<u>**WEBINAR VIDEO TRANSCRIPT**</u>

Partnership for Care HIV TAC

Staff Recruitment and Retention #2, CoP:

Resolving Employee Conflict Within Your Organization

13 June 2017

STEVE LUCKABAUGH: Good afternoon. My name is Steve Luckabaugh and I'd like to welcome you to the staff recruitment and retention community of practice number two webinar. This one's centered around resolving employee conflict within your organization.

This webinar is brought to you by the Partnerships for Care, HIV Training, Technical Assistance and Collaboration Center, HIV TAC. The Partnerships for Care project is a three-year multi-agency project, funded by the secretary's Minority AIDS Initiative Fund and the Affordable Care Act.

The goals of the project are to expand provision of HIV testing, prevention, care, and treatment in health centers serving communities highly impacted by HIV, to build sustainable partnerships between health centers and their state health department, and to improve health outcomes among people living with HIV, especially among racial and ethnic minorities. The project is supported by the HIV Training Technical Assistance and Collaboration Center, HIV TAC.

Our speaker again today is Ann Hogan. Ann has over 25 years experience in the human resource field, including training, employee relations, benefits and compensation management, conflict resolution, and employee development and strategic planning. Ann is a certified senior professional in human resources through the Human Resource Certification Institute, and is a professional member of the Society of Human Resource Management, the American Society of Health Care, Human Resources Administration, and the American Society of Training.

Ann is a graduate of the Metropolitan State College of Denver with a bachelors of science and management and has a masters degree in education in human resources studies from Colorado State University with a focus on organizational performance and change. She is also a graduate of the 2011 University of Washington Community Health Leadership Institute certificate program. And in 2012 she completed the Geiger Gibson Fellowship Program through George Washington University. Please join me in welcoming Ann Hogan.

ANN HOGAN: We are here to talk about conflict. And whenever you have teams of people working together, or more than one person together, eventually you have some type of conflict. And conflict doesn't have to be a really, really bad conflict. It could just be a disagreement. It could be people not getting along, people feeling like they're playing favorites, et cetera.

So we're going to talk about how you can resolve those issues within your HIV care team, and especially if you're a project leader or project manager of that team, and how you can do that effectively and make sure that you get the people to be able to perform at their highest level for you. So anyway, we'll talk about why you need to resolve the conflict, how to resolve it, how to recognize it, et cetera.

So first of all, to start, it is important that as a leader that you need to be able to continually resolve conflict. It's part of your job and it's not the job that everybody wants. They want to do the job you've been hired to do, which is care for patients. But inevitably you do need to resolve conflict. So that is part of your job. And if it's not dealt with, what happens? It happens that it actually reflects poorly on you if you don't deal with it. And so you need to be really conscientious of that, but you really need to work on your conflict resolution skills.

And then also you need to recognize it, address it, and manage it in an appropriate way that is a resolution for all parties. And that does mean-- and we'll go through it-- it doesn't meant that you give into one and not the other, but it does mean that you actually resolve conflict. So as we go through that, make sure that you have questions. That you have them then just put them in the chat box.

So the learning objectives today are, what is causing conflict? Why is it important to you resolve it? And what are the methods that you can use? And that's an important one because there's a lot of different methods that you can use to resolve conflict. And then what is that process for the resolution? And then, how to hold the meeting with the different parties, because that's sometimes the biggest fear is you don't know how to bring the parties together and actually have a meeting about the conflict. Nobody really wants to deal with it. And so that's why it's important that we'll talk about the meeting itself.

What causes the conflict? Two people just have a general disagreement, maybe someone is coming in too late to your meetings. Maybe they're not showing up to work. All different things can cause that. The biggest problem probably is your communication style. Communication styles are key. When you look at a team, and say your HIV care team, maybe there's three people on that team, maybe there's eight people on that team. But it's made up of multi-disciplinary people.

So everyone comes with their own communication style. And especially when you have someone like from [INAUDIBLE] or admin area and the clinical area. That seems to always create-- they always feel like one could do better and the other one is not doing the job quite as well, especially when it comes to front office and back office. That's my experience anyway.

But anyway, even if you get those tier teams together-- so whether it's a physician, whether it's a nurse, whether it's your project lead or your project manager, or your behavioral health, all those people come together with different communications. And how they relate to each other is very important. And so recognize that you have all these different styles, and it helps people really realize, what is their communication style and how did they improve that. Because we all have different ways to communicate, but we all need to realize that we have strengths in one area and others are our weakness. And so we need to build up those strengths at the same time as building

up those weaknesses, and realizing that everyone on the team brings something different and is necessary for the team to succeed.

