PEER COACHING TO COUNTERACT ORGANIZATIONAL SILENCE AND FOSTER A CULTURE OF DIALOGUE

Ann Brown, MD, MHS
Mary E. Dankoski, PhD
Maryellen E. Gusic, MD
Educational Objectives

After attending this session, attendees will be able to:

- Identify the impact of organizational silence as well as practices that support dialogue around challenging issues
- Describe a framework for coaching others to have difficult conversations
- Apply the coaching framework in one’s own practice/situation
Outline

- Introduction

- Practices that support dialogue
  - Appreciative inquiry (personal reflection and small group discussion)

- Framework for coaching conversations
  - Practice and peer coaching

- Organizational structures that support dialogue
  - Reflection and individual action plans
Impact of Organizational Silence

- Silence limits flow of critical information for organizational learning and performance
  - Failure to learn from mistakes
  - Suppresses differences of opinion
  - Prevents holistic approach to problem solving
  - Sources of innovation are ignored
  - Change is stifled
Think of a time when you felt safe, comfortable, and confident in raising an issue that was challenging:

What was it about the climate, relationship, organizational structure, and/or yourself that enabled you to have that conversation?
Report Out
FRAMEWORK FOR COACHING OTHERS TO HOLD DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS
Coaching vs. Mentoring vs. Sponsorship
Coaching vs. Mentoring vs. Sponsorship

**COACH**
- Focuses on awareness and motivation
- Clarifies thought process and choices
- Provides alternative perspective

**MENTOR**
- Helps envision next move
- Research or project focus
- Longer time commitment

**SPONSOR**
- Advocates publically
- Opens doors
- Expects loyalty
- Senior, driven by authority

- Time limited
- Behind scenes
- Any rank, often senior
- Driven by other
- Makes introductions
- Guidance
- Advice
- Feedback
Coaching Conversations Focus on the Other Person

- Coaches should adopt an attitude of curiosity
- Coaching looks at the present… But the focus is **future-oriented**
The Purpose of Coaching: To Promote Growth and Possibly...Change

- A coach can increase the other’s self-awareness and self-trust to enable them to use own strengths

- Coaches should:
  - Use inquiry to explore motivation, goals, self- and relational awareness
  - Rely on other’s ability to generate own approach centered on core values and sense of purpose
  - Help other clarify thought process and find their voice
Prompt Reflection to Uncover Attitudes and Assumptions Holding the Other Back

- Coaches help others explore **WHY** something may be happening and **WHY** it is important to act
  - Why is this issue important to you?
  - What is most concerning?
  - What do you think led to/is driving the behavior you observed?
  - What information or data is available/relevant?
Coaches Provide Another Perspective

- Alternate ways to see the situation/illuminate blind spots

- Challenge the other by helping them see:
  - That they have a responsibility to act
  - That there is value in taking action
  - That something can be done and it will make a difference
Coaches Help Their Colleague
See Potential Challenges

- Help the other conduct a risk/benefit analysis
  - What do you believe/fear may happen to your relationship as a result of this conversation?
  - Is there anything that makes raising this issue feel unsafe?
  - Is there a cost of not speaking up?
Coaches Should Not Give the Answer

- Help the other envision the conversation
  - When is the right time to address the issue?
  - Is there one part of the issue that you want to focus on?
  - How much time will you need for this conversation?
  - How might you follow up?
  - Emphasize the importance of neutral language
Coaches Should Not Give the Answer

- Help the other anticipate and prepare for what might happen
  - If you were in the other person’s shoes, how might you respond?
  - What is the worst thing that could happen? What will you do if they respond that way?
  - What are your typical emotional triggers in conflict situations? How might you prepare for that?
Coaches Provide Expertise and Resources to Build the Other’s Capabilities

- Role model/teach techniques, provide resources about **HOW** to approach difficult conversations
- Allow the other to practice and provide feedback
- Model skills of active listening and inquiry during coaching conversation
  - Spend more time listening than talking
  - Paraphrase what is being said
  - Ask powerful questions
Coaches Should Follow Up

- Coaches should explore the other’s assessment of the difficult conversation and offer observations/feedback as appropriate
  - What did you learn about the other person's perspective during the conversation?
Coaching Practice

- At each table, count off 1-2-3
  - 1=Coach
  - 2=Coachee
  - 3=Observer
- Pick up the respective handout for your role
Coaching Practice

- Read your role (1 minute)
- Coach and Coachee have conversation (5-8 minutes)
- Observer offers feedback (5 minutes)
- Large group debrief (5 min)
Rules for Feedback

- Offer specific, behavioral observations of what you saw, heard or felt
- Ask questions- “I’m curious, when you did X, what was your intention?”
- Hold suggestions for last
- Don’t “should” on the coach
Large Group Debrief
Reflection and Individual Action Plan

- **START**
  - What new steps might you take or explore?

- **STOP**
  - What is not working well that should be stopped or changed?

- **CONTINUE**
  - What is working well that should continue?
Wrap Up
References

Byyny, R. L., Mentoring and Coaching in Medicine, *The Pharos*, Winter 2012


Dankoski M.E., Bickel, J., & Gusic, ME. Discussing the undiscussable with the powerful: Why and how faculty must learn to counteract organizational silence. *Acad Med.*, 2014; 89(12): 1610-1613.

Gentile, M. C. *Giving voice to values: How to speak your mind when you know what’s right*. Ann Arbor, MI: McGraw-Hill.; 2010


