



CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION (INCORPORATING CONFLICT RESOLUTION)

Constructive Communication

Programme for the sessions

(You will be attending either a morning or an afternoon session, not both)

| | A.M. Session | P.M. Session |
|--|--------------|---------------|
| Welcome | Arrival | Arrival |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ The conflict Continuum❖ Body Language❖ The Domino effect❖ Transactional Analysis | | |
| Tea/Coffee break | Mid morning | Mid afternoon |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Communication Models❖ Skills practice❖ The Escalation of Aggression❖ Impact Factors❖ Distance❖ Survivorship | | |
| Close and Evaluation | | |

"The first and most difficult task of dialogue involves parking the ego and listening with an open spirit. From this receptivity can come questions which lead to understanding.

"What is it you see that I don't?"

"How do you see this differently and why?"

"Please help me understand from your perspective."

To ask these questions requires that one no longer need to have the best or last answer. Expanding one's understanding becomes more important than being right or getting one's point across."

Dr. Ann McGee-Cooper
from the article [Dialogue: The Power of Understanding](http://www.amca.com/articles/article-dialogue.html)
(<http://www.amca.com/articles/article-dialogue.html>)

AIMS

This workshop aims to provide learners with the skills they need to enable them to:

- Communicate with a range of people on a range of matters in a form that is appropriate to them and the situation
- Improve the effectiveness of communication
- Constructively manage barriers to communication
- Communicate in a manner that is consistent with relevant legislation, policies and procedures

In particular, learner will be able to:

- Describe common causes of conflict and give examples of how communication can break down
- Describe two forms of communication
- Explain three examples of communication models that can assist in improving communication and resolving conflict
- Describe patterns of behaviour that might be encountered in different interactions
- Give examples of warning and danger signs as well as impact factors
- Describe the use of distance when dealing with conflict
- Explain the significance of risk assessment, duty of care and reasonable force in relation to resolving conflict

WHAT IS CONFLICT?

‘Whenever you’re in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude.’

William James (American Philosopher and Psychologist, leader of the philosophical movement of Pragmatism, 1842-1910)

Conflict is a normal part of life. It occurs when people perceive that, as a consequence of a disagreement, there is a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. Because of this, conflict is often viewed as a negative experience. In reality, exploring different points of view can be beneficial, providing opportunities for growth and development. The negativity arises when the individuals involved in the conflict perceive limited options and finite resources available in seeking solutions, rather than multiple possibilities that may exist 'outside the box'.

What does conflict mean to you right now?

How would you rate your confidence in your ability to communicate effectively and manage conflict? Please circle the appropriate number.

Not Confident

Very Confident

1

2

3

4

5



Look at Calvin and Hobbes – what might they mean?

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

There is an often quoted (and often mis-quoted) study by Albert Mehrabian on how people decide whether they like one another.

Mehrabian and his colleagues were seeking to understand the relative impact of facial expressions and spoken words.

Study 1

Subjects were asked to listen to a recording of a female saying the single word 'maybe' in three tones of voice to convey liking, neutrality and disliking.

The subjects were then shown photos of female faces with the same three emotions and were asked to guess the emotions in the recorded voices, the photos and both in combination.

The photos got more accurate responses than the voice, by a ratio of 3:2.

Study 2

Subjects listened to nine recorded words, three conveying liking (honey, dear and thanks), three conveying neutrality (maybe, really and oh) and three conveying disliking (don't, brute and terrible).

The words were spoken with different tonalities and subjects were asked to guess the emotions behind the words as spoken. The experiment finding was that tone carried more meaning than the individual words themselves.

The misunderstanding

Mehrabian concluded the following formula from these studies:

Total Liking = 7% Verbal Liking + 38% Vocal Liking + 55% Facial Liking

This is subsequently generalised to mean that in *all* communications:

- 7% happens in spoken words.
- 38% happens through voice tone.
- 55% happens via general body language.

Of course this cannot be true: does an email only convey 7%? Can you watch a person speaking in a foreign language and understand 93%?

The implications

Whilst the exact numbers may be challenged, the important points can easily be lost in the debate about how valid or not the study was.

