



Crucial Conversations in Nursing Academics: Practical Strategies

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Purpose and Objectives

1. Identify assumptions that lead to chaos versus dialogue.
2. Value the benefits of dialogue in the workplace despite varying emotions, opinions, and positions of authority.
3. Apply practical strategies based on Patterson, Grenny, McMillan and Switzler's (2012) book, *Crucial Conversations*, to build and maintain communication in nursing academia.

The Issue

- Lateral violence and bullying in nursing
- Nursing faculty-to-faculty incivility

Prevalence of incivility among nurse academicians – only recently studied.

Challenges in Nursing Academics

- Manage costs (financial insecurity)
- Increase/Manage admissions
- Increase/Manage retention
- Increase Manage NCLEX scores
- Recruit and maintain faculty

Assumptions that Lead to Chaos

- Choose between the relationship and getting results
 - Victim stories
 - Villain stories
 - Helplessness stories

Benefits of Effective Dialogue

- ❑ Fosters positive relationships
- ❑ Empowers faculty impacted by incivility
- ❑ Creates a healthy work environment



Practical Strategies



- Start with Yourself
- Establish Safety
- Understand the Other

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Ask Yourself Some Questions

- What do I want:
 - for myself?
 - for the other person?
 - for our relationship?
- How would I behave if I wanted these?
- What will happen if I start/don't start the dialogue?



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Start with Yourself

- Clarify what you really *want*.
- Clarify what you really *do not want*.
- Combine the two.



Example

I really *want* to revise the course syllabus AND I really *do not want* my colleague to think I am criticizing her efforts.

Establish Safety

- Setting and timing
- Silence and violence
- Monitor
 - Content (what)
 - Conditions (why)
- Mutual purpose and respect



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Understand the Other

- Gain other's perspective
- Get clear about our roles
- Discuss common goals/interests
- Actively listen
- Assume an open posture

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Understand the Other

- Alternate sharing objective information with perspective
- Speak directly
- Compromise



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Example

- Ask to meet
- Agree on mutual location and time
- Consider your contribution to the problem
- Create a mutual purpose
 - Students learn the content
 - Students enjoy learning
 - Course assignments align with course outcomes

Example

“Thank you for sharing the course syllabus. I would like to exchange the written assignment for a folding case study and do not want you to think that I don’t value the work you’ve done in this course. I want to use the other assignments just as they are.”

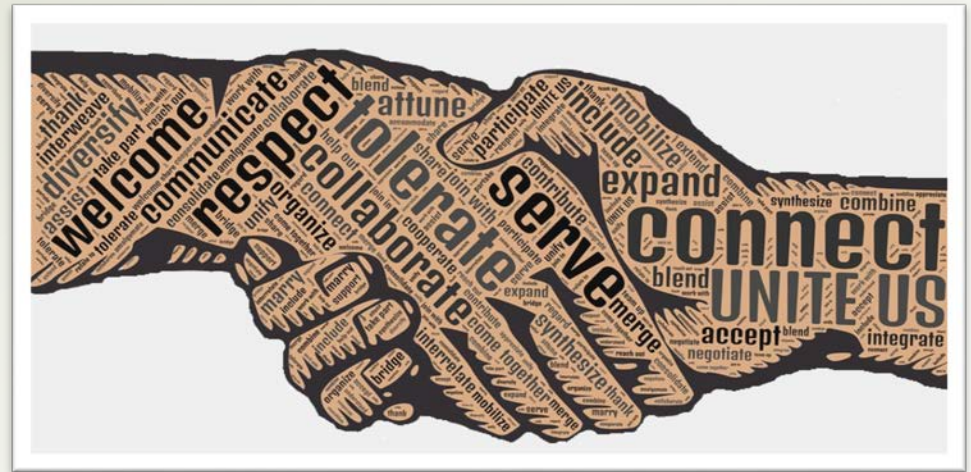
Mutual Purpose & Respect

- Do others believe I care about their goals in this conversation?
- Do they trust my motives?



Maintaining Respect

- Confidence
- Humility
- Skill



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When Safety is Violated

- Apologize (when appropriate)
- Contrast – explain what you don't mean
- Ask them to tell their story
- Confirm feelings

When Safety is Violated (Continued)

- Paraphrase to acknowledge story
- Agree where you do
- Compare when you differ
- Re-establish mutual purpose

Small Group Discussion

Objectives
1, 2, & 3

You are in the role of the program chair. An experienced faculty member informs you that students are failing a course that is being taught by a new faculty member. There is word that the new faculty member may offer extra credit to students, which is against policy.

Practice Scenario

Objective 1

The faculty handbook indicates that instructors/professors must hold 10 office hours each week. Your colleague is rarely in her office during her posted times and students frequently ask if you know where she is or when she'll be available.

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