Silence Kills
The Seven
Crucial Conversations
in Health Care

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The Impact of Not Speaking Up

• A pharmacist sees physicians making errors.
• But doesn’t always speak up.
• What if this were chronic? What are five long-term consequences?
The Question

What are the handful of “Crucial Conversations” that profoundly influence the following?

• Patient Safety
• Quality of Care
• Employee Satisfaction
• Productivity
• Physician and Nursing turnover
The Study

“Silence Kills”

• 150 hours of observation
• Focus groups at 6 hospitals
• Survey with 1700 nurses, doctors, administrators and other clinicians
### The Results

#### Crucial Conversations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Result</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do we discuss incompetence?</td>
<td>Quality of care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do nurses talk directly with problem teammates?</td>
<td>Job satisfaction &amp; retention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do people candidly discuss disrespect, micromanagement?</td>
<td>Productivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we confront broken rules, mistakes, and near mistakes?</td>
<td>Patient safety &amp; medical errors</td>
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**The Seven Crucial Conversations**

Concerns people have occasionally (with at least 10% of their colleagues...)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>% Reporting Concerns</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>50-80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Ethic</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Support</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Micromanagement</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broken Rules</td>
<td>85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mistakes</td>
<td>49-85%</td>
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Concerns about Competence

• How common are concerns about competence?
  • 50% of nurses describe people as missing basic skills, poor clinical judgment, or out of date.
  • This figure is 80% for physicians.

• Likelihood of confronting
  • Only 10% of nurses and physicians will confront a nurse.
  • Almost none will confront a physician—not even another physician!
About half of the Respondents say the physician’s problem has gone on for over a year.
The pervasive culture of avoiding these seven crucial conversations is related to:

- Unacceptable error rates
- High nursing turnover
- Lower productivity
- Higher costs
- Lower morale
When People Speak Up?

- Nurses and other clinical providers who effectively confront people about competency issues...
  - Observe better patient outcomes.
  - Are more satisfied with their workplace.
  - Exhibit more discretionary effort.
  - And have a greater intent to stay.

- Physicians who are able to confront people about competency issues...
  - Observe better patient outcomes.
  - Are more satisfied with their workplace.
  - And exhibit more discretionary effort.
Recommendations

• Health Care leaders must take aggressive action to create a culture where Crucial Conversations are consistently held and held well.

• Health Care leaders can and should measure their progress in creating this kind of culture as a leading indicator of error reduction.

• Individuals can make an immediate difference without waiting on leaders by increasing their individual competence at Crucial Conversations.
Call to Action

- Return your Skill card to get additional resources and white-papers
- Introduce your top managers to this approach
- Make this part of your patient safety initiative
- Develop best-in-class organizational competence at all 7 Crucial Conversations
- Experience Crucial Conversations training in Denver on August 20-21, 2013, other locations available
- Talk with senior consultants about next steps
- Meet with one of the study’s co-authors
- Arrange to have an author speak to your group
Questions?

For additional resources, visit www.executiveforum.net or call 303-796-0444.