Soothing the Dissatisfied Student: Resolving Conflict in an Academic Advising Center

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WHAT IS CONFLICT?

• Competitive or opposing actions of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests or persons)
• Mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands
• The opposition of persons or forces that gives rise to the dramatic action in a drama or fiction.


TRIGGERS OF CONFLICT

TAKE A MOMENT TO CONSIDER THE TRIGGERS OF CONFLICT IN YOUR ADVISING OFFICE.
TRIGGERS OF CONFLICT

• Roles, Goals, Policy, Procedures
• Information
• Relationships
• Values
• Structures

MASLOW’S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

APPRECIATIVE ADVISING
CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

• Nonverbal/Behavioral:
  • Includes all forms of body language, facial expressions, and gestures

• Verbal:
  • Constructed from the words we use (written or spoken) to send information on thoughts, feelings and emotions

• Para-verbal:
  • Involves how we say things, using volume, pitch, speed, tone and inflection of voice

DECODING MESSAGES

• CONTENT
  • facts, data, information sent
  • written or spoken

• FEELINGS
  • emotions and intentions felt by the communicator
  • usually sent nonverbally and para-verbally

• RELATIONSHIP
  • Statement about nature or quality of relationship
  • How one values the relationship with whom he or she is communicating

LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

I. Not Hearing and Not Listening
  • Cannot hear speaker due to environmental noise or internal noise

II. Hearing Content
  • Hearing and listening, providing feedback

III. Hearing Feelings
  • Using empathetic responses to communicate more efficiently

IV. Therapeutic Hearing
  • Helps people gain insight into their patterns of thought and behavior
LISTENING SKILLS

• Be silent and listen!
• Give appropriate signals that you are listening
• Make the conversation about the other party
• Make appropriate paraphrasing statements or empathic responses that show you understand
• Ask questions for clarification
• Summarize at the end
• Thank the person for being open and sharing

LISTENING ACTIVITY

With people near you, engage in a brief conversation. Your conversation must allow each person to participate as a speaker and listener.
1. Introduce yourself by first name only
2. Describe an advising scenario that you find to be particularly challenging.
3. If you are not speaking, LISTEN and be prepared to provide feedback and refer back to what you learned from the speaker.

RESOLVING CONFLICT

• Brainstorming
  • Involves open, non-judgmental process focused on generating as many ideas as possible.
• Evaluation
  • Access the validity and viability of the option. They should be specific, achievable, and realistic.
• Refinement
  • Narrow down list and review for compromise
• Commit to a Solution
• Monitor and Foster the Relationship
BEST PRACTICES

• Reduce environmental noise and other distractions
• Acknowledge feelings
• Provide empathic responses
• Ask open-ended or probing questions
• Avoid use of superior messages or absolute words
• Engage in conversation and not a “sell-job”
• Eliminate anger
• Send I-messages and not you-messages

Continue the Discussion

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REFERENCES