Useful extensions to this understanding are:

- It's not just words: a lot of communication comes through non-verbal communication.
- Without seeing and hearing non-verbals, it is easier to misunderstand the words.
- When we are unsure about words and when we trust the other person less, we pay more attention to what we hear and see.

So what?

Beware of words-only communications like email. It is very easy to misunderstand what is said, even if emoticons (smileys) are used.

Be aware that your verbal message and your non-verbal messages say the same thing

What follows are some examples of phrases that might help. But be careful! You need to make sure your non-verbal signals match what you are saying.

How to say it better !!!

| When you want to say..... | Try saying |
|--|---|
| What's the problem? | How can I help you? |
| You ought to | May I suggest? |
| I don't know | I'll find out |
| I don't know / understand | I'm sorry, please could you explain that again |
| No | I'm sorry I can't do that BUT I can do |
| That's not my job | Jane Smith is the person who can help you |
| It's not my fault | What I can do about this is..... |
| You want it by when? | I can't promise but I'll do my best |
| Calm down | I realise that you are very upset but it would be helpful if you would try and stay calm |
| You need to talk to someone else | I'm going to put you through to Jane Smith. I will explain what your call is about. If you get cut off, her extension is 1234 |
| I can't do anything about it. This is our policy | The reason we is because |
| What did you say? | I'm sorry could you repeat that please? |
| I'm too busy now | I'll be with you as soon as I can |
| There's nothing I can do | I'm afraid I cant do..... but I can do |
| I'd advise you to | Can I suggest that |

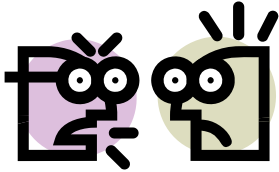
Remember that as a professional, it is your responsibility to do whatever you can to make sure that you use as many of the communication methods available to get a constructive message across to your client. You should also try to ensure that the client can receive the message by reading their non-verbal cues and adjusting your message accordingly. So for example if you go into a client contact with a bad feeling about the last client contact, your body language could show it and adversely affect the interaction.

Effective communication is not about how well you deliver a message, but rather about how well your message is received.

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

Based on the work of Eric Berne, Transactional Analysis became the method of examining the transaction of “I do something to you, and you do something back.”

Berne said that each person is made up of three alter ego states:



Controlling Parent ego state

Parent – this is our ingrained voice of authority. Our parent is made up of a huge number of hidden and overt recorded playbacks. Typically embodied by phrases and attitudes with “how to”, “under no circumstances”, “always” and “never forget”, “don’t lie, cheat, steal, etc”

Our Parent is formed by external events and influences upon us, as we grow through early childhood. We can change it, but it is easier said than done.

Examples of a Controlling Parent Ego State Communication

Physical – angry or impatient body language and expressions, finger pointing, patronising, gestures.

Verbal :- always, never, for once and for all, judgmental words, critical words, shoulds and oughts, patronising language.



Adult ego State

Adult – Our adult is our ability to think and determine action for ourselves, based on received data. If we are to change our Parent or Child we must do so through our adult.

Examples of a Adult Ego State Communication

Physical – attentive, interested, straight forward, tilted head, non-threatening and non-threatened.

Verbal – why, what, how, who, where and when, how much, in what way, reasoned statements, true, false, possibly, probably, I think, I realise, I see, I believe, in my opinion.

Child ego state



Child – Our internal reaction and feelings to external events from the “Child”. This is the seeing, hearing, feeling and emotional body of data within each of us. When anger or despair dominates reason, the Child is in control. Like our Parent, we can change it but it is not easy.

Examples of a Child Ego State Communication

Physical – emotionally sad expressions, despair, temper tantrums, whining voice, rolling eyes, shrugging shoulders, teasing, delight, laughter, speaking behind hand, raising hand to speak, squirming and giggling

Verbal – baby talk, I wish, I don’t know, I want, I’m going to, I don’t care, oh no, not again, things never go right for me, worst day of my life, bigger, biggest, best, words to impress.

