



COMMUNICATING WHEN THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT



ABSTRACT

How often have you wanted to discuss an issue with someone at work but avoided the conversation because you didn't want to cause or engage in conflict? Or maybe you've brought up an issue that was seemingly insignificant, only to have it cause unintended conflict?

There are a variety of possible outcomes given the above circumstances: You internalize your stress and frustration; you discuss your concerns with others rather than confronting the person, potentially creating gossip; you engage the person, and the conversation doesn't go well, so you become discouraged or angry; your behavior toward the person becomes passive-aggressive; or you completely withdraw.

Fortunately, these negative outcomes can be avoided altogether if the situation is approached with thoughtful consideration and a positive strategy.

This course outlines a three-part strategy that illustrates how to handle situations where the potential for conflict exists. Participants will have the opportunity to apply the strategy and learn for themselves how to facilitate more satisfying outcomes when dealing with the potential for conflict.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- Utilize a three-part strategy to manage conversations with a potential for conflict.
- Focus on the personal responsibility that comes with managing conflict.
- Recognize the value of establishing a common understanding or points of common agreement.
- Identify two safety considerations while addressing conflict.



WHEN DOES THE POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT EXIST?

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES:

- Your co-worker, John, has asked you to perform maintenance on one of the instruments in your department. You've done the maintenance the last three times, even though this responsibility should be shared by all the MTs in your department.
- Over the last several weeks Sally has been coming to you to chat and gossip, and you've noticed that she has become increasingly critical of some of your co-workers. Her negativity is beginning to make you uncomfortable.
- You have noticed that Frank is not following proper procedure for running a QC test.
- Jennifer, one of your client services representatives, was on the phone with a client when you overheard her give inaccurate (or out-dated) information.
- You feel like the workload is not being evenly distributed between you and your co-workers, so you've decided to talk to your supervisor about it.
- Joe has spent the greater part of his day at the computer crunching numbers for his lab's monthly quality report. Sarah, one of his co-workers, walks by and sarcastically states, "It must be nice to take a load off and play on the computer all day." This isn't the first time Joe has felt like his co-workers didn't recognize or value the work he was doing when he wasn't at the bench.
- Sue, the supervisor of the hematology lab, has received complaints that not everyone is pitching in to complete some of the small jobs that are supposed to be equally shared among everyone in the lab.

Course duration: two hours

Note: This course is P.A.C.E.® eligible.





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