Critical Conversations

How to Have Conversations with Colleagues, Family and Friends to Decrease Defensiveness and Ensure Dialog so that Relationships Remain Strong and Meaningful.

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Scenario

“Suspicious Anonymous Complaint and Vendor Gifts”

You have been asked to do a Compliance Investigation regarding an anonymous complaint that a Senior Leader in your organization has been suspected of accepting gifts from vendors which are personal in nature. You have mentioned this to your boss, who said we need to “look the other way” since the Senior Leader is world renowned for what they do in their field. You decided to speak with this Senior Leader yourself anyway, and found out that this leader is NOT accepting gifts, yet named your boss who has been accepting gifts from vendors.
Objectives

By the end of today’s session you will be able to:

• Recognize the components of a critical conversation

• Learn and practice strategies for a successful conversation in the realm of compliance or your personal life

• Build your confidence and self-awareness in planning for and having critical conversations

Everyday Conflict

We face conflict each day, in many situations…

• At work- with a peer, employee or supervisor
• At home- family, friends,
• In the community- neighbors, around a purchase, experience at a restaurant

Think about your own response/reaction

• Are you the avoider
• Are you the minimizer
• Are you passive-aggressive
• Are you aggressive
Critical Conversations

1. High stakes

2. Opposing opinions

3. Strong emotions

Avoidance

*Have you ever avoided a confrontation by convincing yourself that:*

- “You can’t afford to lose them”
- “It will eventually get better”
- “Things might get worse?”
- “His performance results outweigh his attitude problems”
- “She is three years from retirement anyways”
Silence Kills

- More than 50% of healthcare workers have experienced/witnessed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mistakes</th>
<th>Lack of support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incompetence</td>
<td>Poor teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td>Micromanagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken rules</td>
<td>Dangerous short cuts</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- 50% report the problem has persisted for more than 1 year
- About 10% of people represent the offender category
- Only 10% report they had an important critical conversation with their coworker

Silence kills study – AORN & Vital Smarts

Impact of Silence

- Patient safety
- Turnover
- Employee satisfaction
- Productivity
Reasons for Silence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imprints of your past</th>
<th>Self Defense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability</td>
<td>Easier Not To</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Time</td>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You Are Not Alone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When the concern is:</th>
<th>% non-supervisory willing to confront</th>
<th>% supervisors willing to confront</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competence of nurse or other allied health provider</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence of a physician</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor teamwork</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect or abuse</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Silence kills study – AORN & Vital Smarts
Adopt the Right Mindset

- Accept that it is difficult
- Accept the challenge of doing it well
- Recognize you are disciplining the behavior, not the person
- Recognize difference between helping the employee and building a case for termination
- What is the End Game?
Your Frame of Reference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Advice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumption</td>
<td>Mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>Biases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgments</td>
<td>Stress level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Frame of reference is so personal and so deeply embedded, it is very difficult to practice suspending it on a regular basis.*

Ladder of Inference

- Take Actions Based on My Beliefs
- I Adopt Beliefs About the World
- I Draw Conclusions
- Make Assumptions Based on the Meaning I Add
- I Select Data From What I Observe
- I Observe Data From the World

Our beliefs affect the data we select next time.
Your Frame of Reference

Hey Look, a duck!

That’s not a duck! That’s a rabbit!

Reality can be so complex that equally valid observations from differing perspectives can appear to be contradictory.
Scraping Yourself Off the Ceiling

- Start with the 3rd story! The one the observer would tell with no stake in either side

- Helps identify the story (*what I convinced myself was true*) from the facts (*What I factually know*)

- Validates both perspectives, removes judgement, but rather describe the difference between the stories
## Critical Checklist

- Seek First To Understand
- Invite them to partner
- Pick the Right Setting
- Sort out what happened
- Understand your emotions
- Check your purpose
- Decide the best approach
- Describe the differences
- Create open communication

- Use “I” Statements
- Take Responsibility
- Keep Body Language in Check
- Listen to understand
- Share your viewpoint
- Reframe
- Invent options
- Look to standards
- Remember what is Possible

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## Scenario

**“Performance Review - Lacking Soft Skills”**

You have a Compliance & Privacy superstar on your team. They have been with the organization for twenty (20) years and know the job inside and out, as well as who to call if there is an issue. However, when things get stressful they snap at their colleagues, or you, and do not take ownership of remarks when colleagues have spoken to them. The employee has been made aware of this during their weekly meeting with you as their supervisor. It is time for their performance review which has always been “exceptional”, yet this behavior is demoralizing the team, and is giving your department a “Bad reputation”. You have decided to have a conversation about this.
Communication

*Respectful*
Treat others the way you wish to be treated

*Timely*
Don’t delay in addressing performance issues

*Correct*
Follow established policies and procedures

*Document*
Record all performance related events

*Balance*
Focus on both what is going well and what needs to improve

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Communication = Prevention

- Ask, “What can I do to help you with your job?”
- Ask, “What am I doing to get in your way?”
- Praise in public…Give negative feedback in private
- Find something to like/admire in each staff person
- Make a point of speaking to each staff member often
- Emphasize the positive; what is going well?
- Give frequent, meaningful feedback for a job done well

If you can do this routinely and successfully, you reduce the tension and open lines of communication when delivering constructive feedback
STATE

S hare your facts
T ell your story
A sk for others perspective
T alk tentatively
E ncourage testing

STATE

S eparate facts from stories

Inferences vs. Behavior
**STATE**

Tell your story

Why this is of concern

Consider saying…

– *It leads me to believe*
– *I’m beginning to think*
– *I’m wondering whether*

**STATE**

Ask for their perspective

– *How do you see it*
– *Help me understand*
– *What’s your view*
STATE

Tentatively
Tell the story as a story
Avoid absolutes/superlatives

STATE

Encourage testing
Remember purpose
If your goal is to convince, compel, control…
Scenario

“Privacy Nightmare”

The “employee” reports to someone else, and is the cause of a 1,000 patient reportable breach. You have done an investigation with all concerned parties including this “employee”. Your recommendation at the end of the investigation is that this was reckless behavior that caused the error and the employee should be terminated. The Manager and Director of this employee, as well as the HR Representative involved in the case, do not agree with your recommendation. You have been told the Vice President of HR agrees with the decision of Manager, Director and HR Representative. How do you have a conversation with the Vice President of HR to make your case.

Scenario

“Team Member Not Pulling their Weight”

You supervise a team of compliance specialists and auditors who all rotate performing New Employee Orientation on a biweekly basis. Everyone seems to take their turn except for one of your colleagues who always has an excuse for why they can’t do the New Employee Orientation on his/her assigned week. The excuses all seem legitimate but they never stop coming when it is her/her turn. When this person doesn’t do the New Employee Orientation, you have filled in on numerous occasions or gotten someone else to fill in. Everyone knows about this and talks about this in secret. It is starting to become an issue for your team. You have decided to have the conversation.
Debrief

Discussion:
• How did it feel?
• What did you find most challenging?
• What strategies did you find successful?
• What did you learn?
• What questions do you still have?

Resources:

http://www.experiential-learning-games.com/feedbackgames.html