

---

## Conflict Management In Hospital Setting

The purpose of this essay is to depict the management of resolving a conflict in a typical hospital ward setting between two nurses. The aim is to resolve a conflict which strengthens the relationship of a team and create a harmony working environment which ensures patient care is delivered.

There's a post Cholecystectomy patient who is due for his wound dressing and it was his Day 2 in the ward. A moment later, the post-operative patient rang the bell and Mason (Senior Staff Nurse) approached to him since he was nearby. The patient questioned Mason, "When is my dressing going to be done and can you do it for me?" Curious and agitated, Mason went to look for Jermaine (Staff Nurse) and confronted her after he changed the dressing. He saw her in the pantry and he yelled, "Jermaine, where have you been and why didn't you change the dressing for the postop patient? I am already so busy and you were nowhere to be found." Jermaine stood up and rebuked, "Why are you yelling?! I'm having my late lunch now and will change after this, can't you wait? It's just a minor issue!" Despite both of them are furious but they are aware that it will affect their work as patient care is their ultimate goal. They hope to resolve this conflict as they know it will affect their partnership in the ward eventually.

Naturally, it is challenging to have a working environment that is free from conflict and it can occur at any point of time. To resolve a conflict objectively, acknowledge of emotions come first is important for both Mason and Jermaine to discuss effectively and openly. This phase is critical as it prevents any decision making process to be blurred and allows each other the opportunity to voice out the conflict issue (Weiss & Tappen, 2015). As how Johari Window technique stated, improving communication and cooperation require a person's willingness and openness to be expressive (Osmano?lu, 2019).

Taking the case abovementioned for instance, a conflict resolution (Weiss, 2015) is needed as Mason and Jermaine are having issue working together which verbal confrontation has already occurred. Since both of them hoped to resolve the conflict, firstly is to identify the issue of the conflict. It creates an open platform for the Mason and Jermaine to openly discuss what would the outcome be at the end. To avoid having a vague response, it is important that emotions do not cloud the decision process and the discussion would be then objectively laid out. For instance, Mason further expressed that he's angry because Jermaine didn't attend to the patient or notified her whereabouts to him. On the flip side, Jermaine thought that it's alright to attend to the patient after her late lunch and it's just a minor issue.

Once the issues are expressed, allow Mason and Jermaine to generate the possible solutions and review its efficacy before implementing it (Weiss, 2015). At this point, both should be given an opportunity to consider the suggestions they made and closely evaluate the possible choices. The process is about choosing the ideal solution to prevent the conflict from reoccurring, and to think out of the box for better solutions. Usually, the ideal solution for a conflict is to combine the suggestions instead of relying on a single suggestion. For instance, Jermaine suggested that she wants to go for the first break while Mason agreed to grant her that provided she attends to the patients first which she also complied.

---

After reviewing the possible solutions, implementing the solutions come in and it reveals the results of conflict resolution based on the suggestions given. The process takes time as sometimes being impatient may result in the early closure of a good solution (Weiss, 2015). Considering that Mason and Jermaine work together in the same cubicle again, both made it clear of their objectives before the shift starts. Jermaine told Mason beforehand of her first break and Mason agreed to allow her the first break so long patient care is delivered first. These have to be consistently evaluated as it takes times and observations to ensure the conflict have resolved as well as fulfil the concerns that were identified initially.

Based on Thomas-Kilmann model (Kelly, 2010), it illustrates the options people have in resolving a conflict. Mason and Jermaine are willing to find a resolution to the conflict issue and alternatives to meet each other concerns. Instead of avoiding the issue, Mason and Jermaine hoped to resolve the conflict which could prevent from further confrontation and interpersonal issues. In nursing conflicts, avoidance results in poor communication which eventually affects patient safety and also the lead cause of increasing nurses' stress level. According to Johansen (2012), the increased level of work stress arise from avoidance conflict management method has an impact to negative patient outcomes such as medication errors. Ideally, it is best to have a favourable environment where nurses are able to work in harmony and willing to face the issues directly.

Ultimately, the use of conflict resolution must be properly initiated as the quality of teamwork and communication eventually affects patient safety. However, it takes times and patience to truly understand one another as it requires therapeutic listening skills since it can be a challenge especially if the person has no interests in doing that. Similarly, there are not many people who are willing to express themselves or expose to expressive people. All these are the possible limitations that could occur while dealing with conflicts and the conflict management methods have to be chosen wisely depend on the affected parties' personalities.

What the abovementioned case has highlighted is that communication effectively comes in two-ways. Apart from the Mason voicing out his concerns, Jermaine is also given the same opportunity to do that. Under Principle 10, enhancing a respectful communication and maintaining the clarity of the communication are required in order to work collaboratively with all the healthcare team (Singapore Nursing Board, 2018). Therefore, it benefits the nurses that they get to know the other party's concerns which enable the nurses to further discuss how to resolve the conflict mutually.

In the communication platform, it emphasized that nurses have to remain an open mind and welcome new options due to the nature of a hectic setting in the hospital. Having an open mind, it allows them to think of new possibilities that could prevent unnecessary conflicts and gives them the empowerment to resolve conflicts (Johansen, 2012). Besides from preventing unnecessary conflicts, having an open mind allows the nurses to understand each other deeper and allow them to build trust together.

This experience highlighted that as a nurse in future; nurses will be representing their hospital's reputation and has to uphold their professionalism constantly. When dealing with conflicts, nurses have to be respectful; responsible; and objective during the discussion of issues. Under Principle 8, being conscious on how one's behaviour and conduct can affect others are required by the nurses to enhance the professionalism (Singapore Nursing Board, 2018). Therefore, this experience benefits the nurses that they are able to maintain their professional

---

image while resolving the conflict and imprint a good impression to other people. By leaving a good impression, it reveals the level of trust from the public after knowing that the nurses are able to handle conflict professionally. Besides from trusting the nurses to handle conflicts, the public will be able to entrust the nurses in delivering their nursing care to the patients.

In conclusion, this essay has depicted a typical conflict case experienced by the nurses and discussed the normality of conflict existence in a hospital setting. It covered the importance of acknowledging emotions first and highlighted the significance of conflict resolution. The essay further discussed the implications of nurses in relation to the example of the abovementioned case. Lastly, the essay identified the limitations on choosing the ideal conflict management methods.

## References

1. Johansen, M. L. (2012). Keeping the peace. *Nursing Management (Springhouse)*, 43(2), 50-54. doi:10.1097/01.numa.0000410920.90831.96
2. Kelly, P. (2010). *Essentials of nursing leadership & management*. Clifton Park, NY: Delmar Cengage Learning.
3. Osmanolu, D. E. (2019). Expansion of the Open Area (Johari Window) and Group Work Directed to Enhancing the Level of Subjective Well-being. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 7(5), 76. doi:10.11114/jets.v7i5.4128
4. Singapore Nursing Board. (2018). Code for nurses and midwives. Retrieved from <http://www.healthprofessionals.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider4/publications/code-for-nurses-and-midwives-april-2018.pdf>
5. Weiss, S. A., & Tappen, R. M. (2015). *Essentials of nursing leadership and management (6th ed.)*. Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Company.