



Awardee of The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology

Component 16- Professionalism/Customer Service in the Health Environment

Unit 7-Handling Conflict

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Learning Objectives

- Dimensions of conflict
- Definition of conflict
- Approaches used in conflict resolution
- Conflict resolution styles
- Communication strategies to resolve conflict

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Dimensions of Conflict

1. Conflict is a struggle
2. There needs to be interdependence between individuals for conflict to occur
3. Conflict contains an "affective element"
4. Conflict involves differences between individuals that they perceive to be incompatible

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Conflict Creation and Resolution

- Conflict
 - Creates a need for change
 - Occurs as a result of change
- Expect to find conflict in healthcare organizations
- Goal
 - Manage conflict
 - Produce positive change from the conflict

Northouse LL, Northouse PG. Health communication: strategies for health professionals. 3rd ed. Stamford: Appleton and Lange; 1998, p.225.

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Conflict Defined

“Conflict is a felt struggle between two or more interdependent individuals over perceived incompatible differences in beliefs, values, and goals, or over differences in desires for control, status, and affection.”

Northouse LL, Northouse PG. Health communication: strategies for health professionals. 3rd ed. Stamford: Appleton and Lange; 1998, p.228.

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Conflict as a Three-Legged Stool

Three perspectives of conflict

1. Personal conflict
2. Interpersonal conflict
3. Social conflict

Northouse LL, Northouse PG. Health communication: strategies for health professionals. 3rd ed. Stamford: Appleton and Lange; 1998, p.226.

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Major Distinctions of Conflict

Two major distinctions of conflict

1. Conflict over content issues
2. Conflict over relationship issues

Northouse LL, Northouse PG. Health communication: strategies for health professionals, 3rd ed. Stamford: Appleton and Lange; 1998, p.228.

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Conflict Over Content Issues

Disagreements surrounding

1. Beliefs and values
2. Goals
 - Procedural conflict
 - Substantive conflict

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Conflict Over Relationship Issues

1. Conflict and issues of self-esteem
2. Conflict and issues of control
3. Conflict and issues of affiliation

Northouse LL, Northouse PG. Health communication: strategies for health professionals, 3rd ed. Stamford: Appleton and Lange; 1998, p.232-234.

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Theoretical Perspectives of Conflict

- Game theory
- Conflict resolution theory

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Filley's Six Step Conflict Model

1. Antecedent conditions
 - Ambiguous roles, not enough time
 - Competition for scarce resources
 - Barriers to communication
 - Required interdependence
 - Joint decision making needed
 - Many constraints and unresolved prior conflict

Northouse LL, Northouse PG. Health communication: strategies for health professionals. 3rd ed. Stamford: Appleton and Lange, 1998. p.237-239.

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Filley's Six Step Conflict Model

1. Antecedent conditions
2. Felt conflict
3. Perceived conflict
4. Manifest behavior
5. Conflict resolution or suppression
6. Resolution aftermath

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Conflict Resolution

Three broad conflict resolution categories

1. Win-lose strategies
2. Lose-lose strategies
3. Win-win strategies

Northouse LL, Northouse PG. Health communication: strategies for health professionals. 3rd ed. Stamford: Appleton and Lange; 1998. p.239-241.

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Resolution Aftermath

Outcome of the resolution process

1. If the process is solved in positive manner, participants will have good feelings about themselves and the other party
2. If the conflict is resolved in a non-productive style, participants will have negative feelings about themselves and each other

Northouse LL, Northouse PG. Health communication: strategies for health professionals. 3rd ed. Stamford: Appleton and Lange; 1998. p.243.

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Further Conflict Resolution Approaches

- Differentiation
- Face-saving
- Fractionation

(Northouse LL, Northouse PG. Health communication: strategies for health professionals. 3rd ed. Stamford: Appleton and Lange; 1998. p.249-252.)

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Individual Level Conflict Styles

- Avoidance
- Competition
- Accommodation
- Compromise
- Collaboration

Northouse LL, Northouse PG. Health communication: strategies for health professionals. 3rd ed. Stamford: Appleton and Lange; 1998, p.245-249.

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Individual Level Conflict Styles

- Avoidance
- Competition

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Individual Level Conflict Styles

- Avoidance
- Competition
- **Accommodation**
- **Compromise**

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Individual Level Conflict Styles

- Avoidance
- Competition
- Accommodation
- Compromise
- **Collaboration**

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Summary

- Dimensions of conflict
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- The material for this unit has been adapted from the following source:

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