Developing Professionalism with Future Athletic Trainers Through the Use of ‘Difficult Conversations’: A Skills-Based Approach

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Outcomes For Today

• Introduce strategies to be utilized by avoiding unproductive emotions;
• Increase participant’s knowledge in managing difficult communication situations;
• Increase participant’s confidence in managing difficult communication situations.
Activity 1 – “Let’s go to the video”

• Each group is charged with completing the following:
  • Identify a note taker;
  • View the vignette;
  • Identify as many communication difficulties as you can
Activity 2 - Think-Pair-Share

- What did the groups find in the videos?
- Commonalities?
- Differences?
Activity 3 – Correcting and Editing

• Each group will use the tablet to re-create the vignette;
• The group will highlight the video by correcting and editing those communication difficulties indicated from activity 1;
• The goal is to create a new and improved version of the video using the skills each group feels appropriate.
Strategies to Use

• “I-Message”
• “DEAL Method for Assertive Communication”
This is a strategy to use in an attempt to minimize blame by focusing on interpersonal issues and their impact on our feelings; purpose to inform not to incite.

Four Elements:

• Description of problem
• Effect on your life
• How you feel about the effect
• Solution you would prefer

Ie. “I’m sick and tired of you coming to work late everyday and having me take care of your patients. How can you be such a jerk?”

“When you come to work late, it causes me to take care of your patients. I feel very frustrated when this happens as I have my own patient load. I really need you to be more punctual.”

DEAL Method

- D = Describe
- E = Express
- A = Ask
- L = List

IE. “It would be helpful if you would tell me you don’t want to talk about this right now and suggest a different time when we can talk instead of just changing the subject.”

Activity 4 – Switch the Roles

• Each group will be given the video works of another group;
• The task is to review the vignette for content of utilization of the I-Message;
• The group should be able to answer the following:
  • How well did the group integrate the I-Message?
  • What strategies were implemented to alleviate miscommunication?
  • Were there strategies that could have been implemented that were not? Identify.
Think-Pair-Share

- Guiding questions:
  - Did this activity assist in gaining your confidence in handling perspective difficult conversations? How?
  - How easy/difficult was the I-Message to implement? Why?
  - Do you see the I-Message associated with professionalism? Why? Why not?
  - How can we utilize these types of skills with coworkers? Student-athletes? Athletic training students? Administrators? Others?
Negotiating

• Pick a good time and place to talk;
• Allow for each other to state their position;
• Brainstorm for solutions;
• Choose a solution
Closing Thoughts . . .

• Miscommunication WILL take place during our professional lives;
• Some conversations may be uncomfortable;
• These skills can assist in taking emotion/blame from the dialogue;
• Recognize as much as you may want to negotiate the conversation, some difficult conversations may need a facilitator.