



Mutual Support



“A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.”

–Author Unknown



Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Advancing Excellence in Health Care • www.ahrq.gov

PATIENT SAFETY



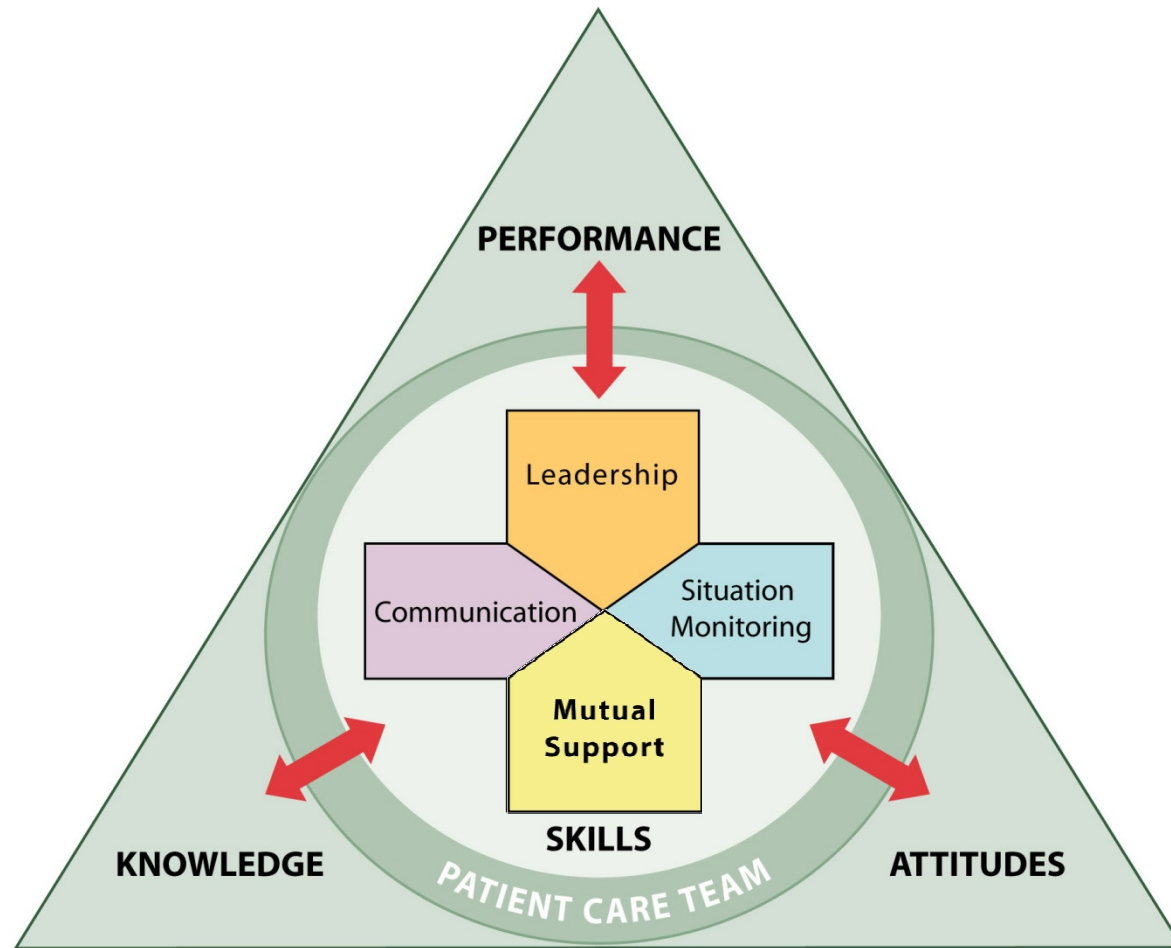
TeamSTEPPS

Objectives

- Define mutual support
- Discuss task assistance and the types of feedback
- Describe advocacy, assertion, and the Two-Challenge rule
- Discuss “CUS” and “DESC script” techniques
- Discuss common approaches to conflict resolution
- List barriers, tools, strategies, and outcomes of mutual support



TeamSTEPPS



Mutual Support

Mutual support is the essence of teamwork

- Protects team members from work overload situations that may reduce effectiveness and increase the risk of error



Task Assistance

Team members foster a climate in which it is expected that assistance will be actively *sought* and *offered* as a method for reducing the occurrence of error.

***“In support of patient safety,
it’s expected!”***



TeamSTEPPS

Task Assistance



Discussion: Task Assistance

- In which situations can task assistance be used?
- How can you make this a daily practice on your unit?
- How can you build it into your system to achieve cultural change?

