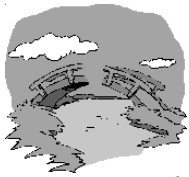




Handling Conflict



Conflict occurs when the needs of a person are not being met. Conflict happens when there is a breakdown in communication, listening and talking. There can be many causes for this, from having a problem in communicating your needs, not listening closely, to feelings of being ignored. Conflict can occur over one situation or several situations. Creating a conflict may be the last option for the person in distress to be noticed. What may not seem important to one person can be very important to another.

As a professional:

- Do you truly listen to your patients and acknowledge their needs?
- Do you respond to your patients and inform them of progress or delays?
- Do you communicate and talk at a level that your patients understand?
- Do you have them summarize what is said to clear up any possible misperceptions?

As a patient:

- Do you let staff know of needs you have?
- Do you ask staff for help when they are busy or when they have time to listen?
- Do you ask staff for a time to talk to you when both of you would not be rushed to discuss an important matter?
- Do you ask or demand help from staff?

Always ask yourselves the following three (3) questions in working through a conflict situation:

1. What is the real issue?
2. How did this situation happen?
3. What can be done to clear it up?

TEN STEPS TO RESOLVE CONFLICT

1. Never talk about a situation when angry. Always be in control of your emotions;
2. Actively listen, repeat back what is said to avoid confusion;
3. Do not interrupt others when they are talking;
4. If the issue cannot be resolved in a short time (10 minutes), ask for help from others or stop. Try one more time. If you cannot resolve the issue, get the social worker or administrator involved;
5. Use a mediator that both people agree on, and accept their decision;
6. Write things down, as this helps in easing feelings and helps people focus on issues not emotions;
7. Focus on the problem, not the person or personality;
8. Be flexible;
9. Do not leave a conflict unresolved so that resentment is created; and
10. Every conflict has a solution if those involved want it.

(Adapted from Network 13 Grievance policy)

