

“What we’ve got here is... failure to communicate”

...Cool Hand Luke

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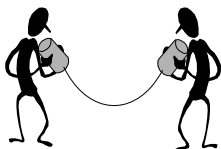
Say That Again?

Cool Hand Luke is a 1967 Warner Brothers American film directed by Stuart Rosenberg, starring Paul Newman and featuring George Kennedy in an Oscar-winning performance.

For the purpose of this presentation, I have nothing to disclose.

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Or... Resolving Conflict in the Workplace through Appropriate Communication Methods



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Objectives:

- Define disruptive behavior as a source of conflict in the workplace
- Discuss the reasons why communication can be difficult and the danger of disruptive behavior in the workplace
- Describe the steps to take before engaging in crucial conversation
- Define active listening and “coffee cup” conversation

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Not “Happily Ever After”



“Fairy tales begin with conflict because we all begin our lives with conflict. We are all misfit for the world, and somehow we must fit in, fit in with other people, and thus we must invent or find the means through communication to satisfy as well as resolve conflicting desires and instincts.”

— Jack Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre*

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Conflict...it happens!

- An employee complains “It seems that someone is always mad at someone else, arguing with someone else, or refusing to work with someone else.” WHY???
- It is all about conflict. Conflict exists everywhere.
- Conflict can be a helpful tool if handled correctly. However, unresolved conflict can be costly!
- The workplace is the perfect petri dish for growing conflict because of the ever present employee-to-employee and patient-to-employee relationships.
- Communication can cause and correct conflict. Understanding effective communication tools can facilitate a more productive workplace with more satisfied and happier staff.
- We will be focusing on the communication challenges and tools. Conflict resolution is an entire course in itself!

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Are You Talking to Me?



- Communication failures
 - Are common place-we have all seen the outcomes
- Could this be happening at your workplace?
- Communication is a simple concept but a complex issue

“Don't assume, because you are intelligent, able, and well-motivated, that you are open to communication, that you know how to listen.”

— Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey Into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*

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Why Listen to Me?



- Really...why am I presenting this?
 - I talk a LOT
 - Attended training at Vanderbilt
 - Served on the UIH Disruptive Behavior Committee
 - On the opposite end, I also chaired the UIH Employee Recognition Committee, the good, the bad, and the interesting!

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A Communications Lesson

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First: Some Terminology!

- Different terms are being used for these inappropriate behaviors leading to conflict
 - Disruptive behavior
 - Incivility
- Names of various communication tools
 - Crucial Communications
 - Crucial Conversations
 - Critical Conversations
 - Coffee Cup Conversations

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What Do All the Terms Have in Common?



- They all define what type of situations prompt the need for appropriate communication
- They all involve the use of communication skills
- They all discuss the need to communicate effectively

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It is what it is! Who cares?

Strong link to Patient Safety

- A disruptive workplace can be dangerous
- Per ISMP 40% of patient care providers have kept quiet rather than confront a known intimidator
- Per TJC, communication failures account for 60% of sentinel events

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The “Joint” cares!



The Joint Commission has mandated we have a process that involves code of conduct

- EP 4 The hospital/org has a code of conduct that defines acceptable and inappropriate behaviors.
- EP 5 Leaders create and implement a process for managing disruptive and inappropriate behaviors.

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What is Disruptive Behavior?

- **Verbal Abuse**
 - Profanity, demeaning comments, intimidating language, yelling, voice intonation, condescending language, impatience with questions or phone calls
 - Being reprimanded in front of others



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What is Disruptive Behavior?

- **Physical Abuse**
 - Assault and battery
 - Throwing objects (instruments)
 - Outbursts of rage or violence (hitting the wall)

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What is Disruptive Behavior?

- **Negative Behavior**
 - Scapegoating, backstabbing, complaining, starting rumors
 - Behaviors to control, humiliate, or injure the dignity of another person
 - Behaviors that undermine the team, staff morale, self worth, safety
 - Unethical/dishonest behavior, repeated failure to respond to a call for help, lack of respect, cultural bias

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What is Disruptive Behavior?

- **Rude Behaviors**
 - Demeaning comments
 - Withholding information
 - Ignoring people, silent treatment
 - Non-verbal-dirty looks, sighing, gestures
 - Inflammatory e-mails
 - Disrupting meetings

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Not One Bad Apple...