“Ask for help...Offer help”



What Is Feedback?

“Feedback is the giving, seeking, and receiving of performance-related information among the members of a team.”

(Dickinson and McIntyre 1997)



Types of Feedback

- Can be formal or informal
- Constructive feedback
 - Is considerate, task-specific, and focuses attention on performance and away from the individual (*Baron 1988*)
 - Is provided by all team members
- Evaluative feedback
 - Helps the individual by comparing behavior to standards or to the individual's own past performance (*London, Larson, and Thisted 1999*)
 - Most often used by an individual in a coaching or mentoring role



Characteristics of Effective Feedback

Good Feedback is—

- TIMELY
- RESPECTFUL
- SPECIFIC
- DIRECTED toward improvement
 - Helps prevent the same problem from occurring in the future
- CONSIDERATE



“Feedback is where the learning occurs.”



A Feedback Scenario

An attending watches an intern start to place a chest tube in an obese patient. The attending corrects the placement of the planned incision by pulling the intern aside, showing the intern the landmarks to use, and demonstrating how the patient's position on the table is slightly distorting the anatomy.

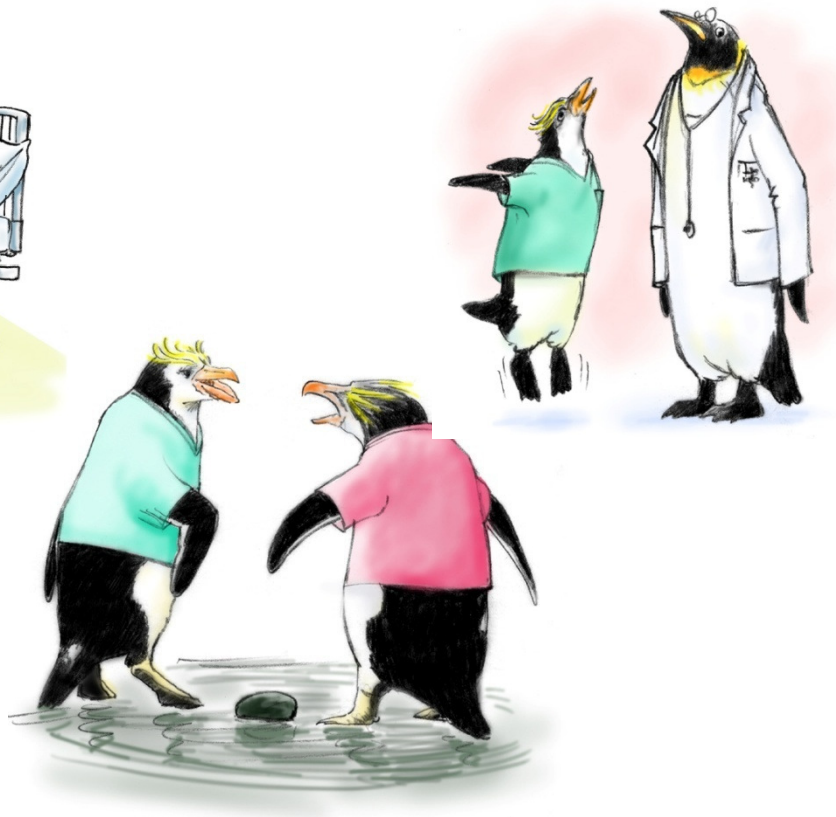


Providing Feedback Effectively





Advocacy, Assertion, and Conflict Resolution



PATIENT SAFETY



TeamSTEPPS



An Advocacy and Assertion Scenario

A medical floor nurse is assigned to a patient following a myocardial infarction. The attending physician provides the final treatment, reviews the clinical situation, and determines that the patient is well enough to be discharged.

Before the patient is discharged, the nurse checks the patient's vitals one last time. The nurse finds it unusual that the blood pressure and heart rate are substantially elevated. Despite these concerns, the nurse discharges the patient because the physician made it clear that the patient was well enough to go home. Besides, the physician is a well-respected authority at the hospital.



