

Managing conflict with emotional competence

From **Confronting**

....To **Stepping Back**, and **Dialogue**



**Follow-up course
Kilifi, Kenya**

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Referencing and acknowledging the iCARE-Haaland model

- *Please feel free to use and adapt the material in this presentation, and the model it is built on, by referring to the model, and the authors:*
- This presentation is adapted from «***Managing conflict with emotional competence***», which is part of the learning materials in the iCARE-Haaland model.
- **To reference this content please use the following:** Haaland A, with Boga M, 2020. Communicating with awareness and emotional competence: introducing the iCARE-Haaland model for health professionals across cultures. With contributions from training teams, Vicki Marsh and Sassy Molyneux
- <https://connect.tghn.org/training/icare-haaland-model/>
- The authors' names should remain on the presentation, with a by line recognizing the person who (has adapted and) is presenting the presentation

Recognizing and managing **conflict**: Different ways, different purposes

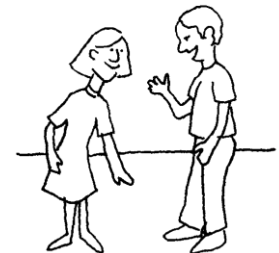
In groups, share:

- How you handle conflict in your work place now
- What skills have you used, what worked well, why?
- What have you learnt?
- What more do you need to learn to handle conflict?



Respect + communication skills = less **conflict**

- *“Before this course, I used to disrespect patients views and sometimes I could lead to conflicts between me and the patients and relatives. During this communication course, I have learnt how to respect patients’ rights and this has lead to less conflict and created a safe working environment between me and my patients.”*
- *“It is effective to listen attentively, not being judgmental and not with mouth full of words. By applying the communication skills, one is able to handle conflicts effectively.”*



Learning objectives

- **To strengthen awareness and knowledge of:**
 - Your own strategies to handle conflict – how well they work, what are gaps and further learning needs
 - Causes of conflict among patients and colleagues
 - How conflict affects us, and what it can result in
 - How emotions affect conflict
 - Different conflict resolution strategies
 - Strategies to deal with conflict, and to prevent conflict
- **To strengthen skills to**
 - Recognise emotions and danger signs for conflict
 - Step back, and
 - Communicate with emotional competence to handle conflict constructively, with awareness and respect for emotions – through dialogue

Causes of **conflict**



Buzz in groups –

- What has caused conflict around you since we last met?

Causes of conflicts

- **Basis: Our upbringing.** Basic insecurities, or unfulfilled emotional needs from childhood
- **Stress** – created by too much or too little responsibility, lack of managerial support, lack of participating in decision-making
- When nurses or patients hold **beliefs, values and goals** that differ from those of their colleagues or carers, the situation can lead to conflict: **«Attack» on our values is very sensitive**
- When individuals or groups are **not getting what they want or need**, and are seeking their own **self interest**
- **Leadership** style
- Alcoholism, mental stress, financial problems



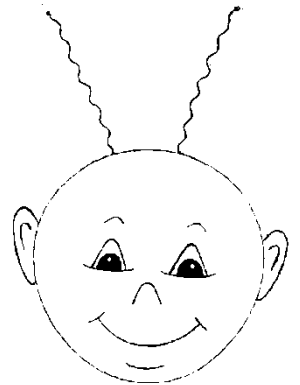
Others causes of **conflict**

- **You are not able to say no, (until – you blow up?)**
- Your **pride** is hurt
- Your perceptions are being questioned
- Assumptions/**prejudice**
- Too high or too low expectations
- **Attitudes** related to race, gender, personality
- Issues related to hierarchy



In summary:

- **Lack of awareness;**
- **Automatic reactions**



From taking things personally – to acting with emotional competence

- Patients often react (emotionally) to the provider as a «representative of the institution»
- When a patient is angry and shouts at you e.g because he has waited long – it is not **your** fault
- It is normal to feel **insecure** (*and want to attack back*) when receiving anger – even when you have no power over what he is complaining about
- When recognizing it is **not personal**, stopping the automatic reaction and stepping back – you handle him without making a conflict:
- **Apologize on behalf on your institution. Then he can relate to you as **a person who understands****



Effects of **conflict**?