- Signs of a deep rooted problem
- Staff frequently share gossip and negative stories in the workplace
- Many staff emulate disruptive behavior
- Staff come to expect poor behavior from colleagues as disruption has become the norm
- Ripple effect

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Is This a Common Problem?

- Data shows behaviors encountered on a regular basis by percentage
 - Physical abuse-9%
 - Verbal outbursts-41%
 - Uncooperative attitudes-51%
 - Condescension and disrespect-83%



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So How is This Dangerous?

- May prevent a care provider from communicating necessary information
- Could be a distraction and create an opportunity for error
- Can lead to staff leaving
- Patients can be made to feel unsafe
 - How would you feel as a patient if you were watching these behaviors?



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Effective Communication Indeed!

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What is a Crucial Conversation?

- Definition of a Crucial Conversation
 - A discussion between two or more people where:
 - the stakes are high
 - opinions vary
 - emotions run strong



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How do you Handle Crucial Conversations?

- There are 3 options
 - We can avoid them-walk away and suffer the consequences
 - We can face them and handle them poorly-and suffer the consequences
 - We can face them and handle them well



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Why is this SO difficult and why do we react SO poorly?

- We're designed wrong
 - Genetics shape our responses-fight or flight
 - That adrenaline sure makes this tough
 - Your brain reacts to fight or flight by channeling blood to the arms and legs leaving your brain somewhat compromised! When you need it most!
- We're under pressure
 - Caught by surprise, no time to plan
- We don't know what to do
 - Act on the fly and make it up as we stumble



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Initial Steps for Crucial Conversations

- Work on yourself first
 - Remember the only person you can control is yourself
- Focus on what you really want
 - What are your motives
 - What do you want for yourself, the others, and the relationships
 - How would the above shape your behavior



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Communication Conditions to Monitor

- How to know when a conversation turns crucial
 - What are the cues
 - physical-adrenaline is the driver, increased heart rate, rapid breathing
 - emotional-scared, hurt, angry, begin reacting
 - behavioral-raising voice, becoming silent
 - brain begins to disengage



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Communication Conditions to Monitor

- You may notice safety problems
 - When moving away from healthy dialogue people begin to feel unsafe, threatened, fearful
 - This generates the fight or flight
 - Fearful responses can be
 - Silence-masking, avoiding, and withdrawing
 - Violence-as a verbal strategy to control, label, or attack



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Communication Code RED!!!



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Make it a Safe Zone for Crucial Communication



Identify what condition is at risk

- Mutual purpose
 - Do others believe you and trust you
 - If not, then explain your intent
- Mutual respect
 - Do they feel you respect them
 - If you have violated respect, then apologize

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Practice Active Listening

Definition:

- Seeking out the opinions and perspectives of others
 - Listening is not the same as hearing
 - Listen without judgement
 - Determine if you agree or disagree with the speaker once they are completely finished
 - First few sentences are not always the most important

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SOLVE Approach to Active Listening

Solve: Listen, Understand, Gain full attention.

Open ended questions to gain full understanding.

SHUN interruptions. Give full attention.

Listen to the full story.

OPEN ended questions to gain full understanding.

Listen to the full story.

LISTEN to the full story

Listen to the full story.

VALIDATE with investigative phrases such as “tell me more” or “go on.”

Listen to the full story.


EXPLORE the speaker’s opinion of the cause of the problem and what he/she believes is the solution

Listen to the full story.

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“The void created by the failure to communicate is soon filled with poison, drivel, and misrepresentation.”


...C. Northcote Parkinson



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Talking Tentatively

- Recognize that “the facts” as you perceive them may differ from others. (Two sides to every story)
- Be confident.
- Stay in healthy dialogue and ask the other person to share their “facts”.
- Avoid being timid or forceful in dialogue.
- Focus on reaching a mutually beneficial outcome.