Advocacy and Assertion

- Advocate for the patient
 - Invoked when team members' viewpoints don't coincide with that of a decision maker
- Assert a corrective action in a *firm* and *respectful* manner

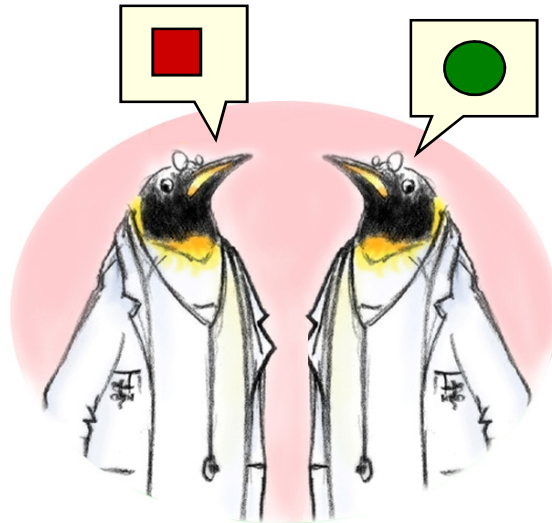


The Assertive Statement

- Respect and support authority
- Clearly assert concerns and suggestions
- Use an assertive statement (**nonthreatening and ensures that critical information is addressed**)
 - Make an opening
 - State the concern
 - State the problem
 - Offer a solution
 - Reach an agreement



Conflict Resolution Options



Information Conflict
(We have different information!)



Two-Challenge rule



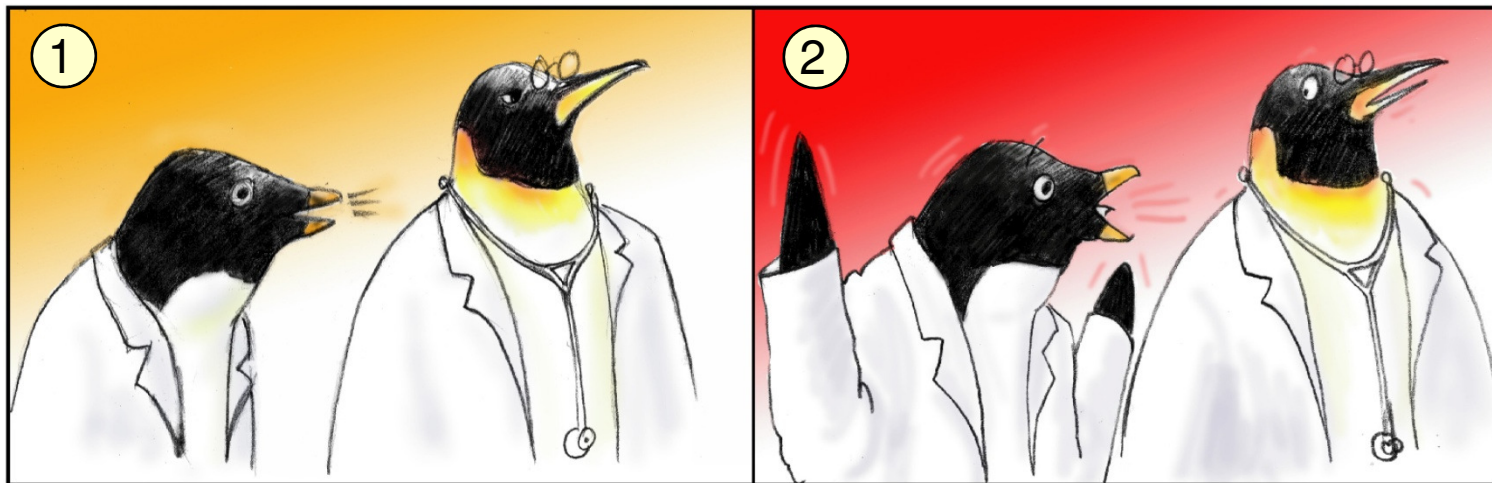
Personal Conflict
(Hostile and harassing behavior)



DESC script



Two-Challenge Rule



Two-Challenge Rule

Invoked when an initial assertion is ignored...

- It is your *responsibility* to assertively voice your concern at least *two times* to ensure that it has been heard
- The member being challenged must acknowledge
- If the outcome is still not acceptable
 - Take a stronger course of action
 - Use supervisor or chain of command