General effects:

- *Undermines morale and self confidence*
- **Polarizes** people/makes people take sides and form rival groups
- **Reduces cooperation**
- **Sharpens differences**
- **Takes attention away** from important activities
- Leads to **irresponsible** or harmful behavior, e.g violence, fighting

Effects on you:

- Your **awareness** disappears
- Can **feel worthless** – that your work, person, values = 0
- You **judge** the other person
- **Critical thinking** disappears
- This affects/ **destroys trust**, and relationships
- Makes dialogue difficult



Demonstration:

The outpatient nurse

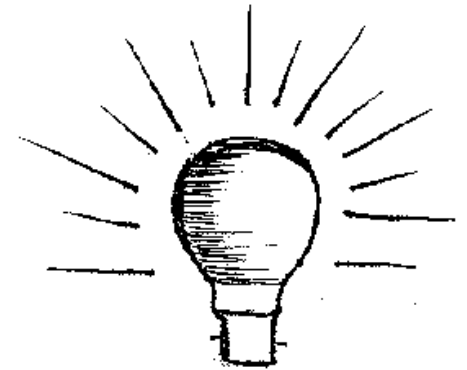
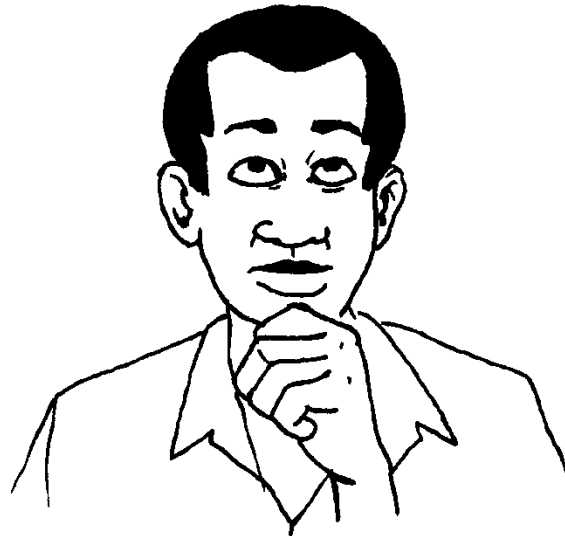


What is behind the reactions?

- *Does this happen?*
- What could be *behind* nurse Jane's reactions?
- How do you think Mama Mary *felt*?
- What *strategy* did nurse Grace use to deal with the conflict?



Insights from discussing the demo



Recognizing and managing conflict:

Different ways, different purposes

1. Collaboration

- **Mutual willingness**
 - to seek effective solution to satisfy both
- **Cooperative, win-win –**
 - as **both** are concerned about the interest of the other,
 - but not prepared to give up to please the other.
- **Used when**
 - **goals and needs of both sides are important.**



Recognizing and managing **conflict**:

2. Avoidance

- **Used by:**
 - People who **negate their own concerns, and**
 - **concerns of others**
- **Uncooperative**
- **Powerful technique –**
 - can be used purposefully to frustrate the other.
 - One party withdraws when other methods have failed
- **Appropriate when**
 - potential negative results of initiating and acting on conflict are
 - much greater than the benefits of its resolution.



Recognizing and managing **conflict**:

3. Accomodation

- **Cooperative interaction**

- One party prepared to give up her needs
- for the sake of the other

- **Nonassertive person feels –**

- more important to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships
- than to express their own opinions and needs clearly.

- **Person will apologize to solve conflict**

- **Appropriate if**

- person was wrong,
- opponent is more powerful, or
- when issue is more important to preserve harmony.



Example: Accomodation

- *I make sure we discuss the whole issue and come to a solution but if the other party is resistant, I just say "let it be the way you say it"*



Recognizing and managing **conflict**:

4. **Compromise**

- **Cooperative style**
- **Used by people who realize that**
 - in conflict, **not all parties can be satisfied**
- Both parties prepared to
 - give and take
- **Mutually acceptable solutions** are sought
- Leads to **lose-lose** atmosphere:
 - both have to give up something,
 - are only part satisfied
- **Used when**
 - **both have equal power**,
 - goals are only moderately important, and
 - **quick solution** is needed.