Our Adult state is the key to all good communication – Our adult is our ability to think and determine action for ourselves, based on received data. If we are to change our Parent or Child **we must do so through our adult**. Think of a good row you have had – not until you have calmed down, and done some thinking in the adult state, can you sort things out.

Communication Tips

When we communicate, we are doing so from one of our ego states. When we respond, we also do this from one of the three ego states.

Remember, when we are trying to identify ego states, words are only part of the story. To analyse a transaction you need to see and feel what is being said as well.

Whichever ego-state a person's words or behaviour manifests it is highly likely that a complementary ego state will be invited from the other person.

If one shows child, it's likely that the other person will respond in parent. Unless you use a question to rescue you.

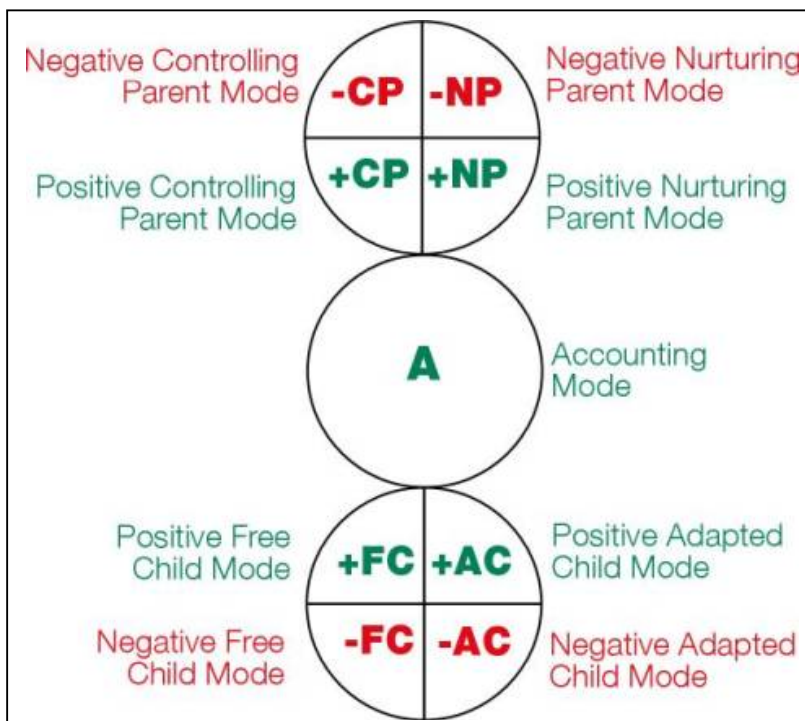
If one shows parent, it's likely that the other person will respond in child. Unless you use a question to rescue you.

If one comes from adult, it's likely that the other person will respond in adult.

In order to avoid being drawn into parent-child game, you will need to change your response to move the transaction onto a more productive basis.

Adult – Adult transactions in the workplace are appropriate, professional and productive. This is the basis of assertive behaviour and that leads to a win-win solution. Win – win also means agreeing to differ. Calmness and persistence are the key ingredients to assertive behaviour.

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS - THE DESCRIPTIVE MODEL



This model shows how we function or behave with others. The model used here is divided up into nine. We have used S. Temple's (1999) term "mode" as it differentiates it from the structural ego state model mentioned above. We have coloured the different modes in red and green for those who find colour helpful as a tool. Effective communication comes from the green modes, (just as with traffic lights we get the go ahead when the green light comes on), and ineffective communication come from the red modes (as with the red traffic light). When we come from the red modes we invite a negative response, and vice versa from the green modes.

Ineffective Modes

Negative Controlling Parent - communicates a "You're not OK" message, and is punitive.

Negative Nurturing Parent - communicates a "You're not OK" message. When in this mode the person will often do things for others which they are capable of doing for themselves. When in this mode the person is engulfing and overprotective.

Negative Adapted Child - expresses an "I'm not OK" message. When in this mode the person over-adapts to others and tends to experience such emotions as depression, unrealistic fear and anxiety.

Negative Free Child - in this mode the person runs wild with no restrictions or boundaries. In this mode they express a "You're not OK" message.

Effective modes

Positive Nurturing Parent - communicates the message "You're OK". When in this mode the person is caring and affirming.

