - Create An Agreement

Patients and families will adhere to the plan better if it is their plan, not our plan.
– Participants feel more comfortable with outcomes.
– Participants will be able to communicate outcomes effectively in their own words to other family members.
– Participants are less likely to find blame with the team for poor or unexpected outcomes.

Why Can We Not Get A Plan?

Sometimes, pre-existing conflicts, family dynamics, and poor adherence to the steps can cause the mediation process to halt. Some examples include:
– Lack of accurate information.
– Guilt, fear, and/or anger.
– Lack of trust.
– Cultural and/or religious conflict.
– Dysfunctional family members.
– Marginalization, coercion, and intimidation.
The Problem With No Plan

What happens when no one can come up with a plan?
- The patient suffers.
- The family remains in distress.
- Legal processes may be started (arbitration).
- Decision making is delayed.
- Bereavement can become complicated.

Conclusion

- Summarize areas of consensus and disagreement
- Caution against unplanned alternative outcomes.
- Provide continuity to team.
- Document in the patient’s medical record (seek help if needed).
- Reflect and debrief.

References


Thank You