And make sure that-- there has to be respect between team members. That's probably one thing that I've seen a lot with conflict, is that one particular person or two people on the team are not respecting the other people on the team. And we'll kind of talk a little bit about how that looks and how you can maybe see that. But it can be very minor things that they do, or could be very major things. So make sure that everyone is respecting their role on the team, and especially when you have-- in the health care field you have a hierarchy. But when it comes to your team, everyone needs to contribute and participate equally. And so make sure that there's no disrespect going on in the team.

And then of course stressful situations in the clinic. I worked in a community health center for 20 years. I realize that it's very hard work, and it's very difficult at times. And you're delivering not such good news to people, and that brings a lot of stress. And so you need to learn how to manage that within the team to make sure that people feel like they can kind of express their stress and express their frustration with things, but at the same time it can't be taken out on somebody else. So that's what you need to look for within your clinics and your teams.

Now, it's important for you to resolve the conflict. When you think about your employees on that team, whether you're a team lead, whether you're one of the employees on that team and maybe you don't have a leadership role, but everyone expects you to manage conflict. Because if there's one reason that people will leave an organization, it's because no one's dealing with what they consider their biggest problem, which usually is around conflict. And people will leave [INAUDIBLE] bosses easily if you're not actually doing something about the problem that exists.

So additionally your teams can become very divided, and that lowers the satisfaction and the productivity of the team because they're constantly kind of bickering and not getting along. So again, for all of these things we have to look at how our patients are cared for. We talked about that last line to the importance of focusing on patient care. And so in order to do that well, you've got to have a good functioning team.

And so what happens if you don't address conflict? Well, it can lead to a number of different things, but it can also lead to very aggressive situations. I've seen that with patients-- the patient and provider. It could be just between two staff members or even two people in your waiting room. So if there's conflict-- this, that's the extreme. You never want it to get there, but it can. I've seen it. And so that's the part that you really need to manage.

But there's also legal implications for not taking action. Yes, there is conflict and someone decides that it's a hostile work environment. Now there is criteria for a hostile work environment. But when you hear those kind of words being thrown out, it's really a red flag that you have to do something quick. And then also, employees will always leave because of unresolved conflict. Very few employees will actually just stick it out for a lengthy period of time if they feel like they're not being part of the team or there's a lot of conflict in the team, they don't want to be there. It's not like they're there for, I guess to fight.

Where it hides in your organization? Boy, it hides everywhere. And so we'll talk about where it can be found, and we'll talk about that it's necessary at times. I mean, conflict is not necessarily a bad thing. Just think of it as kind of a degree of conflict. Because you can have disagreements, you can have a meeting that's functional and people can each express their opinions and that's not necessarily conflict, but it can lead to kind of disagreements within the room and a little go back and forth. That's healthy. So the conflict in between two employees regardless of position-- so just because someone is a higher ranking employee, even if it's the CEO and you're front desk, there can be conflict. It doesn't matter what position is held within the organization.

So realize that in your HIV care team, think about all your different disciplines that are there and all of the people that contribute. And it doesn't matter what their position is, it can result in conflict. And it can happen at your executive team level. It can happen at your front desk level. It can happen in between your IT staff. It doesn't matter. And no one is totally absolved of not having conflict. So just because they are medical providers doesn't mean they don't have conflict. And sometimes people want to kind of ignore it and think that can't be happening.

And many conflicts, if not addressed, will literally grow like a cancer in your organization. People start taking sides with other people. They start hearing the rumors that this conflict's going on, et cetera. So it just explodes. And that's why you need to continually address the conflict.

How to look for your conflict-- as a team, whether you're the project lead, whether you're just on the team, but your whole HIV care team-- think about what you do to look for a conflict. Are people truly working together? Or do you have kind of half your team over on one side and half your team on the other side, and they're really not communicating back and forth? Are people attending your team meetings, or are they calling in maybe if they're sick at work?

Absenteeism on a team is a definite sign that there's something going on there at the team level. You may not know what it is, but you need to find out. Because when people start not showing up-- because remember the first time you had the team meeting, the kickoff meeting. Everybody was excited. Everyone wanted to participate. They were gung-ho about it. So suddenly they're not showing up or they don't seem to be respectful in that meeting-- there's a problem, and you need to research and dig deeper to find out what that is.

The one thing that I have found that has been a true indicator of conflict is when you actually look at the emails that people are sending to each other. And are you allowing those emails to have conflict kind of digs at each other in them? People not saying, hi, Ann, may I please ask that you do this for me today? That would be nice email, versus no, hi, Ann. So it's just blank and it says, do this for me today, explanation point. So that would not be a respectful email.

