

PReP 13: Working in Teams, Part 2

Lesson 3 - Teamwork and Conflict Resolution

Joan:

Well actually, can we talk about Mr. Rose please? I just—

Gord:

You know what, this case has me a little bit worried. I've seen a steep decline in his mobility, especially in the last week, as we all now know, and I'm concerned that he's not living in a safe enough environment. All it would take would be one bad fall for things to go downhill very quickly.

Joan:

Now I know—

Gord:

Now Joan, I asked you yesterday to find out what kind of home support Mr. Rose has, and whether his family could offer some support. We may need to involve the social worker at this point.

Joan:

Listen. Gord. Can we just take a step back here? Just for a minute? I have a question about his medication. I mean, the Hydromorphone could have caused all the symptoms that you saw yesterday in Mr. Rose. Now I haven't seen him for a few weeks, but Meaghan, are we really at this stage of his treatment?

Meaghan:

What's the implication? That he's on the wrong medication? Obviously I prescribed Hydromorphone for a reason. I mean, he's coming in this morning, as you know, Joan; I'll explore some other options. But what I want to know is why I didn't hear about these changes as soon as you noticed his symptoms, Gord.

Gord:

What do you mean? I told Amisi. That should have been enough.

Joan:

Amisi, do you have something you want to say?

Amisi:
I—I'm sorry.

Meaghan:
Was that necessary? Honestly!

Gord:
What did I say?

Meaghan:
Why do things always seem to get to this point?

Gord:
That's what I'm wondering, Meaghan. I'd love to know. You know, this should be about the patients.

Meaghan:
Exactly what I was thinking.

Narrator:
Effective teamwork is a critical part of a healthy workplace. In fact, the link between teamwork and preventing adverse events is well established. Patients expect, even assume, that their healthcare teams are functioning well. But that's not always the case.

Managing a healthcare team successfully can be challenging. And it always helps when team members are supportive and collaborative. Yet the role of a leader can be perceived very differently depending on the country and culture you're working in. In this section, we will give you an overview of what is expected from an effective team leader here in Canada. This is helpful to know—not only as a future team leader, but also as a team member.

Strong team leaders embrace the leadership role, asking for help when they need it. They constantly monitor the team, setting priorities and making decisions as they go. They make the most of all resources in order to maximize team performance. They help resolve team conflicts, and delegate tasks so that the workload is balanced for everyone. They check in regularly, and aren't afraid to call for a quick brief, a huddle, or a debrief. Great leaders empower their team members to speak freely and ask questions.

They organize training opportunities. And they inspire and work hard to achieve a positive group culture.

But even when a team is structured for success, and its leader excels, one key challenge that can't always be avoided is conflict. Conflict is an inevitable and normal part of any team. In its Best Practice Guideline, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario describes the reasons why conflicts occur using the Healthy Work Environments framework.

According to the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, organizations can reduce conflict between coworkers by providing a positive work environment. Where leaders have a clear sense of direction, are accessible to employees, and foster a sense of friendliness and trust. Where the organization promotes a culture of respect, celebrates successes, and deals with mistakes as opportunities to learn. Where the workplace is ethical. Where people feel appreciated, and are given opportunities to grow professionally. And where it's recognized that employees have commitments outside of work that need to be respected.

As a team member, here is how you can help to deal with conflicts: Listen with empathy and respect. Allow others to express their concerns. Look beyond what's been said to find the deeper meaning. Be self-reflective, acknowledging if you are at fault, and express your emotions in a different way. Try to separate what is important in a situation and what gets in the way. Learn from difficult behaviours. And negotiate collaboratively to resolve an issue.

Joan:
Good morning everybody!

Everyone:
Good morning!

Joan:
And thanks everyone for being on time.

Meaghan:
You're welcome.

Joan:
Thank you, Alex for these snacks, and thanks for taking notes.

So you know, we have a lot on our agenda today, but there is one case I'd like to bring up first because we have to make some decisions before the patient arrives at 9. So let me bring everyone up-to-date on Mr. Rose.

Gord:

Right, right. What's happening there?

Joan:

Well Gord—first of all can I just say, good call. You noticed his symptoms right away yesterday, and dealt with them on the spot. So thank you.

Gord:

Thanks, Joan.

Joan:

Okay. And now we've all been the new one, trying to figure out a different way of doing things. And Amisi I know you've heard me say this before one-on-one, but I just want to say in front of everyone here how much I've enjoyed working with you these last few weeks.

Gord:

Yes.

Joan:

You bring a lot to this place.

Meaghan:

Absolutely. It's been great.

Alex:

I agree.

Joan:

So I've explained to Amisi that when there's a change in the patient like you saw with Mr. Rose yesterday, we do want to get the doctor's input—in this case Meaghan's. I've also asked Amisi to follow up with Mr. Rose's daughter Jessica. Now Amisi, do you want to tell us what you found?

Amisi:

Joan, would you mind?

Joan:

Uh—no, sure, that's fine; I'll bring everyone up-to-date. So Meaghan, Jessica confirmed that they would reduce the dosage of Hydromorphone until he sees you again. And Gord, Jessica works full-time; she does not live with her father; and she's the only family member in the area.

Gord:

I was afraid of that. I'm just really concerned about this decrease in mobility, especially the last week. He's already had the one fall, and luckily it wasn't serious, but he's fragile enough that it wouldn't take much for things to go downhill very quickly. I'm wondering if we need to involve the social worker.

Joan:

Mmm hmm—Meaghan, what do you think?

Meaghan:

Well, I mean I do have Mr. Rose on a strong opioid. Hydromorphone can cause unsteadiness and drowsiness, and his blood pressure was a bit low. I know he was also complaining of fighting off a bug last week. I'll give him a full workup this morning, but I think he may just do better on another med.

Joan:

I still think, though, Gord, we should get Rachel to come in and discuss the home situation anyway, but I mean Meaghan is making perfect sense, don't you think?

Gord:

Absolutely. It's worth a try. Okay—let's see if a different med does the trick.

Joan:

Okay. Can we move on to Mr. Chu?