Conflict, Reality Shock and Stress
Conflict Resolution

See what you can learn about conflict by viewing this short video...

www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZpDnXYIFjo
Obviously, Adam Sandler did not demonstrate an acceptable way to manage conflict. He definitely taught us what not to do! So let’s broaden our knowledge.

Conflict is unavoidable and often viewed as negative. The most common conflict types include:
1. Conflict between different people
2. Conflict as situations in society
3. Conflict internally within yourself.
• When any form of conflict occurs, two behaviors are demonstrated within the people involved, assertiveness and cooperativeness.

• Assertiveness is defined as “the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns.”

• Cooperativeness is “the extent to which an individual attempts to satisfy the other person’s concerns.”
Conflict Management Styles

- There are five conflict management styles identified by Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann in the 1970’s. They include:
  1. Competing
  2. Avoiding
  3. Accommodating
  4. Compromising
  5. Collaborating

Click here and explore the site to help you identify your conflict management style.
What’s your style?

• Styles come from personal beliefs, values, and motives. No style is necessarily bad... There is a time and place for each to be utilized; some may be more universal than others.

• Most people prefer one style. Learning about the other styles will increase your ability to work with different types of people.
Competing

• Characteristics:
  Assertive and Uncooperative
  – Forceful and competitive
  – Goal or power oriented
  – Need to win, therefore others need to lose.

• Disadvantage:
  – Own concerns are pursued at other peoples expense
  – Breeds hostility and resentment

• Appropriate when:
  – Standing up for your rights
  – Defending a position you believe is correct
  – In an emergency situation
Avoiding

• Characteristics:
  - Unassertive and Uncooperative
  - Avoid/withdraw/ignore
  - Maintains relationships that would be hurt by conflict

• Disadvantage:
  - Conflict remains unresolved
  - Overuse of style leads to others walking over them

• Appropriate when:
  - Issue is trivial
  - Confrontation will hurt a working relationship
  - Little chance of satisfying your wants
Accommodating

• Characteristics:
  Unassertive and Cooperative
  – Resolves conflict by giving into others; Self-sacrifice
  – Maintains goodwill and trust; Restores harmony
  – Soothes hurt feelings

• Disadvantage:
  – May not be productive
  – May be taken advantage of

• Appropriate when:
  – Maintaining the relationship outweighs other considerations
  – Minimizing losses in a situation where you’re outmatched or losing
  – You realize you are wrong
Compromising

• Characteristics:
  Somewhat Assertive and Cooperative
  – Concern is for goals and the relationship
  – Finds a mutually acceptable solution
  – Addresses issues, but doesn’t explore in depth

• Disadvantage:
  – May create less than ideal outcome
  – Game playing can result

• Appropriate when:
  – Important/complex issues leave no clear simple solution
  – All are equal in power with no time restraints.
Collaborating

• Characteristics:
  - Assertive and Cooperative
  - Views conflicts as problems to be solved
  - Wish to learn and understand others' views

• Disadvantage:
  - Takes time and effort

• Appropriate when:
  - Maintaining relationships is important
  - Peer conflict is involved
  - Gain commitment through consensus building
• Now that you understand the different management styles that may surface during conflict, how is conflict resolved? Here are a few strategies to take note of:
  – Recognize conflict early; take ownership of your role in the conflict
  – Be proactive; Try not to let it get out of control
  – Actively listen, experience the other side of the issue
  – Remain calm; be respectful
  – Define the problem; focus on the problem and not the person
  – Seek a solution; find an acceptable outcome
Conflict...can it be good?

Conflict can bring positive outcomes if it is managed correctly. Many times conflict...

– Leads to clarification of issues
– Results in solutions and improvements
– Releases anxiety and stress
– Builds cooperation
– Leads to understanding
Words of wisdom...

“Peace is not the absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.”
Ronald Reagan

“Creativity comes from a conflict of ideas.”
Donatella Versace

“Difficulties are meant to rouse, not discourage. The human spirit is to grow strong by conflict.”
William Ellery Channing
Test your knowledge...

• Match the conflict management style with the appropriate characteristics.

A. Competing  I tend to give into others.
B. Avoiding  I want to learn and work with others.
C. Accommodating  I often get walked on.
D. Compromising  I address issues, but not in depth.
E. Collaborating  I am competitive and don’t like to lose.
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A. Competing  I tend to give into others.  C
B. Avoiding  I want to learn and work with others.  E
C. Accommodating  I often get walked on.  B
D. Compromising  I address issues, but not in depth.  D
E. Collaborating  I am competitive and don’t like to lose.  A
Reality Shock
The transition from school to the work setting can be a shock. New graduate nurses, in particular, suddenly are faced with the “real world” of patient care without an instructor to rescue them. The acute hospital setting isn’t the controlled school setting. It can be overwhelming, especially if there is little support or transition for the new graduate.
Phases of Reality Shock

• This concept is referred to as reality shock. It consists of 4 phases.
  1. Honeymoon
  2. Shock
  3. Recovery
  4. Resolution

• It is important to discuss these phases with new staff. Awareness and reassurance will be great support for them.
Honeymoon Phase: “Don’t worry, be happy”

• Preceptees are happy to be done with school.
• They are excited to start their job...all aspects of new employment is great! They see the world through rose-colored glasses. Everything is wonderful.
• The preceptee’s focus is on socialization, developing skills and learning routines. They want to learn everything at once.
The Preceptor Role

• Focus on the “need to know” information rather than the “nice to know” information. Giving them too much information could overwhelm the preceptee.
• Allow the preceptee to be enthusiastic, but realistic as well.
• Be supportive; involve the team.
• Assist with prioritizing and learning; give feedback.
Shock Phase: “Not what I thought it would be”

- Obstacles become apparent to the preceptee preventing him/her from meeting their needs and goals. They may not be able to grasp all the information as fast as they think they should.
- They encounter inconsistencies with their environment, their colleagues and their own knowledge. They realize the values they learned while in school do not match the values in the workplace.
- The job is not what they thought it was.
- They may become defensive with periods of outrage, disorganization, tardiness, and/or fatigue. They become frustrated and disappointed.
- Communication breakdown occurs. They may feel humiliated by fellow staff.

