Module: Leadership Training Workshop for Health Professionals

Organization: East Africa HEALTH Alliance

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Resource Title: Session 11: Conflict Resolution

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Conflict Resolution
What is a conflict?

• A conflict is a disagreement within a group or between people in a group
• Conflict between people can have very negative effects in a group
• It can prevent a group from implementing a leadership action plan
Do we need to conform all the time?

• By conformity, we mean trying all the time to stick to the group’s needs

• Sometimes, too much conformity may hinder change because there will be no new ideas on how things should be done

• Sometimes conflict over ideas can enhance team development provided it is within the objectives and goal

• Sometimes, a level of conflict is good for a group because it keeps members dynamic and connected and it can generate ideas
Need for leadership in conflict resolution

• Several times we get too much conflict that the organisation is threatened

• The leader has to take immediate action to salvage the situation
Causes

- Allocation of resources and money
- Allocation of duties
- Clash in goals
- Clash in interpretation of what is to be done
- Personal problems between people
- Clash in values and principles
- Failure to recognise that people are different
Signs of Conflict

- Poor communication between people including silence or quarrelling
- Jealousy, hostility and sometimes violence
- When we always have to mediate problems of two or a few people
- The rules in the group tend to increase
- Frustration, reduced morale and reduced efficiency
Preventing conflicts

• Communicating the leadership goal clearly
• Creating clear channels of communication by being clear on roles
• Having common values upheld in the group
• People should have correct information concerning the action plan
• Regular feedback from the leaders using meetings and other channels
Resolving Conflicts: Mediation

• In order to resolve conflicts, the leader needs to be a good mediator
  – Analyse the source of the conflict
  – Obtain all relevant input and advice from other members that are not involved
  – Listen to each side of those involved, and do not be judgemental
  – List and evaluate the options for resolving the conflict
  – Arbitrate and mediate between the parties to select a middle ground
Resolving Conflicts: Mediation

– Tell them the risks of un-resolved conflicts and tensions
– If an option is agreed, promote reconciliation and agreement
– Assess if you need some external help and get it if it is available
– Build trust by being true to the people involved
– Agree on a way to prevent future conflicts
– Always have an emergency plan if this fails
Conflict Management Techniques

• There are about 5 approaches to conflict management
  – Avoidance
  – Accommodation
  – Forcing or competing
  – Compromising
  – Collaboration and consensus
# Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Characteristic behaviour</th>
<th>Best used when</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>This is a non-confrontational approach; You deny or ignore the existence of conflict</td>
<td>Conflict is small, or when emotions are running high and time is needed to cool them down</td>
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<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Agreeable, non-assertive behaviour. Cooperative even at the expense of personal goals</td>
<td>When the issue under dispute is not that important to you or when harmony and stability are important; you do not wish risking damage to relationships</td>
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Source Unknown
## Techniques

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<td>Forcing or competing</td>
<td>This is a win-lose approach. It is confrontational and aggressive. Reliance on formal authority and power with promise of punishment if necessary.</td>
<td>When management needs a quick resolution to important issues that require unpopular actions. Forcing does not resolve the conflict and may serve to compound it by hurting feelings and evoking resistance.</td>
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<td>Compromising</td>
<td>Parties to the conflict seek middle-ground position that provides partial satisfaction for both parties.</td>
<td>This is based on negotiation resulting in maintenance of good relationship. Usually there is no one person or idea that is best. It works well for achieving a temporary settlement</td>
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<td>Collaboration or consensus</td>
<td>This is a win/win technique; the needs of both parties are recognized as important. There is high respect and open communication. There is merging of views</td>
<td>When all the conflicting parties seriously want a win-win solution and no one want to make a major concession</td>
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