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Options for Talking Tentatively

| <u>Too Forceful</u> | <u>More Tentative</u> |
|---|--|
| • The way it really is... | • In my opinion... |
| • That’s stupid! | • Maybe it would make more sense to... |
| • The only reasonable thing to do is... | • I believe what we should do is... |

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How Our “Stories” Guide Our Communications

Stories are our interpretation of the facts and our resultant actions as we communicate

- Victim stories-it’s not my fault, innocent sufferers
- Villain stories-it’s all your fault-assume the other has the worst possible motives
- Helpless stories-there was nothing I could do
- Useless management stories-they don’t care and won’t do anything anyhow

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A “Story” Example



For example, we might “self talk” any of the following comments in response to another person taking the last available parking spot just as we are ready to park:

- “That arrogant, elitist b\$@%*#!”
- “He seems to not know what he’s done and maybe he’s confused. I wonder if he even realized that he took my spot.”
- “Now what am I supposed to do? I’ll be late for my appointment. Should I tell him or will that just make him angry?”

These different options we might choose contribute to our emotional and behavioral responses. This is where stories can either promote a positive or negative spin on the situation.

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Sellouts are the Start of a Story

Sellouts are when we don't admit our own mistakes which lead to stories

Examples are:

- You believe you should help someone but you don't
- You believe you should apologize but you don't
- You believe you should listen to feedback but become defensive
- You know you have information a co-worker needs but you keep it to yourself
- You believe you should talk to someone you have concerns with but you don't

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The Quote Master & Monsters

"In order to master compassion, you have to spend time getting to know monsters. When you can do that you will see that there are no monsters, only people that acted like monsters because no one gave them the time or compassion to hear their story."

— Shannon L. Alder

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Common Communication Challenges!

Let's consider our options as we role play work place scenarios!



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Coffee Cup Conversations

Another communication technique for peer to peer intervention

- The classic approach is "Can you take a minute to sit down with me and talk about something? Over coffee?"
- Then proceed with this: "I saw/heard something I don't understand: [fill in the blank with the offensive behavior]. This is not consistent with what I know of you as a professional. Help me understand what was going on."
- Avoid enabling or authoritative tone. Anticipate responses.
- Wouldn't you want to know?

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Remember! Disruptive Behavior Creates Stress!!!



- Pharmacy work is stressful as it is.
- Adding additional stressors from disruptive behaviors only increases that stress
- It's bad for your health
- It's bad for business
 - Especially when staff leave
 - And when patients leave
- It's dangerous for the patient

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Now What?



- Knowledge is power!
 - Understand how disruptive behavior impacts patient safety
 - Understand how disruptive behavior undermines a teamwork approach
 - Learning to listen is key to communications
 - Not hearing but active listening
 - Understand why healthy dialogue is difficult
 - Understand barriers we set up against effective dialogue
- Practice crucial communication techniques

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Words to Remember!

When we're caught unprepared, we're more likely to revert back into bad habits. If a communication problem shows up unexpectedly, stick to the basics.

That way, when disagreements become fires, you'll be more likely to move to safer ground– and come out without a single burn!

- keep your *comments* specific to the situation
- keep your *manner* calm
- keep your *words* tentative
- Remember “Houston, we have a problem”



Effective Communication is Everyone's Responsibility!

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

— George Bernard Shaw, Leadership Skills for Managers



ICHP September 2014 Meeting

“What we have here is failure to communicate”

Linda Grider

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Self-Assessment Questions:

1. Which of the following statements is correct?
 - a. Disruptive behavior includes verbal abuse, physical abuse and negative behavior
 - b. Disruptive behavior is dangerous in the workplace
 - c. Disruptive behavior can have a ripple effect
 - d. All of the above are true

2. True or False: A crucial conversation is a discussion where the stakes are high, opinions vary, & emotions run strong.
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. Active listening is:
 - a. Having a casual conversation at the gym while on the treadmill
 - b. Seeking out the opinions and perspectives of others while you listen without judgment
 - c. Arguing with someone while you multitask on the computer and sing along to music

4. Communication is difficult because:
 - a. Genetics shape our responses-fight or flight
 - b. We're under pressure
 - c. We don't know what to do
 - d. All of the above

5. Talking tentatively would include the phrase(s):
 - a. “That’s a stupid way to think”
 - b. “You’re just an idiot”
 - c. “Maybe it would make more sense to...”
 - d. “My way or the highway”
 - e. a. & d.