Importance of Reactivity In Work and Relationships
Leadership Implications

DEBRA HAGERTY DNP, NHA, CDP, ACDDCT, IP-BC, LBSW, CDONA, FACDONA
OBJECTIVES

1. Learner will define and discuss reactivity and its impact on the relationship with the boss.
2. Discuss tools to promote relationship building and diminish reactivity in the workplace.
3. Review Active Telling, Active Listening, and Dialogue as a relationship building tools.
REACTIVITY CAUSES

VUCA
Volatility
Uncertainty
Complexity
Ambiguity
Reactivity Definition

Reactivity is Behaviors not helpful to and not aligned with producing desired outcomes
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO REACTIVITY

- Fear of Unknown-Daily

- Skills not Proficient-New expectations Daily

- Relationships with staff need to be developed-
  Takes time

- Constant changes-QAPI

- Constant emotions in flux-Stress and excitements
REACTIVITY IS HUMAN AND NORMAL

OUR BRAINS ARE HARDWIRED TO REACT

- Minor slips in communication with Boss - Cause reactivity

- Or a chain reaction of misunderstandings - Boss

- Work emotions and work relationship stress - Boss
Reptilian Brain

Hardwired to React

(Baker, 2016)
AUTONOMIC STRESS RESPONSE

- Hardwired into our humanness.
- Experience and skill & Education Do Not protect us
- Stress factors cause us to act counter productive, Pull us from using our best skills!
UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS

➢ Counterproductive

➢ Happens no matter how skilled, smart, or experienced we are.

➢ We do not see how we appear to the students or others.
TAKE A MINUTE TO DISCUSS

Turn to the person on the right

Tell them about the last time you were reactive. Then they tell you the same.

- Serious discussion with someone
- Someone upset you
IMPROVE COMMUNICATION IS KEY

...AND THAT IS WHY WE LIFT ON THREE...

COMMUNICATION

- Be hopeful
- Be prepared for reactions
- Tell the truth
- Keep it simple - avoid jargon
- Slow down
- Be empathetic
- Assess what the patient wants to know
- Assess what the patient already knows
- Watch for visual cues

Effective Communication
Starting point is looking at things the way they are!!

What seems like:

- Personality Issues  
- Lack of Skills  
- Not caring  
- Severe Dysfunction

Situational factors  
Temporary Degradation of Skills  
Due to Complexity and Stress
Judgment, blame, 
Personality diagnoses

Personal accountability, 
What’s working and 
not working

Pushing ideas or withdrawal into silence

Joint exploration of all ideas

Unbalanced participation

Balanced participation
Stuck in conflict or no conflict
Decisions premature or delayed

Conflict surfaced and managed
Balanced dialogue and decision making
FRAMEWORK FOR RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

• Active Telling
• Active Listening
• Checking Understanding
• Check for Reactivity
• Reflection
ACTIVE TELLING

- People are likely to get on board with an idea if they have an opportunity to talk about it

- Express concerns

- A large majority of people have to talk their way to commitment over multiple conversations
Skillful Telling

- **ASK** Permission
- **TELL** Use I Statements
- **ASK** Ask What Was Heard-Summarize
Active Telling

- Driven by a need for success
- Need to *convince* people of my ideas.
- Worked hard to present ideas in a powerful and inspirational way, minimizing weaknesses and flaws
- Well-prepared and could quickly counter any perceived limitations or risks.
Paradox of Active Telling

- Even the most inspirational speech is lucky if it gets even 20% of people on board.

- The large majority of people have to talk their way toward commitment over multiple conversations.
Active Listening

- Use of open & closed questioning
- Clarify
- Summarise
- Show interest
- Listen for feelings
- Observe non-verbal behaviour
- Signal encouragement
- Avoid prejudice
- Probe
- Reflect
- Avoid interruption & distraction
I'M AFRAID TURN OUT ISN'T AS HIGH AS WE HOPED. THREE OF THEM MISHEARD THE DATE, FIVE GOT THE TIME WRONG AND EVERYONE FROM SALES WENT TO A HOTEL IN SCARBOROUGH BY MISTAKE!
Dialogue

- State your intention to first understand even if there is disagreement.
- Be vigorous in assuring accurate learning about different viewpoints by avoiding debates.
- Repeatedly summarize and check for understanding.
Reflection

- Set aside certainty that there is ONE correct viewpoint (no matter how certain you are).