So think about how those emails are exchanged and also, what is your expectation as far as email etiquette? Where is email etiquette? And we all know that if you type in capital letters it's like someone yelling at you. That's how people take it. So whether that's how it's meant to be or not, your email is just as much a communication tool as speaking face to face.

If there's someone complaining about conflict, or complaining about the team, or the team's not pulling their weight, or I'm doing all this work and they're doing nothing-- look for those signs. Also, the most important one also is the grapevine. Look at your grapevine. Listen to your grapevine. Your grapevine usually-- it may not be 100% accurate, but it's pretty darn close sometimes. So make sure you're paying attention to that grapevine and what it's really saying.

Also, review your employee satisfaction results. And I know we're talking about HIV care teams, and you're kind of a team within the bigger clinic, but make sure that yeah, if an employee satisfaction is not being done, you may want to suggest that to the clinic that maybe do apply section results survey. And also make sure that within your team now, you do have control of that. And so make sure you're doing five minute weekly check-ins with each team member individually, and make that a constructive time.

Ask them, how do you think things are progressing? Is there anything I need to know about? Is there anything that's hindering our ability to move forward within the team? If you can ask those questions, but make sure you're doing at least a five minute check-in. It will only take that long and it will prevent a lot of problems. But five minutes every week individually-- because the mistake people make is that they get the team together, and they say, how are things going? Well, if you're a member of the team and you're having a problem with someone else in the team, you're not going to say it, probably, right in that team meeting. So make sure those are individual meetings, as well as having your team meetings.

And then is someone feeling bullied? Is someone feeling left out? How does that look and how does that feel to people? Because when that happens that instantly creates a lot of conflict within the team.

Managing conflict-- so you hear about the conflict. And how do you hear about it? Usually someone complains to you, and they don't want you to do anything about it. That's the classic line, right? They call the project manager and say, hey, I'm having this problem with so-and-so but I don't want to do anything about it, or I don't want them to know that I called you, but I want it resolved. And so that's a real problem, because you need to get people together to resolve the conflict.

So let them know that, you know, thank you for reporting this to me, but we really need to work together to make this a better team. Because remember, we're here for our patients, and we want to make sure our patients are getting the best care possible. And so we need our team to function that way. And if you handle the conversation that way, you'll probably have much better results.

And then another coworker might complain about someone who isn't pulling their weight. That happens too. And so, again, you need to individually address this to people, and then get them together. And we'll talk about how that meeting should look in a minute. OK. And it could also look like a supervisor calls you because they don't know what to do, right. They don't know what to do about their situation, and so they call you because maybe it involves two of your team members.

Maybe it's someone on your staff that's the problem. But they call you and they don't know what to do. Or someone overhears something. And again, what you hear through the grapevine-- always pay attention to the grapevine. That's why it's in there twice, because it's a really, really, really important piece. You'll hear about a lot of conflict with that.

So the first thing that you want to do is you always need to remain objective. And calm-- the word calm is in there, because if you're dealing with an aggressive situation you need to always remain calm. But if it's two people not getting along within your team, you need to always remain objective and not take sides, because you are the supervisor or you are another team member, and it maybe it's your job to resolve conflict. So you don't want to be seen as, I favor this person over someone else.

Be sure to remain objective at all times. A decision never needs to be made immediately. If it does, then it's one of those aggressive situations. And at that point you separate everybody and send them all home to get [INAUDIBLE]. But if there's just people that are not getting along, remember, you don't need to make a decision then whether you keep someone on the team or you let them off the team or how you're actually going to resolve it at that moment. You just need to collect all the facts.

And so you always need to sit down with people. And I really suggest, don't do this by phone. People need to feel as they're really heard. And once you've listened to everybody in both parties, then it's the time to start clarifying. So at first you're going to sit down and listen to their side of the story and what they feel is happening within the team, or what they feel is the problem with whoever else that they are working with, that they have the conflict with.

Then it's time for you to kind of step up and say, OK, now I have to clarify these things. So you're going to enact your listening skills, and your active listening skills, and start repeating back to them what you heard. And be sure-- this is probably the biggest mistake I've seen people do-- people let their biases into these conversations and in these situations. And you cannot do that. You need to kind of remove those biases that you have and deal with the situation at hand.

And then find out what your goal is and what their goal is, because they're kind of two different things. Their goal is not as important as the organization's goal. The organization's goal needs to be, we are going to perform as a team because we need to care for our patients, et cetera. There goal needs to be together, they will support each other to make sure that we're able to meet those patient care team goals. And so you need to kind of work through both of those.