Positive Controlling Parent - communicates the message "You're OK". This is the boundary setting mode, offering constructive criticism, whilst being caring but firm.

Positive Adapted Child - communicates an "I'm OK" message. From this mode we learn the rules to help us live with others.

Positive Free Child - communicates an "I'm OK" message. This is the creative, fun loving, curious and energetic mode.

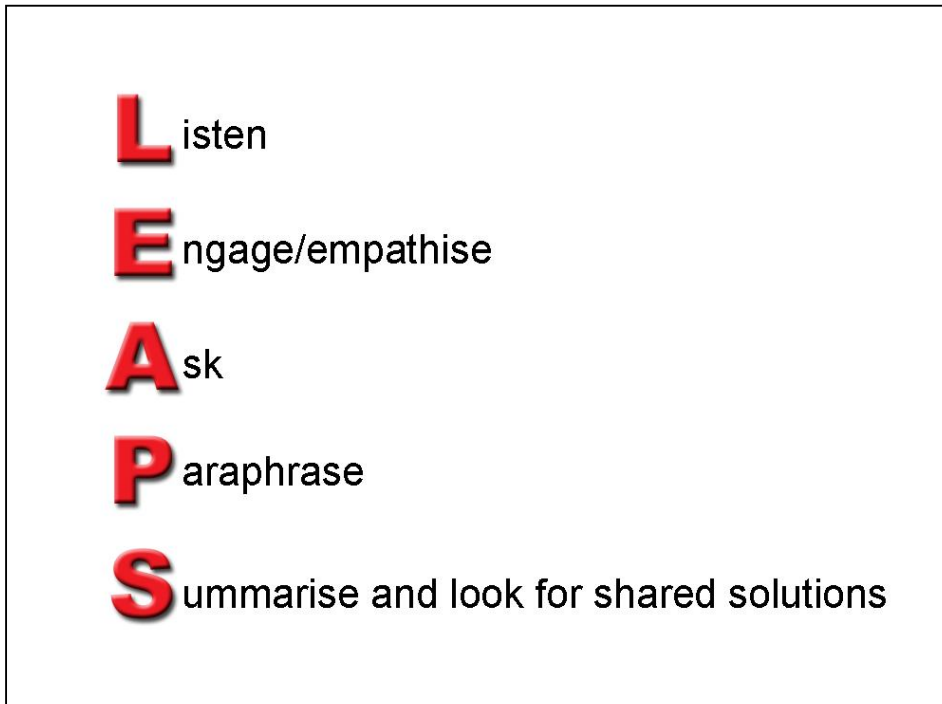
Accounting mode

Communicates "We're OK" messages. The Adult is able to assess reality in the here and now. When the Accounting mode is in the executive position it is possible to choose which of the other effective modes to go into, dependent on the situation. This is then called Accounting Mode. When using the descriptive behavioural model the term Accounting Mode helps to differentiate it from the structural model; where it is referred to as Adult. When stable in this Accounting Mode we are taking account of the present context and situation and deciding the most appropriate mode to come from. We are then able to respond appropriately rather than flipping into archaic or historic ways of being, thinking and behaving which are likely to be inappropriate and unhelpful.

COMMUNICATION MODELS

It's not always easy to get into the right ego state when we communicate with other people, especially when we aren't feeling particularly resourceful because we're tired, upset, very busy etc. So to help us get the right outcomes, what follows are a few communication models that might help.

The LEAPS Communication Model (Dr G.J. Thompson)



Listen: Try to find out what the root cause of the issue is for the other person.

