



Communication Skills Training Discussion Guide:

Problem Solving Among Co-workers

This communication skills training can be used for staff development in the area of problem-solving skills. This guide is designed to help you use the *Problem Solving Among Co-workers* training to enhance collaboration and team work and develop good problem-solving skills. This problem-solving training will provide a framework to tackle problems as they arise.

As the discussion leader, you should review the entire training and print the *Presentation Handout* prior to using the training with your staff. The training takes approximately one hour to complete and provides one hour of continuing education credit. Once you view the training, you can then choose to use the entire training or use only sections of it with your staff. To earn continuing education credit, each person in the group needs to watch the entire training and successfully complete the quiz (score \geq 80%). Each person will be able to print a certificate at the end of the training. (See *Course Information* handout.)

Staff Development in Cultural Awareness

Section 1: This video is about five minutes long and shows an interaction between CeCe, a diabetes program director, and Kathy, a new employee. The section demonstrates the importance of building good relationships among co-workers. Have the group describe the cultural issue that arises in the video and then discuss the following questions:

1. What experiences have you, or people you know, had with this issue or a similar one?
2. Why do you think it's a problem? How does it affect you personally?
3. What types of cultural issues do you commonly encounter in your work setting?
4. What ways have you found to be helpful in mentoring non-native personnel or personnel from different tribes?
5. What might be helpful if you suspect that a cultural conflict is not being addressed?

Practice Applying Problem-Solving Steps

As a refresher, consider how problem solving was modeled in the following sections of the problem-solving video:

Section 2 (7 minutes): This section shows a discussion between Kathy and the team coach/EAP counselor. The steps in problem solving and communication skills that enhance problem solving (i.e., listening skills, nonverbal communication, questioning and reflection) are demonstrated.

Section 3 (8 minutes): The interaction between CeCe and another team coach is shown. The steps in problem solving and communication skills that enhance problem solving (i.e., listening skills, nonverbal communication, questioning and reflection) are demonstrated. The session ends with the counselor reinforcing the importance of taking the time to build a relationship between team members.

Problem Solving and Team Building

Consider a situation in your setting in which roles are not well defined. This might be because of recent additions or losses of personnel, or simply because the work needs have changed over time. Using problem-solving steps, discuss how to clarify roles in a way that builds your team.

Problem Solving with Difficult People

Difficult people can make it feel as though it is impossible to apply these problem-solving principles. Think of times when you have encountered a person you work with who is extremely challenging. As an example, CeCe was initially very resistant to cooperate with and assist Kathy. Answer these questions:

1. What is your first response to a person who is defensive, angry, passive, defiant, or disinterested?
2. Consider the problem-solving steps. What are two that you might use when faced with challenging people?
3. How might this look and sound? Try it out with your team or write a play-by-play as you imagine it. Read it to your team for feedback.

Personal Reflections on Problem Solving

This aspect of the discussion guide can be carried out as a group discussion if your team is cohesive. An *alternative way* is to ask each person to write brief responses to the questions, and share them with one other person.

1. Which problem-solving skills seem most challenging for you?
2. Which areas of your work life would most benefit from the addition of these skills?