

Conflict Resolution Tip Sheet

Conflict will happen. Learning how to deal with it rather than avoiding it is crucial. When conflict is mismanaged it can cause great harm, but when handled in a positive and respectful way, it can instead provide opportunities for growth and improvement by both parties. The tips below can help foster a positive and productive conflict resolution meeting.

- Create a short agenda for the meeting. Identify the conflict; separate the topics they want to discuss and label and define the issues. Your ultimate goal is to transition from the past situation to the future situation.
- Make sure everyone knows the ground rules for discussion. For example:
 - One person speaks at a time.
 - Make a sincere commitment to listen to one another and try to understand the other person's point of view before responding.
 - Avoid disrespectful words/language.
 - Don't start the meeting in attack mode (both staff and patient).
 - Do start the meeting in a positive mode; we are here to find a solution to the problem that will work for both patient and the facility.
- Make sure each participant in the meeting gets a chance to present their perspective.
- Summarize/re-frame statements to ensure you understand their perspective accurately.
- Discuss possible solutions; review different methods of action to handle the situation if it occurs again.
- Resolve the problem or come up with a solution that all parties can be agreeable on. Confirm that both staff and patient can accept the resolution. Document the solution and procedures to resolve the problem. Have staff and patient sign the document (for chart) to ensure mutual understanding. Retain a copy for your own records.
- Conduct a follow-up phone call or meeting with patient to confirm there is no ongoing conflict following the meeting.

Healthy Responses to Conflict

- Calm, non-defensive, and respectful reactions
- Ability to seek compromise
- Facing conflict head-on instead of avoiding
- Readiness to move past conflict without holding resentment

Unhealthy Responses to Conflict

- Explosive, angry, hurtful, demeaning reactions
- Inability to compromise
- Fear and avoidance of conflict resolution
- Withdrawal resulting in rejection, shaming, or fear of rebuttal

References:

De la Morreaux, A. (n.d.). How to Lead a Conflict-Resolution Meeting. Retrieved April 26, 2016, from <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/leadconflictresolution-meeting-10665.html> Segal, J., PH.D., & Smith, M., M.A. (2016, April). Conflict Resolution Skills: Building the skills that can turn conflict into opportunities. Retrieved April 26, 2016, from www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships/conflict-resolution-skills.htm