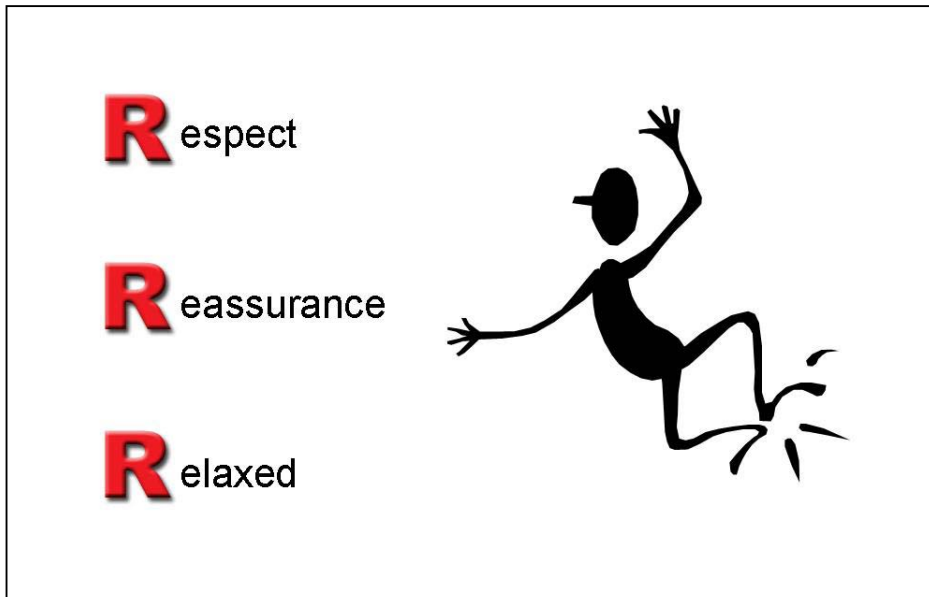
Engage/empathise: How would you feel if the situation were reversed? Can you understand the other person's point of view? Remember, you don't need to feel the same way (sympathise), you only need to acknowledge and understand the other person's feelings

Ask: The only way to get to the root of the issue is to ask questions. Be careful to ask only questions to which you really want the answer, otherwise you will disengage.

Paraphrase: Check your understanding of what you have heard. "You have told me ...is that correct?"

Summarise: Restate the issue as you have discussed it and the action that has been agreed, checking once more that the other person is happy with this solution.

The 'R' factor



Respect: smile, use their name, be polite, listen

Reassurance: explain, listen, check out

Relaxed staff who have the time: this is an art to practice!

RRRRR this is sooo good

ROARing Communication



Responsibility: It is important to recognize that the only person's behaviour you control is your own and therefore, if you want to change someone else's behaviour, you need to influence that change through your own. By taking responsibility for the communication, you also take control of the direction of its travel. Rather than think "this person is not able to hear my message" think, "How can I alter my communication to help them understand?"

Outcome: Try to keep your end in mind. Focus on what it is you would like to achieve. Are you focused on getting a workable solution for your client that will leave them feeling valued and satisfied?

Agreement: Try to get to a mutually agreed win-win solution, where both parties leave the interaction in a better situation than they were in before the interaction started. You can only achieve this by understanding what it is that your client actually wants, so good questioning and listening techniques are crucial!

Respect: By recognising and validating a client's point of view and by communicating in an adult way that both gives and demands respect, you can keep the communication channels open.

RECOGNISING ESCALATING AGGRESSION

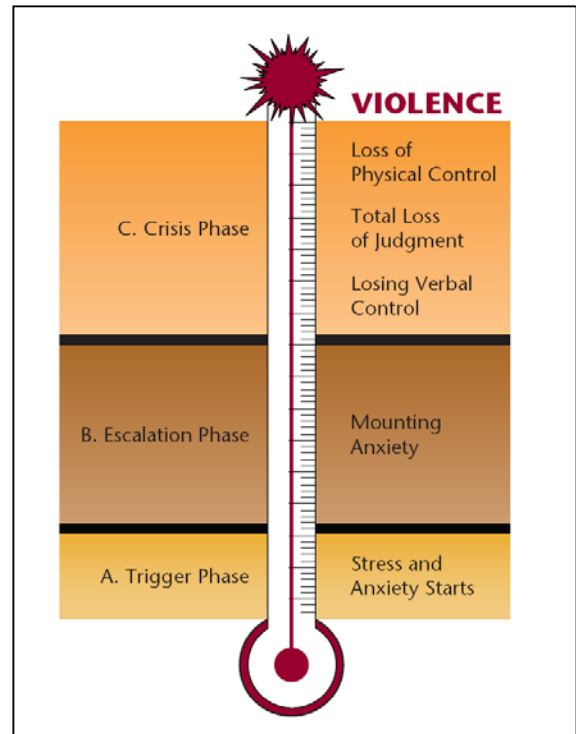
Dr. John D. Byrnes (Centre for Aggression Management) designed the model shown in the figure on the right and named it The Aggression Continuum™. The diagram shows how aggression may escalate in an individual until it reaches the stage of violence. It serves to illustrate that aggression has its roots in anxiety and stress and the continuation of an individual's progress up the continuum happens when no intervention is made to reduce or eliminate the said anxiety or stress.