And one idea is that they have to resolve the situation. And probably the most important thing to walk away from today-- when you end up with conflict, one of the most telling questions I've always asked people-- because usually someone comes to you and they're complaining and they're upset. And the one thing that you can ask them is how have they contributed to this conflict or this work environment? And that usually kind of sets people back and go, oh, what have I done?

And so, don't let them get off and say, I haven't done anything, because that's probably not true. It's probably not totally one-sided. So make them think about how have they contributed to that

conflict, or how have they contributed to that core working environment that they're in. And that does help resolve that situation really quickly when they have to actually answer that question.

Now, when you establish a goal, you have to figure out where you're trying to get people to go. The best book I can recommend for this is called, Crucial Conversation. And it really helps you frame how you're going to have that conversation, how you're going to let that goal. And so if you haven't gotten that book, I would highly recommend that you do that. And it can be used for any kind of area in your life, or any kind of conflict. It talks about how to set that goal of your conversation.

Then you have to look at, what are your barriers to reaching that goal with these two people? And have them help brainstorm ideas to resolution. They can help, but it's not necessary that they do that with you. It's kind of a give and take. So you have to look at the situation and say, OK, I'm going to brainstorm ideas for resolution here. And there could be different ways, right. You could separate them. You could compromise with them. You could let one go. You could just make a decision, they're going to get along from here on out, et cetera. You could do a lot of different things.

But if it's a good idea, it can be done with the parties, because the parties have kind of an ownership in this and it kind of depends on where you're at on that spectrum of conflict. And if they're willing to get together and kind of brainstorm ideas and how they're going to get along going forward. And what you need to remember is that at all times it's the patients and the team at the core part. So never jeopardize anything regarding patient care or the team to satisfy two individuals who are not getting along.

And then what you see the future looks like. And they need to agree that that's what the future looks like for them going forward. If you have to, you're going to put verbal or written agreements in place. And I would say that if the conflict is large enough, you need to give them written warnings, or you need to have some type of agreement with them that says, this is how their behavior is going to be in the future, especially if someone's being very disrespectful. You want to make sure that that doesn't continue.

And so make sure you get those agreements, whether they're verbal or written, it kind of depends on the situation. But make sure that they know that this behavior moving forward is completely unacceptable. What's happened in the past is the past. Now we're all going to move forward, and this is what our future is going to look like together. So it's kind of like any kind of relationship, right. If it was bad in the past, this is the changes we have to make to move forward.

And if it doesn't work out, something has to happen. Right. There has to be a result if things do not move forward smoothly. And at the same time realize there's going to be setbacks between those two individuals probably, and you may have to mediate a little bit more. But again, make sure that they know, this is what I expect in the future, nothing less than this will be accepted.

And when you're getting ready to meet them-- and I put this in this slide show just because it is very important of how you're going to do that. Because sometimes conflicts arise and some people go, oh my gosh, I have to run to the clinic or I have to run to my team neighbor and get

this resolved right away. So you need to think about, is this an emergency or is it not, and kind of make sure you're aware of where does that line get drawn.

When you meet with people, you definitely don't want to be into the conflict. You can tell them to calm down, and that you'll meet with them at four o'clock tomorrow afternoon. We'll discuss it when everyone's less emotional about the situation. That might work. It might be that it's something that needs to be dealt with immediately. But you cannot make that judgement.

Think about where you're going to do that meeting. Because if you immediately run to the clinic, or you run to their department, that again shows emergency level. It also tells everyone in the clinic that you're there to resolve conflict, because you're not necessarily there all the time. So make sure that, do you want that to be the message, or do you want to pick a neutral office, and something neutral within the clinic?

Or maybe as the project manager you want to have them come to your office. And if you have them come to your office it definitely projects authority to them and makes them feel like they're maybe more listened to. It also projects more of an important meeting than picking something neutral. So just realize that those little things with regards to which office you even meet in makes a huge difference.

It also makes a huge difference whether you sit across from them at a table. And that's more for the decision-making process, especially if you project authority during that process. We'll talk about that in a minute. But for this first meeting, I probably sit next to them, and really listen to what they have to say, and make sure you always have enough time allotted. The worst thing you can do is say, yes I'm coming to meet with you, and you give yourself say a half hour or something that will probably take more like an hour. So make sure.

And then again at the clinic site, especially if you're an admin person, I just know how that looks. When admin shows up at the clinic, you can project a lot of different things, like why are they here? What are they doing, et cetera, et cetera. So running to the clinic to resolve something may not be the best idea when it comes to how it looks for employees.