Recognizing and managing **conflict**:

5. Competition

- **Power-oriented uncooperative** mode
- One person
 - is **aggressive**,
 - **pursues own goals**,
 - **at the expense of the other**
- **Win-lose** situation – similar to forcing an issue
- When style used **too often**,
 - morale is damaged
- **Appropriate** when
 - **quick or unpopular decision is needed**



Strategies to resolve conflict

- **Win-lose:** Use of power of one position, use of mental or physical power, use of majority rule
- **Lose-lose:** Use of compromise, bribes, resorting to rules
- **Win-Win:** Use of problem-solving, reaching consensus, focus on goals



Insights – Dealing with conflict



- *“It is imperative that no matter how angry or irritated we are, we need to approach others with dignity and respect bearing in mind that they are also people with feelings”.*



- *“It is important to listen attentively, not being judgmental and not with mouth full of words. By applying the communication skills, one is able to handle conflicts effectively”*

Summary: Resolving conflict

- **Choose Win-Win strategy:**
 - Problem-solving, reaching consensus,
 - focus on goals
 - Use emotional competence
- **Recognize emotions, take a step back:**
 - If emotions are high, suggest to meet later to talk.
 - *Take care of your feelings.*
- **Respect, and listen:**
 - There are *almost* always **two sides** to a conflict: **Listen**, with intention to understand
- **What do you need, what can you give?**
 - Reflect on your own situation and priorities, discuss.
 - **Use positive thinking, be generous**



Role-play:

The rude and irresponsible colleague

- Run the role-play – see instructions at the end of the module script



Discovering the volcano is about to erupt?

Recognizing early signs of conflict

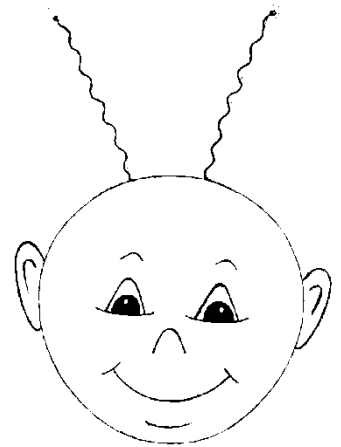
In groups, discuss:

- At your workplace, how can you “read” that a conflict is “brewing”, that “*the volcano is about to erupt*”?
- What are signs that *there is danger* that a conflict can erupt?
- **What can you do** to prevent a conflict?



Early indicators - Conflict is brewing: Watch for emotional clues

- Negative body language
- Colleagues **complain** and argue frequently
- **Mood changes**
- People feeling **insecure**
- Frequent display of **power**
- Problems are not solved
- Colleagues (and others) show **lack of respect**, repeatedly
- Absenteeism increase
- Restructuring/changes without clear info
- Gossip
- **No spontaneity** – colleagues are protecting themselves: **No trust**
- Lack of clear goals
- Not discussing or reaching goals
- **The remedy:**
- **Awareness**
- **Finding reasons**
- **Respect – and**
- **Open communication**



Example: Prevention of conflict

- *“My supervisor didn’t give my off duties as I requested. I viewed the duty roster, I felt irritated but I decided to leave my tempers to cool. I didn’t want to confront her when my tempers were high.*
- *I also engaged on self-talk and self-reasoning. I said maybe she didn’t give me the offs due to the shortage of staffs.*
- *After my tempers are down, then I faced her and asked her why she didn’t consider my request. She said it was due to shortage of staff and we both agreed to give me my requests when other members finished their offs and leaves. The situation was solved and there was no conflict between us.”*

How to prevent conflict

- **Establish clear written rules, policies and guidelines at work:**
 - make everyone aware of them
- **Appreciate people' efforts**
 - People must feel that what they are doing, is seen as worthwhile
- **Create a supportive climate –**
 - where people are free to try out new ways of doing things.
 - This energizes and stimulates them to make new suggestions
- **Avoid power play,**
 - where decisions or plans are likely to create conflict –
 - because the staff does not agree on implementing them
- **Provide active and open communication system**
- **Feedback about behavior (what you do) is constructive,**
 - but not feedback about personality (what you are/your person)