**Best Practices in Team Interactions**

Teamwork is crucial in healthcare delivery. Effective teamwork in healthcare organizations has immediate and long-term positive impacts on patient safety. The influence of teams on the success of healthcare organizations has been increasingly studied. Effective teams in healthcare are increasingly necessary because of the increasing co-morbidities, global workforce shortage, and increasing complexity in the provision of care. This paper will analyze the characteristics of effective team leadership, examine models of effective team leadership, propose interventions to enhance collaboration and recommend a conflict resolution plan.

Effective team leadership possesses several characteristics. The first characteristic is that the leadership has a common purpose with the team (Babiker et al., 2014). The team leadership encourages the team members to define the organization's purpose. The purpose includes the team's interest, and this helps the team members develop a sense of ownership. Second, the team leadership possesses the ability to set measurable goals for the team. Setting measurable goals helps the team to remain focused on the team's task. Thirdly, the team leader possesses practical leadership skills. Teams require leaders who can maintain structures, support members, and manage conflicts. A team leader should also be prepared to share leadership functions.

Fourth, a team leader should be an effective communicator. Effective teams share ideas quickly and regularly. Safford and Manning (2012) point out that effective communication is crucial to the teamwork success. Fifth, the leader should be respectful. The team leader should respect the team members' talents, beliefs, and professional contributions. A respective leader should also accept and encourage diversity among team members. Sixth, an effective team leader possesses excellent decision-making skills. An effective leader has skills and knowledge that enables them to make legitimate decisions. Mitchell et al. (2012) recognizes effective decision making as one of the critical element in effective leadership. Finally, effective leadership should possess proper coordination skills. A good leader should be able to guide team members to utilize their skills in performing critical tasks in healthcare provision. Adequate coordination encourages teamwork within an organization.

Several models serve as the foundation for learning about effective team leadership. One such model is the Duke Healthcare Leadership Model. The Duke Healthcare Leadership Model was designed by Hargett et al. (2017). This leadership model is specific to the needs of healthcare leadership. The model is based on critical competencies recognized as the most crucial attributes of effective healthcare leadership. The Duke Healthcare Leadership Model is based primarily on the core principle of patient-centeredness. The core competencies of emotional intelligence, selfless service, Integrity, teamwork and Critical Thinking are utilized in the leadership model.  According to Hargett et al. (2017), an effective healthcare team leader should possess the competencies of emotional intelligence, selfless service, integrity, teamwork and critical thinking. This model can be utilized by healthcare organizations when appointing a team leader. Also, it should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the healthcare team leadership.

Another healthcare leadership model is the Healthy Teams Model designed by Mickan and Rodger (2005). The Healthy Teams Model provides a foundation for organizations and healthcare teams for evaluating and developing teamwork knowledge and skills. The leadership model provides that team members are the most appropriate to identify the shared goals in the work environment. The Healthy Teams Model emphasizes six key characteristics. The key characteristics include the teams, purpose, goals, communication skills, leadership skills, cohesion and mutual respect. The six identified key characteristics distinguish effective teams from ineffective teams. Each of the identified key characteristics symbolizes effective teamwork. Mickan and Rodger (2005) insist on the need for a clear purpose and goal setting within a team.

Several interventions can help promote collaboration and goal attainment within healthcare teams. First, training workshops can be used to promote collaboration and enhance communication skills within healthcare team members. The study conducted by Wang, Wan, Lin, Zhou & Shang (2018) indicates that team training improves communication between nurses and physicians in the intensive care unit. The enhanced communication between team members helps promote patient safety. Second, reorganization of wards into smaller teams can help improve collaboration and goal attainment. A smaller team would be managed better than a bigger team. Also, it is easier to set a goal and to define the purpose of a closely knit group. A smaller group tends to have more things in common.

Third, workshops can be used to promote team development hence enhancing collaboration and goal attainment. The healthcare team leadership can incorporate workshops into the daily routine to promote team development. The workshops can be held weekly or biweekly and should involve all members of the team. Every cadre can be given a specific topic to present on during the workshops. Doing so would create a sense of pleasure and commitment to the team. In addition to the workshops, teams should meet regularly to remind the members about the institution's goals and purpose. The team members found to be most committed to achieving the team’s goal can be awarded to encourage others to do the same.

Fourth, coordination of care is another intervention that can help promote collaboration and goal attainment. The healthcare team leadership could involve all team members in patient’s assessment, treatment and follow up. All cadres within the team can be involved in the treatment plan from the beginning to the end. The team members can even develop the treatment plan together to allow each team member to utilize their skills and talents. Proper coordination can promote collaboration among team members and enhance goal attainment.

Effective conflict resolution within a team is crucial to the attainment of the team’s goal. Several pathways can be employed in conflict resolution within a team. Dorn, Marcus, and McNulty (2013) propose a four steps approach to resolve conflicts within in healthcare teams. The first step involves encouraging each person to articulate their self-interests that led to the disagreement. Allowing each person to articulate their self-interests allows the other side to hear their side of the argument. The exchange allows the individuals to understand their opponents’ opinion. The second step in this approach involves finding where the two sides overlap. This allows the members to understand where the two sides are in agreement. Often, the agreements outnumber the disagreements because the team members are working towards a common goal of improving the patient safety.

The third step in the approach involves promotion of collaboration to develop solutions to the remaining disagreements (Dorn, Marcus & McNulty, 2013). During this step, the team leaders should utilize creative problem-solving approaches. The final step involves certifying the larger set of agreements. Any existing disagreements are left to be addressed in future negotiations. This approach can be utilized by healthcare teams to promote cohesion within the teams.

Effective teamwork is now recognized as a crucial tool for promoting patient safety. Effective team leadership possesses key characteristics. Several identified team leadership models guide the healthcare teams in developing and promoting key skills. The healthcare organizations can employ several interventions such as training and coordination to promote collaboration. Also, effective conflict resolution is essential in healthcare teams as it promotes cohesion.

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