When you're getting ready to meet with them-- again, who's going to be at the meeting? Because usually you don't want to meet with people by yourself. Now if you're just listening to a conference and things like that, that's probably fine to meet with them by yourself. But once you get into the clarifying portion or delivering the message of how you're going to move forward, it's probably best that you have someone else there that can remain objective, someone who is not in their chain of command, and someone who respects the organization.

So think about who that is. You don't want someone who's known for spreading rumors around the clinic being that third person in the room, but someone who can take notes, someone that can kind of through that with you. And also they're kind of another party that you can say, did you hear this? This is how I heard this. And they may have heard it differently. So make sure that you include someone else. It's always just a good idea.

Schedule a meeting-- again, don't just show up without any prior notice, as that can create a lot of emotion for people. So schedule a meeting. Tell people what you're going to meet them for. Tell them, you understand there's conflict between Sam and Joe, and so I need to meet with both of you to find out how we can resolve this and move forward, so we can make sure we give our patients the best care possible.

The biggest thing is to acknowledge that there is conflict. It's OK to acknowledge it and say, I understand that you two are having some problems. Let's work through it and work it out. Most people want that. Most people don't want to end up terminated for this or working in this environment that they don't like going to work each day. So they will actually appreciate you getting involved in the conflict usually.

Have your set of questions ready. What's been said? Who said it? Why do you think it pertains to you? Because usually it's, they heard rumors that so and so said this about me. So why do you think that pertains to you? Where did this occur? Is it something that was hearsay, or that actually you overheard? Or who did actually hear it, because I want to talk to them also. So have your list of questions ready. And those are a good place to start-- your who, what, why, when, where, how. Always start with those kind of questions.

Again, decide where you're going to sit, because that is really, really important. And you in patient care know that when you talk with patients and you want to get more information from them, you need to sit close to them. And sit kind of next to each other. And people will share a lot more. If we're sitting across from each other and there's a desk separating us, it's not an environment people want to go and open up themselves. So make sure that if you really want to find out what's going on, sit next to someone and really have a conversation with them.

Now, again, don't make an emergency out of the situation unless it truly is. And always be respectful that within your care team, within your clinic people are seeing patients. And again, that's what we're there for, right? The mistake that I've seen multiple times-- when someone has conflict, say it's with a physician in a clinic and admin wants to get involved in resolving this, and so maybe the medical director or some other administrative personnel calls that physician or calls the MA for that physician and says, I'll be there today at 2:00. And yet they're booked with patients all afternoon.

And that's a huge missed message, because unless that's an emergency, that physician just heard, wow, this is more important-- meeting with admin is more important than my patients. And that's a core message to send, where they feel like there's kind of disrespect in that. Wow, I'm going to be taken out of patient care which is what my main job is to talk about something that we can talk about at 4:30 this afternoon when I'm done with patients. Or we can talk about it later in the week maybe when I have the admin hours.

So think about how that looks. And again, don't make an emergency out of something that really isn't. And make sure that people know, you're going to look into this, and you actually are. But it doesn't need to be done immediately. So be respectful of everyone's schedules.

At the start of the meeting, always talk to each person separately at first. Very rarely would you get two people together that are in conflict and sit them down and say, we're going to work this out today. Because-- and it's probably the biggest mistake people make-- but again, you don't really know what the problem is. And if you get two people together, either it's going to turn out really poor, that they start getting mad at each other and saying nasty things to each other, et cetera, or they're just going to kind of look at you and go, oh no, we're fine. There's no conflict here. That's been my experience anyways.

Make sure you're speaking to them separately and say that you want to resolve this. We want everyone on our team to be working to their highest level moving forward. And not that we don't need this conflict on our team, but we want everyone to feel comfortable on the team and respected for their contributions. That's where you need to sit down and talk to each person. Always shake their hand, because that's how you determine that someone actually is caring and they're respectful of your opinion.

Discuss how the meeting is necessary, because you need to hear both sides of the story. You need to hear what's going on, and how you can actually help make that situation better. So always be open and honest. That's always the best policy when it comes to conflict resolution.

And during the meeting, the important thing is that they need to know there can be no retaliation of them for talking about what they want to discuss. And when you think about that, think about retaliation for say, sexual harassment. That can be a conflict. That's a much bigger conflict than maybe two people getting along as on the team. But those kinds of things, when two people don't get along, when there's problems within your team, those things can grow and ultimately result in say, sexual harassment conflicts, hostile work environment allegations. It can grow into all these different things.

And that's why it's so important that at the smaller level, look for it, find it, and look for a result. And I always say that you're not necessarily going to keep this confidential. Now you don't quite word it that way. But you need to give people the understanding that as you're going through this, whether you're talking about conflict when it has to do with hostile work environment if that's the charge-- that may not be the case in the end.