- Prepare to state your view with the aim of being understood, not “getting” agreement.
PUSHING FOR A SOLUTION IS NOT THE SOLUTION

- Without an understanding we close off exploration of ideas with others

- Don’t consider right versus wrong or good versus bad.
SYSTEMS SOLUTIONS MINDSET
Supports Creativity

- What Are The Facts?
- Am I a Judger?
- How Did We Contribute To The Problem?
- What Outcomes Do I Want?
FROM OBSERVATION TO BELIEF

The Ladder of Inference

1. Observable "data" and experiences
2. I select "Data" from what I observe
3. I make assumptions based on the meanings I added
4. I draw conclusions
5. I adopt beliefs about the world
6. I take actions based on my beliefs

Reflexive Loop
Our beliefs influence what we observe
Reactive Mindsets

- Dominating Push is Survival
- Close Off Exploration of Ideas
- In Order To Fix Things
What recent activity caused you to feel reactivity??

What was the reactivity about??

Who was it with??
Opportunities for Reactivity at Work

a. Failure to understand?
b. Not enough time?
c. Given additional duties you not aware of?
d. Disagree with approach to staff problems.
Solutions To Reactivity and Communication Barriers

TEAMWORK
Together Each Achieves More
PRACTICE REFLECTION
FEEDBACK

Morning Meeting

End of Shift report
HOW DID WE DO???

GOOD JOB
An inability to tolerate feedback is an inability to allow yourself personal growth.
Techniques to Improve the Relationship with the Boss

1. Develop a trusting relationship
   a. Do what you say you will
   b. Don’t blindside with events
   c. Remember No I in Team
Nursing Director Versus IHI Data
1. When you experience problems with improvement and safety initiatives, estimate the frequency that the predominant cause is due to *relational issues*.

Write-in a number from 1 (almost never) to 6 (almost always)—see table below—Your estimate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Debra RNs</th>
<th>IHI RNs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;50% of time</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;75% of time</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. I am currently facing a challenging situation in which I see reactivity in myself and/or others. Improving this situation would make a significant impact on my work life. (check one)

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Uncertain**

The above situation has been going on for roughly (check one)

- **days**
- **weeks**
- **months**
- **6 months – 1 year**
- **>1 to several years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Debra RNs</th>
<th>IHI RNs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>96.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uncertain</strong></td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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THE ABOVE SITUATION HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DEBRA RNs</th>
<th>IHI ALL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>97</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Days</strong></td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Weeks</strong></td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Months</strong></td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 mos – 1 year</strong></td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>years</strong></td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
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</table>
3. The most important barriers to my own personal reflection are: (check all that apply)

- Lack of time
- Lack of sufficient organizational support
- Lack of availability of colleagues I can be open with for input and support
- Uncertainty about how to do it well
- Lack of helpful feedback during the course of work
- Other (please describe)

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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Org Supp</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avail of Coll.</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to do it</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Fdbk</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
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**NORMS**

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREQUENCY</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost Never</td>
<td>1-25% of Time</td>
<td>26-50% of Time</td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AVG</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Median</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The leaders in my organization are aligned on priorities.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When a decision is needed, it is clear who has the authority to make it.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. People who are likely to be impacted by a decision are consulted for input prior to the final decision.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. After decisions are made, leaders meet with those people impacted to explain the rationale, hear concerns, and to involve them in implementation.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When people communicate or behave in ways which impair collaborative teamwork, they receive feedback and are expected to make changes.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. When resistance occurs, it is heard through dialogue which emphasizes problem solving and it does not stall decision making or forward progress.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. When difficult conversations are needed, people are willing to take them on and work hard to resolve issues without blame or judgment.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. With conflict, people take care to hear and explore each point of view (e.g. as opposed to talking over each other or engaging in win-LOSE debates).</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Meetings are productive.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Physicians are aligned and actively engaged with improvement efforts.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final Tool to Diminish Reactivity

Establish a Culture Where People Can Say What They Think!!
Culture of Cooperation and Collaboration

1. Not your problem and my problem
2. People communicate with Vision
3. Fear is not a part of my sense at work
4. Team building is a priority
5. Safety is first
6. Quality Assurance and Improvement is continuous
Summary

- Reactivity is a Normal Event / Destructive to student learning
- Awareness of the role of reactivity is important
- Culture of Open and Honest Discussion should be taught where people can say what they think.
References