This intervention should happen as early on in the escalation process as possible. Certainly most, if not all PCT staff, would either manage the conflict (or potential conflict) by using verbal de-escalation techniques and not enter into any kind of physical resistance situation. Anyone who is required to actively deal with any kind of physical resistance would require specialised training.

This diagram also supports the notion that there may be times when a person does not conform to the continuum. This may be when an external factor (such as being under the influence of alcohol or drugs for example) has already pushed the individual into the crisis phase (e.g. alcohol impairs one's judgment).

The real value of this information is to emphasise that if you recognise that the person you are dealing with has entered the crisis phase of aggression, you need to react in an appropriate way. Remember your own personal safety is paramount.

The following table describes some of the warning signs that might tell you that a person is becoming angry and the danger signs that will indicate that they are readying themselves for the possibility of physical contact.



| Warning Signs | Danger Signs |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct, prolonged eye contact Facial colour may darken Head is back Person stands tall Kicking the ground Large movements close to people Breathing rate accelerates Behaviour may stop/start abruptly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fists clench and unclench Facial color may become paler Lips tighten over teeth Head drops to protect throat Eyebrows droop to protect eyes Hands rise above the waist Shoulders tense Stance moves from square to sideways Stare is now at intended target Lowering of body to launch forward |

IMPACT FACTORS

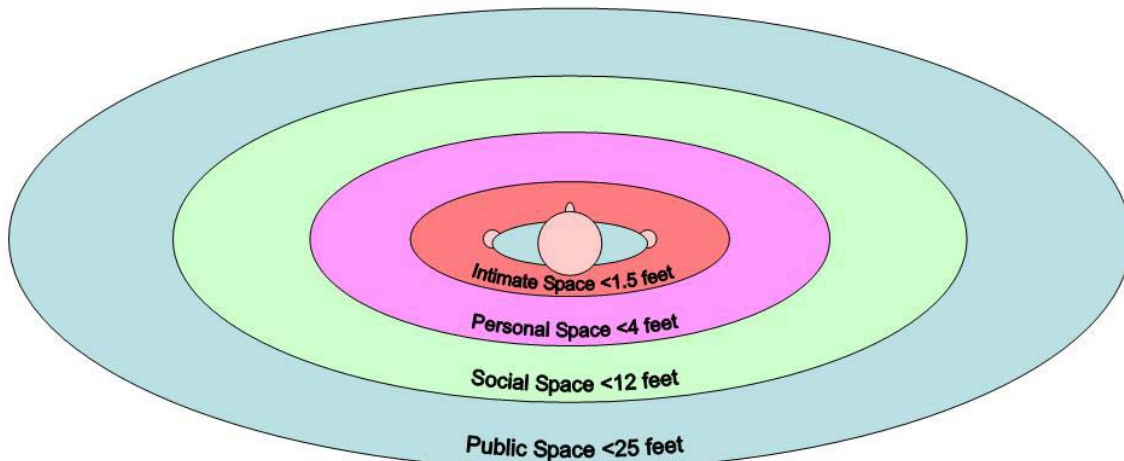
In any communication there are external and internal factors which will affect your ability to communicate well and the respondent's ability to take your message on board. It is wise to consider each situation and the factors that could impact on your communication (and therefore on your ability to diffuse conflict) and adjust your communication to take these into consideration. It may also be prudent to recognise when these factors may make it necessary to withdraw from the interaction altogether. Some examples of impact factors include your own mental state, objects that may be used as weapons, safe exits/layouts, the time of day, etc.