Two-Challenge Rule

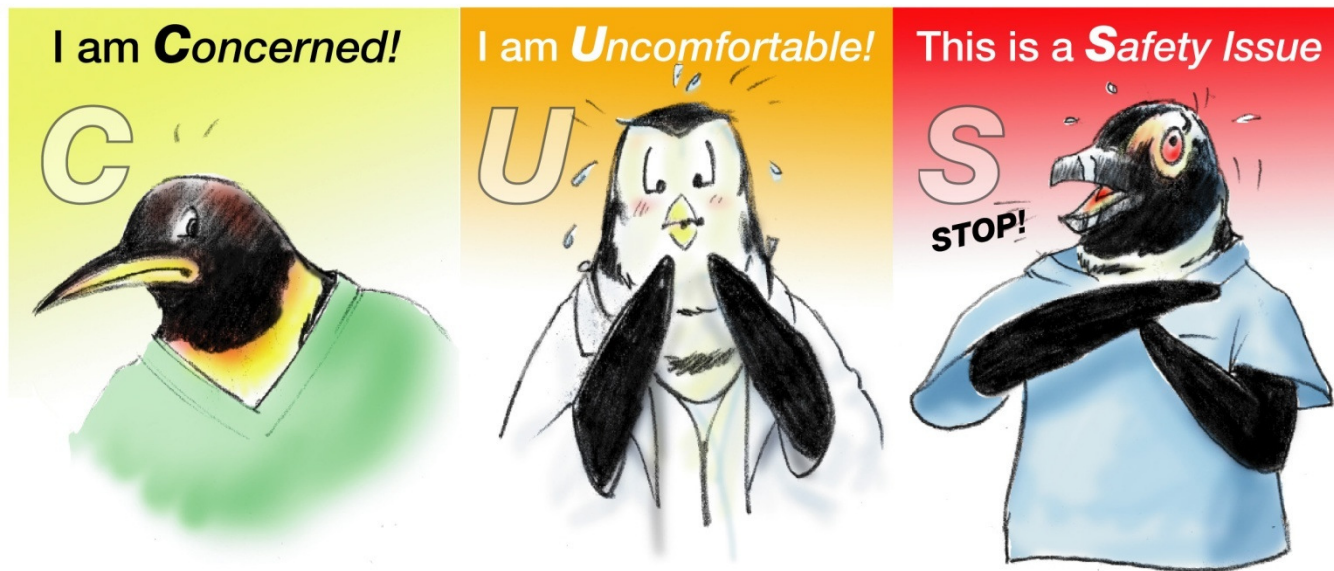
“Empower any member of the team to “stop the line” if he or she senses or discovers an essential safety breach.”

This is an action never to be taken lightly, but it requires immediate cessation of the process and resolution of the safety issue.



TeamSTEPPS

Please Use CUS Words but *only* when appropriate!



TeamSTEPPS



Conflict Resolution DESC Script

**A constructive approach for
managing and resolving conflict**

D—**Describe** the specific situation

E—**Express** your concerns about the action

S—**Suggest** other alternatives

C—**Consequences** should be stated

Ultimately, consensus shall be reached.



DESC-It

Let's "DESC-It!"



- Have timely discussion
- Frame problem in terms of your own experience
- Use "I" statements to minimize defensiveness
- Avoid blaming statements
- Critique is not criticism
- Focus on what is right, not who is right



DESC Script in Action



A DESC Scenario

A nurse sees that a patient has abdominal distension and has pain secondary to a distended bladder and needs a foley catheter. The nurse receives the order from the resident on call. When the attending later realizes that the order was given without his consent, he raises his voice to the resident in front of staff and the patient.



Common Approaches to Conflict Resolution

Often used to manage conflict; however, typically do not result in the best outcome—

- Compromise—Both parties settle for less
- Avoidance—Issues are ignored or sidestepped
- Accommodation—Focus is on preserving relationships
- Dominance—Conflicts are managed through directives for change



Collaboration

- Achieves a mutually satisfying solution resulting in the best outcome
 - **All Win!:** Patient Care Team (team members, the team, and the patient)
 - Includes commitment to a common mission
- Meet goals without compromising relationships

“True collaboration is a process, not an event.”



Mutual Support

BARRIERS

- Hierarchical Culture
- Lack of Resources or Information
- Ineffective Communication
- Conflict
- Time
- Distractions
- Workload
- Fatigue
- Misinterpretation of Data
- Failure to Share Information
- Defensiveness
- Conventional Thinking

TOOLS and STRATEGIES

- Brief
- Huddle
- Debrief
- STEP
- Cross Monitoring
- Feedback
- Advocacy and Assertion
- Two-Challenge Rule
- CUS
- DESC Script
- Collaboration

OUTCOMES

- Shared Mental Model
- Adaptability
- Team Orientation
- Mutual Trust
- Team Performance
- Patient Safety!



Teamwork Actions

- Foster a climate supportive of task assistance
- Provide timely and constructive feedback
- Be assertive and advocate for the patient
- Use the Two-Challenge rule, CUS, and DESC script to resolve conflict
- Resolve conflict through collaboration—Create a “Win-Win-Win” situation

“Those whom we support hold us up in life.”

–Marie von Ebner-Eschenbauch

