Managing Teams & Conflict Management

Conflict in the Context of Nursing and Patient Care
Interpersonal conflict: Nursing (RNAO, 2016)

- **Types**
  - Relationship
  - Task
  - Process

- **Sources**
  - Doctors,
  - Colleagues,
  - Nurse manager
  - Patients/families

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Explaining interpersonal conflict in nursing workplaces: SCARF model (Freedman, 2019)

• Status - high degree of specialization of knowledge in health care systems; high degree of collaboration required across specialties
• Certainty - inherent complexity of health care systems and workplaces
• Autonomy - health workplaces are large public organizations; multiple lines of reporting
• Relatedness - high level of interdependence between disciplines in providing care
• Fairness - competing ethical/moral frameworks
Nurse Client Conflict

- Nurse-Client conflict occurs when a patient’s needs or expectations are not met, or trust is not established.
- Patients may be hesitant to share concerns
- Therapeutic relationship is challenged
- CNO Practice Guideline (2018):
  - Nurse client conflict can escalate under conditions of constraint, intoxication or overstimulation, inability to communicate, nurse judgement/labeling or misinterpretation of needs of client and family
Nurse-Nurse Conflict

Communication - shift handover;
Demands of nursing manager
Inefficient nurse physician relationships and/or collaboration with other HCP
Lack of support from colleagues
Intergenerational differences - education
Challenges to clinical competence
Nurse-Workplace Conflict

- Emotionally demanding and fast paced work environment
- Organizational change; budgetary demands
- Organizational policies - communication
- Safety of work environment; poor working conditions
- Inadequate staffing and resources
- Lack of role clarity, responsibility
- Lack of opportunity for advancement or professional development
- Workplace harassment and/or disruption
Ethical Conflict

Ethical conflicts can be patient/family related or systems related

Ethical conflicts can be experienced as ‘moral distress’
- Protecting patients' rights;
- Autonomy and informed consent to treatment,
- Staffing patterns negatively affecting work;
- Surrogate decision making
- Use of or abuse of physical/chemical restraints
- Providing care with possible risk to your own health
- Unethical practice by other HCP
Ethical Conflicts Experienced by Nurses
(Gaudine et.al. 2011)

- Disagreement about care decisions or treatment options;
- Others not respecting a patient’s wishes;
- Patient not receiving quality end-of-life care;
- Patient’s or family’s behavior preventing safe or quality care for self or others;
- Patient and/or family not having informed consent or full disclosure;
- Not knowing the ‘right thing to do’;
- System deficit or deficiency preventing quality care;
- Nurse or physician values conflict with patient values or lifestyle choices;
- Possible or perceived deficiencies in care owing to nurse or physician competency.
Concepts related to Interpersonal Conflict
(RNAO, 2016)

- Bullying
- Workplace Incivility
- Horizontal Violence
- Ostracism

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Conceptual Model of Antecedents and Consequences of Conflict (Almost, 2006)
Consequences of team conflict on quality of patient care (Cullati et. al., 2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Dimension</th>
<th>example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Lack of communication across team can delay care delivery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patient Centeredness</td>
<td>Conflict can distract from ‘seeing’ the patient and family needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Workplace stressors can reduce efficiency of care delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>Personal stress could lead to suboptimal patient care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Interprofessional conflict could lead to lack of attention to patient status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>Differences in beliefs re. patient prognosis can result in inequitable care</td>
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</tbody>
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Key points

Nurses are often caught in workplace conflicts but are ill-prepared to deal with them.

Conflict is inherent to complex, large and multiprofessional organizations such as the Health Care System.

Workplace conflict can arise from communication, structural or personal issues.

Understanding how you react to conflict can help you find more efficient ways to deal with it.
Understanding the conditions under which interpersonal conflict occurs guides nurse leaders to effectively intervene, manage and mitigate conflict in their teams.