But if you're the manager or something of that, we'll one, I'd get HR involved or get your CEO involved in that situation if those words are being tossed around. But at the same time, when you look at that, you never want to guarantee confidentiality of that employee because you may need to bring it to the CEO. You may need to bring it to your clinic manager. And so you might want to say something like, whoever has a need to know or a business reason to know. Because a lot of times they're just want it between you and that one person. And you're not going to resolve anything if it's just between you and them. Right? You have to bring in another person that they're in conflict with also. And then you may need to share it with others within the organization. So be aware of that need to know clause.

And then mediation during the meeting-- always, always set the ground rules. And that even goes when you have that very first initial meeting with them. Just let them know that these are the ground rules for our meeting. Everything that you have to say, I will be respectful and listen

and I won't interrupt you during that meeting during your discussions. But I will ask clarifying questions. But please tell me what's going on from your perspective within the team. And that's OK. And then just sit back and listen to them.

And then always set the goals of the meeting. Most people, when you do get them together, make sure they both realize, and when you meet with them individually, that they're both valued members of the team. And that the goal here is to have a productive team moving forward. So whatever that looks like in how you resolve that, that that's really important. And again, your active listening skills. And always focus on the behavior. Don't focus on the person. Focus on the behavior that's been exhibited.

So if someone's upset because the other member of the team was sending disrespectful emails, you're going to focus on the email, and how to make them better. And at the same time with that one individual, you might want to talk to them about why did they not show respect for this other employee. Maybe they can-- side by side a lot of times people think that this person over here on the team doesn't have anything to do. Well, that's usually not true. Organizations do not hire people just because they feel generous and want to give money away. They actually have a job to do. And so make sure that people understand other people's rules and how they fit into the team, and how important they are to the team.

And then the findings-- don't let your personal values influence your decision. Just like your biases, you need to separate those away. I've dealt with conflicts within teams when it comes to affairs, things like that. And so you have to just allow your influence-- your personal values cannot influence the decision at all. You have to let that go.

It doesn't matter what it is, really, but you have to let your personal values separate you out from the actual outcome of the situation. So we've had numerous situations that you may or may not disagree with, based on your background, based on your religion, based on your belief system, based on your family values, whatever it is. You have to let that go because that's not your role during the situation. It's not to be influenced by your personal decision.

And then always inform both parties of the decision and how you're going to move forward . That's really important. And if you're not going to have that follow up, make sure you don't commit something you're not going to do. So if you're actually going to meet with these people and have a decision, then you need to actually meet with people, have the decision, explain the decision to both of them.

And it's always important to make a decision in however that looks moving forward. They need to know that that's what happened. And then if you say you're going to follow up with them in two weeks, you need to really follow up in two weeks, because I'll tell you, if this conflict ever comes up again, they're going to throw that right back to you and say, you didn't follow up with me in two weeks. And so you need to make sure, put it on your calendar, follow up with them, find out how things are still going, meet with both people and say, how are things going. And continue to monitor that situation at all times.

So what to do when you do have conflict-- just to kind of review it real quick. There's recognize it. Always respond to it. Don't ever ignore it, even if it seems petty. Make sure you're addressing those conflicts. Again, you'll get a lot of respect as a supervisor, as a team member when you do that. And if you're one of the members of the team that's in conflict with someone, be should to talk to your project manager about that.

Or even first, try to work it out with the other person. That's always an important first step to try to work it out. And again, when you have that meeting, don't focus on them personally, but focus on how you feel their behavior has impacted you. And so you kind of separate it out from the person, but actually focus on that behavior. Then there's the decision time, and always continue to monitor.

So again, recognizing it, pay attention to what others are saying, how people are behaving. Again, look for disrespect, and again always respond to it. Do not ignore it, even if it's petty. Respond timely. Again, but don't make an emergency out of something that isn't. But at the same time, make sure that you schedule a meeting. You actually address these things. It's best in person. If it absolutely has to be done by the phone, I would say that's the last resort. But try to do it in person.

And then using the fourth step, just as a review, always talk to the parties involved. Remain objective. Focus on the behavior. And remember your goal, which is always the patient, the organization, or the team. It's not both individuals. And you need to make that very clear to them. It's the patient, organization, or the team. And always take into consideration the tone of the meeting and how you open that meeting with them.

