

Unit 2: Z-Chapter 13 – Conflict Management

1. You have recognized one of your coworkers is suffering from Compassion Fatigue. Discuss specific ways you would deal with this person if they were a:

(Provide specific examples and techniques)

a. Sherman Tank – With this personality it is important to stand your ground. Look this person directly in their eyes, state your own position in a very direct and assertive manner. Do not escalate but do not back down either.

b. Sniper – This personality is a bit less direct. They will make jabs but often attempt to minimize the intention behind their remarks. Instead of shying away or ignoring them, a direct approach is best here as well. The next time a comment or “joke” is made, question them about their intentions in making the remark, and/or simply state that disagree with their opinion.

c. Constant Complainer – This person may be facing real issues but fails to communicate about them effectively. With this personality type, its best to take a “How can I help?” By offering clear and actionable items, you will show the person that you are willing to help, but not willing to continue engaging with the complaining behavior.

d. Clam – This person may shy away from confrontations and is not likely to come and ask for help or offer suggestions even when they recognize an issue. With this type of person, it is best to respect their need for distance. Be concise, direct, and build trust through action. If this person does open up about a workplace need, it is best to simply let them know that you will be taking action on it, and that they will receive follow up by a certain time or date.

2. Pick one of the ways to offset or reduce the risk of compassion fatigue in staff members (article) and provide **specific** examples a Unit Director could utilize in order to accomplish this.

The article listed one option (to offset or reduce the risk of compassion fatigue in staff members) as encouraging healthy self-care habits, such as good nutrition, sleep, and taking work breaks. One way a Unit Director could support this is by providing nutritious snacks in break rooms so that all employees have access to items while on duty. Though, making sure staff has enough time to eat and take breaks is also important. This could be best addressed with good planning. By having sufficient staff scheduled, staff is more likely to feel supported enough where they can comfortably step away from the floor for a rest-period or meal break. Further impact could be supported by staff leaders, such as charge nurses, encouraging breaks and checking in with staff throughout shifts to see how they can be better supported.

3. You are a new graduate RN working on a busy Medical-Surgical Unit. The patient assignment you have for the day is a very heavy workload, and the Charge Nurse has just informed you that you are getting a new admission from the ED. You know that you will not be able to manage your patient load and this admission. Utilizing the model for conflict resolution, provide specific examples of how you would manage this situation by using:

- a. Accommodation – Through this approach, one position loses and the other wins. A new RN may accept new patient assignment even in knowing that it would be too difficult to manage effectively. The new nurse loses, may become overwhelmed and resentful, and though the charge nurse would win, they may also view the new nurse negatively if she was unable to perform on the accepted assignment.
- b. Collaboration – This is a win-win dynamic. Here, the new nurse would communicate her thoughts and feelings, and the charge nurse would also communicate their needs. Together they would figure out better balance that met the needs of both parties. With this specific example, the new would tell charge that the new admission would be too much with the existing assignment. Perhaps the new nurse could pass off of a different patient to another nurse and accept the admission.
- c. Compromise – With compromise, this is still considered a win-lose dynamic, but with some show of effort to ease the losing party's load. In the given example, the new nurse might still be expected to accept the new assignment, but the charge nurse may offer to request an additional support staff (such as a patient care technician) from the nursing supervisor to help support the unit.
- d. Avoidance – This is a lose-lose dynamic. It is generally an ineffective method of conflict resolution and can only lead to heightened frustrations and levels of stress. In the given example, this could look like the new nurse begrudging accepting the assignment, perhaps displaying some frustration but actually communicating thoughts or feelings related to the matter. The charge nurse may observe the frustration from the new nurse but fails to investigate further. Instead, the charge walks away from the situation with negative association to the new nurse and suspects it is an issue of professional attitude or work ethic. Whereas the new nurse is left feeling unsupported and overwhelmed.
- e. Competition – This is also considered a win-lose dynamic, and typically involves one party exercising their power/dominance over the other. In the example provided, it could look like the new nurse speaking up about her apprehension (toward taking on the new admission), and the charge nurse being unresponsive. Instead, the charge nurse tells the new nurse to do the best she can, offering no actual support toward the situation.