Toward Better Communication and Teamwork: Skills for Handling Difficult Conversations

American College of Surgeons
Leadership and Advocacy Summit

April 10, 2016
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PERSONALIZING CONFLICT

Think of a time when...
“TRIZ”

Our reactions to conflict
A Story...

Reframing Conflict

- It’s about relationships
  - Relationships are co-created
- “Start with the heart” (Crucial Conversations)
- Seek to understand the unmet needs – your own and for the other person
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A

• Activating event or adversity faced
• Just the facts

Consequences

• Identify how the situation is making you feel – examples:
  • Frustrated
  • Worried
  • Angry
  • Upset
  • Confused
  • Scared
  • Embarrassed
  • Discouraged
Beliefs

• Beliefs you hold about the activating event
• The “story” you tell yourself
  • “He only cares about himself and not the team.”
  • “She is out to get me, probably wants me fired.”

Energy

• So how is your energy at this point?
• What might happen if you were to confront the other person?
Dispute

- Attribute positive intent
- What do you appreciate about the other person?
- What do you have in common – mutual purpose
- **Dispute** the original story (B) – what other possible explanations exist?

Energy

- Re-check your energy – any difference?
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<td>Avoids me in the hallway</td>
<td>He doesn’t want to work with me anymore</td>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>I admire him as a physician; his patients really like him</td>
<td>Initial: I feel awful it has come to this; hopeless</td>
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<td>Uses RNs or other PCCs to relay info</td>
<td>He wants me fired</td>
<td>Concerned</td>
<td>He is just as confused as I am and also wants to fix it</td>
<td>After ‘D’: Maybe there is a way to salvage this relationship</td>
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<td>Not speaking to me</td>
<td>I’m terrible at my job</td>
<td>Confused</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Frustrated</td>
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<td>Upset</td>
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<td>Disappointed</td>
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**Additional Thoughts**

**Increase Self-awareness**

- Self-reflection (journal)
- Analyze self-talk (what other possible explanations could there be?)
- Go to the balcony
Additional Thoughts

Leadership Matters

• Lead by example – emotions and behaviors are contagious
• Inspire and motivate others; make yourself accessible; role model the behaviors
• Frame situations as learning opportunities

Resources

• *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*, Patterson, et al
• *Nonviolent Communication*, Marshall Rosenberg
• *Primal Leadership*, Daniel Goleman
• *Learned Optimism*, Martin Seligman
• *The Emotional Life of Your Brain*, Richard Davidson
THANK YOU – QUESTIONS?