What other impact factors can you think of?

THE ARTFUL USE OF DISTANCE

Human beings are surrounded by invisible fields or bubbles of space that are kept during our interaction with other people. How comfortable we are with people within these distances is determined by our relationship with them. The following diagram illustrates the personal space zones as defined by Edward T Hall, a respected anthropologist and cross-cultural researcher:

This illustration and the distances involved are defined for the typical American in the 1960's .



Intimate space: close family and partners

Personal space: people we know well and trust

Social space: Impersonal space (other people)

By the very nature of what we do, many of the staff in the PCT do not have the luxury of avoiding the intimate space. We have to consider how and when to retreat in order to afford our clients the space they need, especially during a possible conflict situation.

SURVIVORSHIP GAME

Match up which fits best:

1. Feeling low & tired

2. Can't be bothered

3. Feeling bruised after a tough client

4. Can't sleep at night for thinking of work

5. Worried about a clinical incident

6. Lost confidence with a procedure

7. Colleagues seem to be getting at you

8. Manager never seems to have time to listen

9. You seem to be drinking too much alcohol

10. You are suffering from headaches at the end of most days

a. Get the facts clear – see your manager

b. Go through your skills list – ask a colleague

c. Use this as a wake-up call look for additional de-stressing activities

d. Ask for a one to one

e. Check out your long and short term plans, hopes and dreams

f. Talk it through with a friend

g. Write down what is really worrying you

h. Go for a walk

i. Get eyes checked and book a neck massage

j. Talk to your supervisor

OTHER SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

You may find the information and guidance in the following PCT documents helpful;

For Telford and Wrekin PCT staff:

- Workplace Bullying Factsheet
- Lone Working Code of Practice
- Risk Assessment COP 2007/08

All these documents are available at www.telfordpct.nhs.uk

For Shropshire County PCT Staff:

- Risk Management General Policy
- Risk Assessment Code of Practice
- Bullying & Harassment at Work
- Lone Working
- Withdrawal of Care Policy
- Violence at Work

All these documents are available at www.shropshirepct.nhs.uk

SELF-REFLECTION

What have you learned today and what actions will you implement in the future to improve your communication techniques?

How would you rate your confidence in your ability to communicate effectively and manage conflict now? Please circle the appropriate number.

Not Confident

Very Confident

1

2

3

4

5

We have included this Additional Reading List for anyone who would like to obtain more information on the things we cover today.

From Amazon:

Modelling with NLP by Robert Dilts

The Structure of Magic Volume II by Grinder & Bandler, 1976

NLP Volume I by R. Gilts, J Grinder, R Bandler and J Delozier, 1980

Reframing by R Bandler and J Grinder, 1982

Changing Belief Systems with NLP by Dilts, 1990

Scripts people live by Claude Steiner. Grove Press, 1990

Managing Conflict in Organisations by M Afzalur Rahim & M Alzalur Rabim, Quorum/Greenwood 2000 from Anglo-American Books: <http://www.anglo-american.co.uk/>

Dealing with people you can't stand by Rick Brinkman

Words that change minds: Mastering the Language of Influence by Shelle Rose Charvet

The Skilled Helper: A Problem-Management & Opportunity-Development Approach to Helping by Gerard Egan, Brookes-Cole 2004

How Good is your Team? – A guide for Team Members by C Borrill and M West, available at: www.aston.ac.uk/achsortop 2002

The Effectiveness of health-Care Teams in the National Health Service + Report by C S Borrill, etal. Universities of Aston, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Leeds & Sheffield, available at <http://research.abs.aston.ac.uk/achsor/achsor.html> 2002

The NHS Plan - Department of Health, The Stationery Office, London 2000

A Commitment to Quality, a Quest for Excellence, Department of Health, London, 27 June available at www.doh.gov.uk/cmo/cmoh.htm 2001

On Error Management: Lessons from Aviation - British Medical Journal Vol. 320, 18 March, pp. 781-5

Improvement Leaders' Guide to process Mapping, Analysis and Redesign, Modernisation Agency 2002, available at www.modern.nhs.uk/improvementguides