

Discipline and Interpersonal Relations in Operation Theatre

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Discipline

ORGANISATIONS are just like any living being in which a number of sub-systems are working towards achievement of some common goals. These goals are diverse in different organisations and their perception, more so by different people working therein.

Discipline is a method which keeps the person working under certain rules and regulations made by an organisation. One who does not follow the rules and regulations breaks the discipline. Some of the rules and regulations are relaxable in case of emergency.

Like in any other organisation discipline in the Operation Theatre is very important for its smooth functioning and proper maintenance. Discipline is essential for good organisation. In the Operation Theatre strict discipline is observed by the surgeon, theatre staff and also by the patient. The main goal is to give the best care to the patient coming for surgery. To maintain the discipline certain mental attitudes are needed to be adopted. Recognition of the need to suppress total freedom of action in the interests of teamwork, willingness, punctuality and adherence to schedules is needed.

Mental Attitudes

It has been observed that a person not willing to work in the O.T., cannot cooperate with the discipline of the theatre or may try to break the discipline so that he/she may get

removed. In the Operation Theatre tidiness, physical cleanliness of people and places, neat clothing, avoiding wandering into Theatre without mask and positive attitude towards punctuality are essential features. Operation Theatre is a high technology area, and successful working of such a complex system depends upon people, willing to adopt certain mental attitudes like:

1. Recognition of the need to suppress total freedom of action in the interest of team work. Occasionally O.T. staffs are expected to work till late hours of the day and night. It is not correct that the operation has to be cancelled because someone insists on leaving exactly on time or refuses to cooperate and work extra hours since an operation is unexpectedly prolonged.

2. Willingness to work and also on occasions to participate with seniors when they make critical decisions.

3. A sense of importance about getting things right. Professional secrecy is one of the important tenets of discipline. In fact, it is counted as a rare quality of the person. During operation the surgeon may discuss many things regarding the patient's condition and this must be regarded as a secret conversation and should never be discussed by the staff of the O.T. No message should be given to the attendant without knowledge of the surgeon. Any administrative talk should be avoided and if discussed, it must be kept secret.

Strict sterile technique, changing the dress while entering the O.T.

and avoidance of gossiping are certain rules which are sometimes not followed by the surgeons and O.T. staff. Strict sterile technique is the backbone for the best patient care. Under this comes removal of nail polish, finger rings, scrubbing the hands properly before operations, observing strict sterile technique while handling sterile linen and instruments. One must always observe the others and inform if by mistake anything has become unsterile. Sometimes the surgeon does not like to change the O.T. dress, when coming to observe some operations. But this small negligence may become an example for others. Unnecessary talk and discussions must be avoided.

In every theatre there is a theatre-in-charge who is either a Surgeon or an Anaesthetist and there is a Sister-in-Charge also. The person in charge should be self disciplined and capable of maintaining the discipline. They are the role model for others. The person in charge of an operation department influences to a great extent the degree of cooperation between members of the team to make them work most productively and effectively.

Interpersonal Relations

Cooperation and mutual understanding between all the members of the operating team are the basis of efficiency and is greatly influenced by the Operation Theatre incharge. Total management depends upon them. The objective of such management is to guide and influence the O.T. team to work together and provide best care to the patient.

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Personality clash affects performance and it must be avoided in the interest of patients. Usually conflict causes bad interpersonal relationship among the staff of the O.T. Conflict is "A psychologically painful state of mind resulting from frustration caused by unsuccessful attempts directed towards a particular goal".

Conflict is like a weapon. It may be constructive or destructive. It may create a good interpersonal relationship or may promote deep cleavage in relationships between two persons.

It has been observed that there is personality clash among people when there is a difference in styles of working. Conflicting ideas originating from different backgrounds, trainings or skill of the persons lead to non-productive relationship among individual.

When the staffing pattern and posting of the O.T. staff is done on the basis of seniority and cyclic rota-

tion sometimes interpersonal relationship is affected because when a senior person waiting for promotion is transferred to the O.T. he or she is not interested in the work due to frustration. This staff doesn't co-operate with the incharge and also with the other staff who are already experienced in the O.T. and this may ruin the friendly atmosphere of the department.

Like Family

Operation Theatre is just like a family where all categories of staff from different backgrounds and trainings are working together. It is usually observed that the staff do not have such a relationship in the other units or in the wards because of being posted to different units. The O.T. staff working for so many years together become very helpful to each other.

To maintain interpersonal relations the selection of the Operation

Theatre staff should be done strictly in the interest of the best care to the patient. Only the staff deeply interested in the O.T. must be posted there. In case a situation of friction arises among the staff, the inadequacies need correcting firmly, but politely.

A high standard of discipline, good interpersonal relationship and a thorough training of personnel is required in each operating department. A good training and continuing education shall make the personnel well disciplined.

References

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