And then listen. I think that's the biggest mistake people do when they start getting into these situations is that they actually want to try to manage it right there without actually listening to what the problems are, and then actually considering that and thinking about that. Don't make a decision immediately because you probably haven't processed it enough what someone has told you. You need to think about that. And so to spend at least-- it's kind of like interviewing-- spend at least 80% of that conversation, that first conversation with someone, listening to what they have to say. Let them do 80% of the talking. You do 80% of the listening. And again, don't promise everything's confidential.

And these are kind of some things to consider. Again, have your questions written down. Hear their side of the story. Ask clarifying questions. And you've had that meeting. So the things that you're going to look at. It's really trying to identify where those disagreements are. What's creating the disagreements between two people. Identify where they agree. That's your starting point. Wherever they agree is where you're going and work from.

That's your plight to move forward with them, where they agree. And usually sometimes they just agree, we're not getting along. And that's OK, because that's the place to start. Once they both agree they don't get along, but the patient care team is suffering because they're not getting along, well then that's really the place that you can say, OK, we're going to work from here. And again, inform everyone of the decision and meet with the person to discuss the findings. Don't ever let that just kind of be one meeting, we're done, we're gone, we're going to ignore it from

now on. You can't do that. You have to go through the findings with people and you need to continually monitor that.

At some point a decision is necessary, and you need to actually make that, again because, people are looking for you to do that. Whether you are the CEO, whether you're the project manager, or you're the director of IT, or you're HR, it doesn't matter what your role is in the organization, people want a decision. They want to know where they fall on this and what is that decision.

Is the division mean that I'm going to get terminated? Possibly if it continues to fester, right. But what is that decision? Is the decision we're going to keep all of you, but we're going to compromise with you? Does it mean that we're going to work with you to kind of mediate this and you're going to continue to work together? A whole variety of different things. But you need to make that decision. That is part of your role.

And then always monitor it. Again, do what you say. It's so important. And personally I've gotten caught in that, where you say, oh I'll call you back in three weeks and check in on you. And even if it's been three weeks and one day and you haven't done it, it reflects very poorly on you. And so you need to make sure that whatever you say you're going to do with these employees, you need to actually do it. And that's a huge thing.

So I'm not going to run through the objectives because we're kind of gone through those as far as the process and why it's important to resolve the conflict. It just is a matter of, one, your job's on the line if your team's not getting along, correct? But second of all and more importantly is that we owe it to our patients to have a well-functioning team, because then they're going to get the best care. So that's the important part.

Are there any questions so far?

STEVE LUCKABAUGH: All right. We have a few moments here to take some questions. If you have any questions, please enter them now into the questions pane.

ANN HOGAN: Does anybody have any questions-- they can ask as well as, you know maybe they have a conflict now and they're not quite sure how to start the meeting. They don't know what to ask. That's kind of a big thing when people-- people tend to want to-- nobody really wants to dive in and get involved in conflict. But if you have two people that aren't getting along, maybe we can give you some suggestions on what you can do moving forward to make sure that they're performing at their highest level together. And you can make up names. Don't even say who it is.

STEVE LUCKABAUGH: OK. We've got one here. What ways can we ensure that the staff is on board a team after a conflict? As in, how do we address the team after the conflict has been resolved?

ANN HOGAN: OK. So if I think about that, I'm thinking of say, maybe an eight person team and there was a conflict between two of them. And maybe the other six even witnessed it, right. About the only thing that you can do is probably during that process you obviously met with two

individuals. And I'm just making this scenario. But this is kind of what I've seen happen. So these two individuals, one, you need to meet with them.

But you probably need to meet with the other six to find out one, what they observed, and also if they-- not to stir the pot by any means-- but at least to find out what other problems are arising within the team. Because it's probably more of a symptom that you're team is kind of struggling. And teams go through a growth period. Like I said, everyone at the kickoff meeting is excited to be on the team. They're thrilled. They're listening to each other. But actually as you start to get into the work of the team, then you kind of go through these stages.

So you've heard of storming and norming. So it gets into that storming stage and you have to actually work through that as a team. And so you want to deal with the conflict between the two people, for sure, and find out what's creating that, and how you're going to resolve that. But it's probably a symptom of a bigger problem within your whole team, that you just need to kind of reset, if you will.

And maybe meet with everybody and say, OK, this is where we're at and this is where we need to go. Remember these are goals for our team. This is what we need to do. So what's worked so far for the team? What has not worked so far for the team? And at the same time be prepared-- and I'm not saying this is the case, but be prepared. Always be prepared that they're going to look at you and go, but we need more input from you, or we need more leadership from you, or we need you to make sure you're at all of our meeting, et cetera. That's been something that I've seen happen too.

