



Operating Room Conflicts & Attitudes:

As a new Surgical Technology instructor one of your biggest adjustments will be dealing with OR conflicts & attitudes. We have all had to deal with a surgeon or co-worker, at one point during our work experience that was not very pleasant. ST students will also have to face the same issues as OR employees. Keep this in mind when you begin dealing with students and problems during clinical rotations. Often the easiest solution is simply not to place a student in the room with the person they are having trouble with. Too often this solution is used without any effort on part of the Instructor to resolve the problem. As an instructor it is your responsibility to be the mediator. Go to the Staff person in private and discuss the student and investigate the situation. Often you will find the Staff person does not realize there is a problem. If there is a problem, find out the root cause. Is it a lack of skills demonstrated by the student? Is there a respect issue? Does the student simply show a lack of social skills? Is the staff person at fault? After you have done your investigation you may find it necessary to simply avoid putting the student with the Staff member. Just remember to try other methods of dealing with the problem first. The information is from St. Joseph's Hospital and contains some good tips in dealing with conflict in the work place.

It is part of every job description (overtly or implied) to get along with co-workers and to overcome conflict. The occurrence of conflict is a necessary part of a dynamic, creative, and competitive working environment. Employees and organizations either challenge themselves to embrace the process and build new skills - or risk diminishing their market competitiveness.

Here are some tips to help resolve conflict with co-workers:

1. Embrace the idea that maintaining healthy cooperative work relationships *is* an important part of your job description.
2. Speak politely. Give specific positive feedback & respect, and ask for feedback from others. Communication is *not* a 50-50 endeavor. Responsibility for being heard accurately is 100% yours. Don't just focus on job tasks, but observe how

the other person is responding to your behavior. If something seems to be unclear, ask for and offer clarification.

3. When conflict does arise, start by evaluating your own response (behaviors and thoughts). What is it about the other person or the situation that is bringing out strong feelings in you? Workplace conflict can actually be a powerful teacher.
4. Are there personal patterns for you to look at: fear of conflict, lack of assertiveness, vulnerable self esteem, perfectionism, aggression, care taking? Your willingness to grow and add new skills is strength.
5. Talk to a friend or mentor about the conflict, but *only* for help in clarifying the best approach to speaking with the person directly. Talking to others as the *only* course of action will rarely resolve a conflict. Avoid exchange of gossip, which inevitably sabotages the moral of your work environment.
6. When you are calm, try talking directly to the person in private, allowing enough time and privacy. Focus not on trying to change the other person, but on learning about each other, so that you can better understand your differences and needs. Win-win outcomes are usually the only viable way to resolve workplace conflict. Focus on specific behaviors rather than attitudes or perceived intentions. Stay away from making generalizations about the other person. Generate an agreed upon plan for resolving conflict as it arises in the future and follow-up; 7. "How are we doing with our plan?" Trust is built by consistent adherence to clear agreements and maintaining ongoing communication.