

**Managing Workplace Conflict**  
Organizational Growth Through Mediation

Janice Kopec, BA, CDP  
Jeff Stanicki, BA, CDP  
Provider Relations  
Hospice of the Western Reserve

**Objectives**

- Define Conflict Resolution
- Identify Effects of Organizational Conflict
- Lead a Managerial Mediation Session to resolve disputes

**Conflict Resolution**

- What is Conflict???
- Defining and Understanding Conflict

**Healthcare Workplace Conflicts**

- Workforce Issues-Staffing
- Regulatory Requirements
- Competitive Environment/Interests
- High Expectations
- Ethical Issues
- Reimbursement Complexities

**Are Healthcare Conflicts Different?**

- Disputes accompanied by-  
Strong Emotions  
High Stakes (often life and death)  
Complex Issues  
Multiple Parties Effectuated  
Constant Change in Uncertain Environment

**A Reason for High Levels of Conflict**

**INTENSITY**

- \*Subtle spread of emotions from person to person
- \*Often below the level of consciousness
- \*Caregivers exposed to high stress situations
- \*Emotions and moods often transferred

### Healthcare Dispute Categories

- Workforce
- Patient/Provider
- Bio-Ethical
- Third Party Reimbursement/MCO's
- General Business

### Clash of Value Systems

- Decisions are often based on :
    - Our interests
    - Our values
    - Our feelings-
- To BE: cared about, understood, appreciated, trusted, accepted and respected.

*Not having the ability to recognize other perspectives is often a prescription for conflict.*

### Effects of Workplace Conflict

- Why does it matter to the organization?
- 1. Cost
- 2. Risk
- 3. Impact on Decision Quality

### Cost of Organizational Conflict

- Wasted Time
- Loss of Motivation
- Productivity
- Performance
- Absenteeism
- Talent Loss
- Decision Quality

### Risks of Organizational Conflict

- Behavioral Issues
- Vandalism
- Retaliating Law Suits
- Workplace Violence

### Impact on Decision Quality

- Information Distortion
- Power Contest
- Judgment
- Political
- Personalization
- Role Dysfunction

## Identification of CONFLICT

How do you know there is a conflict?

A condition between people who are task interdependent  
and  
where one or both feel angry  
and  
find fault with the other  
and  
use behaviors that cause a business problem.

## Behaviors Indicating Conflict

- Distancing= Walk Away (flight)
- Avoidance
- Withdrawal
- Withholding Information
- Not Returning Messages
- Silent Treatment

## Behaviors Indicating Conflict

- Coercion=Power Plays (fight)
- Threats
- Pre-empting
- Gathering allies
- Shouting
- Hostile gestures

## Conflict Resolution Continuum

- Negotiation
- Mediation
- Arbitration
- Adjudication

Individuals involved in the conflict have more control over the process and outcome using voluntary ADR methods.

## A Better Strategy: The Essential Process of Mediation

Face to face  
talking about the problem  
without interruption  
long enough to find a solution.

## Objective of Managerial Mediation

Determine the following:

- Identifying Conflict and its behaviors
- When to use
- How to use
- When not to use

### What is Managerial Mediation

- A business meeting about a business problem
- For the benefit of the organization
- Normally initiated by the manager
- Facilitated by the manager
- Delegates problem solution to employees

### When to use Managerial Mediation

- Is the conflict appropriate?  
Define the problem.
- Why does it matter to me?  
Observe effect on others.
- What is the purpose/problem?  
Reaching a balanced agreement.
- Who will solve the problem?

### When NOT to use Managerial Mediation

- To establish innocence or guilt
- As a form of punishment
- As a substitute for discipline
- As a substitute for job training
- As a substitute for EAP service
- To decide right and wrong
- To address a poorly defined problem

### Steps of Managerial Mediation

- Step 1: Decide to mediate
- Step 2: Hold preliminary meeting(s)
- Step 3: Plan the context
- Step 4: Hold the three-way meeting
- Step 5: Follow-up

### Preliminary Meeting Objectives

- To define the business problem to be solved.
- To show why and what evidence exists.
- To hear each persons "side of the story".
- To explain key information about three-way meeting. (roles of each participant)
- To prepare for effective participation.
- To secure the person's commitment to attend.

### Planning the Context

- Clear Environment
- Location
- Physical Environment
- Time of day/week
- Who attends
- Duration

### Manager as Mediator Tasks

- Keep Disputants Engaged
  - NO- Walk Aways
  - NO- Power Plays
- Support Conciliatory Gestures
- W.A.I.T. "Why am I Talking?"
- Stay in Essential Process

### Techniques to Move Progress

- Brainstorming
- Reframing Issues
- Active Listening
- De-Escalation of Conflict

### Conflict Mountain

- Confrontation Phase
- Breakthrough Phase
- Conciliatory Phase

### Reaching an Agreement

- What's a Good Deal?
  - Ensure it is:
    - Balanced
    - Behaviorally Specific
    - Written Record

### Follow Up

- Follow up meeting(s)
- Timing
- Supervision

### When Failure Occurs

- Options to consider-
  1. One more try
  2. Final offer selection
  3. Mediation/Arbitration

## Summary and Conclusions

- Why become a mediating organization?

Bottom- Line Benefits

Performance

Productivity

Quality

Efficiency

Profitability