This is a very vulnerable time for someone to quit!
The Preceptor Role

• As a preceptor, you should be anticipating this phase. Be on the lookout for signs of general frustration...Don’t let them feel abandoned!
• Preceptors need to develop a bond with the preceptee during this phase. Take an interest in them. The preceptee needs to be able to trust, respect and feel comfortable with you.
• Be a good listener. Let the preceptee vent in a constructive manner; be careful to not become defensive.
• Focus on the good things that happen. Highlight the areas they are able to do independently. Give frequent feedback.
• Communicate to the preceptee that it is ok that they are learning. They do not need to be proficient in every task.
• Distinguish and prioritize learning needs. Ask them what they feel is going well and where they would like to improve.
• Set realistic goals. Unrealistic goals set the stage for additional disappointment.
Recovery Phase: “I will survive”

• The recovery phase begins to bring balance back to practice; The preceptee recognizes that not everything about their role is negative.
• Stress is reduced. Their sense of humor begins to return.
• Enthusiasm and excitement return.
• They will survive!
The Preceptor Role

• Establish realistic expectations. Provide feedback to the preceptee regarding their progress. Keep humor in the picture.
• Preceptor should be positive. Help the preceptee recognize positive aspects of their job.
• Attempt to turn unpleasant situations into positive learning experiences.
• Build critical thinking skills; assist with prioritization.
Resolution Phase: “I did survive”

• The preceptee now has a new way of thinking.
• The gap between what was learned in school and what is experienced on the job closes.
• They are more accepting.
The Preceptor Role

• Help resolve any conflict that persists.
• Continue to provide feedback.
• Build on the critical thinking skills.
• Teach constructive problem solving.
A tidbit to remember...

• Experienced staff will go through the same phases of reality shock, but the duration of each phase may be shorter and smoother due to having prior work experiences.

• But all new staff, no matter what experience they come with, want the same thing...to be accepted, to be respected, to feel welcome and to be supported.
Test your knowledge...

• Your preceptee has been orienting with you for about 3 weeks. You notice she has become disorganized and gets easily frustrated. She says to you “this isn’t what I thought it was going to be.” You recall learning about reality shock. Which phase of reality shock best describes what you preceptee is going through?
  A. Honeymoon
  B. Shock
  C. Recovery
  D. Resolution
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Stress

• Everyone experiences stress. Stress causes irritability, anxiousness, excitability and mood swings. It can reduce effectiveness when working with other people. It creates an accident prone environment where it is hard to focus and make good decisions. Please view this short video example.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2M87KDNwtA

We’ve all been there! Don’t let it get the best of you!
Stress

• Dr. Karl Albrecht, a consultant and conference speaker from California, identifies 4 common types of stress. They include:
  • time stress
  • anticipatory stress
  • situational stress
  • encounter stress
• It is important to recognize which type of stress is occurring in order to better manage it and control the environment.

(MindTools.com 2016)
Time Stress

• Time stress is the most common type of stress. This occurs when you worry about time or the lack thereof.
• You worry about all of the things you have to do and how you are going to accomplish it.
• Time stress can be managed by utilizing and teaching good time management skills. Create to do lists. Prioritize tasks. Help organize the work day. Delegate when appropriate. Talk new staff through these skills. Often times they will need to see how you prioritize and delegate so they can develop these skills within themselves.
Anticipatory Stress

• Anticipatory stress occurs when the thought of something causes stress. It is future based; anticipated.
• Whether it is someone’s first shift or their tenth, new staff admit they get nervous coming to work or thinking about coming to work.
• Anticipatory stress can be managed by utilizing positive visualization techniques and improving confidence. Let your preceptee know that these feelings are common. Help them find ways to overcome the stress. Focus on what is happening now and not in the future. Accentuate the positive things they have accomplished to instill confidence.
Situational Stress

• Situation stress occurs when a situation is unfamiliar or you have no control over it.
• Often times it presents during an emergency or a conflict. A car accident, a patient falling or administering an incorrect medication are a few examples of when situation stress may occur.
• Situational stress can be managed by utilizing conflict resolution skills. Help your preceptee recognize and control emotions.
Encounter Stress

- Encounter stress occurs when dealing with people; an encounter with someone.
- This may be experienced when you encounter intimidating, unapproachable people or people that make you uncomfortable.
- Encounter stress can be managed by developing greater emotional intelligence. By teaching self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation and empathy, your preceptee will likely broaden their people skills.
Preceptor Burnout...Be Cautious

• Training a new staff member requires many additional responsibilities. If you are training new person after new person, this responsibility can become a burden and emotional exhaustion, or burnout, could occur.

• If you find yourself just “going through the motions” rather than engaging in the preceptor-preceptee relationship it might be time to take a break from precepting.

• Utilize your self-awareness skills to identify these feelings before burnout becomes an issue.
Don’t let this be you!

"Dr. Singh's the third E.R. burnout we've lost this week."
Test your knowledge...

Stress that is felt when one is thinking about coming to work is known as:

A. Encounter
B. Situational
C. Anticipatory
D. Time
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