



Collateral Damage

Helping Students Process Difficult
Peer Situations Session

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Disclosures

- Financial
 - Scott – Salary from Florida State University
 - DeRuiter – Salary from University of Arizona
 - Taylor – Salary from University of Memphis
- Nonfinancial
 - Scott – Member, CAPCSD Board of Directors
 - DeRuiter - Member, CAPCSD Board of Directors; Founding editor and consultant, *Teaching & Learning in Communication Sciences & Disorders*
 - Taylor – Member, CAPCSD Board of Directors



Learning Objectives

- Describe at least 3 situations in which faculty may need to communicate difficult student information to a larger student group
- Develop a minimum of 2 "scripts" that meet FERPA/HIPAA/ethical guidelines for sharing difficult information with a student group
- Construct a list of possible campus resources for student referral.



Experience with difficult situations

- What situations have you encountered in your program?
- How were these situations addressed?
- How did students respond?

Collateral Impact

- We often need to deliver messages to students about their peers when difficult circumstances arise
 - Students leaving the program/taking a break
 - Academic/clinical reasons
 - Health reasons
 - Personal decisions
- Students may have anxiety, fear, guilt, confusion about the events
 - Information they have may not be accurate, and is probably incomplete
- Considerations for the peers
 - What they need/want to know
 - What CAN we say?



FERPA

- Protects student privacy in regard to *personal education records*
- Key components:
 - Student has a right to access their own personal information in their education record
 - Right to amendment of inaccuracies in education records
 - Students must be notified annually of the rights under FERPA
 - Institutions cannot disclose personally identifiable information from a student's education records to a 3rd party without student written consent



HIPAA

Federal law that specifies administrative simplification provisions that:

- Protect the **privacy** of client/patient information
- Provide for electronic and physical **security** of patient health information
- Require “**need to know**” use and disclosure
- Specify patient **rights** to approve the access and use of their medical information



Ethical Values

- **Autonomy:** Commitment to respect an individual's independent actions & choices
- **Beneficence:** Obligation to convey benefits and help others further their legitimate interests
- **Harm avoidance:** Obligation not to inflict harm, risk of harm or evil on others
- **Justice:** Equal distribution of burdens, benefits, and scarce resources
- **Professional responsibility:** Obligation to observe rules of professional conduct with patients, colleagues, students, community at large
- **Truth:** Disclosure of all pertinent information, even if it may reflect poorly on the informer



Difficult Conversations

There are two primary components to address

1. Objective

- Incident itself
 - What happened

2. Emotional

- How the incident impacts the students
- Variable student responses



Communication Strategies

4 skills for managing the conversation (Stone et al)

1. Listening

- Asking clarifying questions, paraphrasing another's view, acknowledging feelings

2. Asserting

- Sharing, advocating, expressing

3. Process Moves

- Directing the conversation in a productive manner

4. Problem solving



Steps of facilitating challenging conversations

- Before the conversation: establish the goals of the conversation
- Preface the conversation by stating the purpose of the conversation
- Provide the students with the opportunity to share their views and concerns
- Respond in ways that acknowledge the students' concerns and helps dissipate stress – validate their concerns
- Problem-solve as a team
- Follow-up

- Two 1st year Au.D students left the same program within the first six weeks of the semester
- Remaining students' responses: primarily confusion
 - Speculation
 - Self-doubt
 - Domino effect
- Students often reach out to peers before seeking information or guidance from clinical or academic faculty
- Students may have a great deal of information from peers re: social media or other platforms

Case Study 1

- Student was asked to leave SLP program after 3rd semester due to poor clinical performance
 - Failure to meet essential functions of interpersonal communication and critical thinking skills
- Student reactions: Students became angry, frustrated, and retaliatory
- Overtly critical of faculty and program

Case Study 2

- Student went missing the day of comprehensive exams for 4 days
- Student Reactions: fear, concern, distress
 - Media presence – made the news
- Need of faculty to address grief, depression, and emotional distress

Case Study 3

- Student began sharing thoughts with peers about
 - Advisor
 - Controlling computer mouse,
 - Engaging the community in "tracking" movements and behaviors
 - Contacting parents to get physician information to get access to medical records
 - Program taking steps to remove the student
- Peers were frightened, confused about their role as colleagues and friends

Case Study 4



Possible Campus Resources

- Student Counseling Center
- Student Handbook
- Academic Advisor
- Clinic Director



Considering Scripts

- Assess the situation
 - What's really happening? What is known?
- State that you care: A binding statement
- Create a holding statement
 - Powerful when information is limited
- Be prepared to listen



Script 1

- Situation: Student was exited from the program due to poor clinical performance
- “On behalf of the department, we wanted to let you know that Sarah will not be returning to the department this semester. I’m sure that many of you have questions about the situation. However, it’s our responsibility to ensure Sarah’s privacy. We can assure you that we have been in contact with Sarah and she is safe.”

- Situation: Student voluntarily left the program after failing comprehensive exams
- “We’ve had a change in our student community. You’ll notice that Thomas is no longer attending classes. We have heard from Thomas and he assures us that he is doing well. Each student situation is different and we are respecting Thomas’s privacy, just as we would with any other student in our program.”



Script 2

- Situation: Student is missing and not responsive to well-being checks
- "Several of you have reported concerns about Elizabeth's absence. We are all concerned. Please know that your department is concerned as well and we are working with the appropriate campus offices and authorities for a fast resolution. Right now it is important that we all take care of ourselves until we learn more about the situation. Our department has campus resources available for you, should you desire a person to talk to about this situation"



Script 3



References

- U.S. Department of Education.
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