But at the same time, sit down with your team and really have a frank conversation. What needs to change here? And again, don't let people point fingers at each other, but point fingers at really what can we resolve? What ideas and suggestions do you have for us moving forward? Do we need to set our ground rules for how we're going to respond to each other as a team member?

If you haven't set those up, it's time to do that, because you don't want people talking over each other. We don't want people interrupting each other. Everyone has to be respectful and maybe use someone's name. No one can raise their voice during the meeting. You can set all these ground rules out, and that can really help establish your team norm moving forward in how they're going to communicate.

But I would say there's a number of things that I would say. Certainly look at the two-- and I'm assuming maybe there's two that are having conflict with that. But also look at your entire team. So if it's another six people, you might have to have at least 10 minute conversations with each person on that team to find out how you move forward or what they see as the problem. But always be prepared that there could be someone else on the team or it could in fact be the manager of the team that they're having trouble with.

And usually people are really good about-- they're really good at kind of forgiving people in a sense. And so if someone has done something incorrectly, as long as they correct that behavior going forward, usually people will kind of-- they won't ever forget it, believe me and if it ever happens again they'll bring it back up. But usually if the management of the team meeting is very

well directed and things like that and they feel like they can contribute, they usually kind of set that aside and move forward.

And I've seen that happen more than a few times. So that can happen. But just make sure your meetings are very well structured, you're listening to what ideas they have for suggestions, and then setting those norms for how the team is actually going to behave.

STEVE LUCKABAUGH: Yeah. Any strategies to approaching conflict resolution when you are working across multiple business units or departments? So I guess like when other managers--

ANN HOGAN: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, so when it's other departments that-- yeah. So that's a tough one. I'll admit that. That's a tough one, because really what you have to do is you need to meet with that other manager in person. So I've seen different situations where-- I'm just going to make up the departments. But say the IT department, when they're handling someone's help desk calls from a clinic, that clinic feels that that help desk person is very rude, they're not listening to them, they're impacting their work, et cetera, et cetera.

But you in the clinic are not in charge of the IT department, right? And IT has lots of things on their plate. And so how do you make it work between the two? And really it's the role then of the clinic manager in this scenario to meet with IT manager and let them know that this is how we're having this conflict. And usually the IT manager's aware of it too. I mean, help desk has probably said, oh those, you know, whatever out in the clinics, they don't know what they're doing. I wish they'd learn their job or I wish they could turn on and off their computer without me having to tell them to reboot it, et cetera. So you need to work between the two managers.

And if you're an employee in one of those two departments, your responsibility is to go to your manager and not complain about the IT help desk person, or IT help desk person, depending on if you're at the clinic. And as a manager you might have to help or as an employee you might have to help that conversation be directed into what behaviors-- I'm a client person-- what behaviors is IT doing that's affecting my job? Or what are they doing that's rude?

Don't let people get away with these kind of-- they're not professionals, they're rude. Don't let them get away with this term. Actually have them describe the behaviors that are happening. Is the IT person hanging up the phone on them? Are they raising their voice? Is the clinic person calling IT when maybe they do need to turn off their computer and turn it back on again, and just try that first? And maybe this is their 50th call to IT in a week.

So you've got to look at what is really happening, and then work between the two departments to resolve that. But that is a tough one because you have to get both of those department managers to agree there's a problem. And if you can't, you have to go up next level. It's creating that much problem for your staff. You have to get it resolved. And if you have to bypass-- if you tried to work with the IT director or the IT manager and it hasn't happened, then you'd go up the chain of command.

But in order to get that to happen, you need to describe really how it's affecting your team and your patient care. Don't let it be, they're rude, they don't us. Don't use general terms like that.

Figure out how it's affecting the team, and their performance, and how that's affecting the patients, and you'll get that conversation with whoever you need to when you start bringing those back into play.

STEVE LUCKABAUGH: OK. That's all questions we have for now. Yeah. Did you have any final thoughts before we wrap up here?

ANN HOGAN: I think that it's just important that you actually deal with the conflict. You're never going to prevent conflicts completely, but it certainly will help if you're having those five minute conversations with your employees every single week. If you can't commit to that, commit to 10 minutes every two weeks.

But make sure you're sitting down with people every single week, getting their feedback on what's going well, what could be improved in the team or in the department, and really listen and actually take action on those things. And hold yourself accountable. Even if you can't do anything about what they suggested, let them know that. Let them know you'll fix the things you can fix, and that you'll let people know how these other things are affecting them. But it's really important. That's probably the biggest thing to prevent some conflict from happening.

STEVE LUCKABAUGH: All right. And thank you everyone for participating in today's webinar, and we hope you are able to find the information provided useful as you continue your P4C project. Take care everybody, and we'll see you next time.