

Transcript

Promoting Staff Consistency Through Debriefing Strategies

Pam: Welcome to Promoting Staff Consistency Through Debriefing Strategies. As we get started, we wanna consider the session objectives, which are to identify strategies to utilize the CPI COPING model as a means to create staff consistency, increasing understanding of why debriefing is important, and to validate the impact that staff can have on improving consistency within the organization.

So first of all, what is consistency? Consistency, according to the Oxford dictionary, is a conformity in the application of something typically that which is necessary for the sake of logic, accuracy, and fairness. Now, in your organization, there are things that you do need to think about. How can the debriefing process promote consistency among staff? What can we learn from debriefing? And does your organization currently debrief, and if they do, is it always, sometimes or never?

There's a lot of things that consistency can do for us. It can help remove uncertainty within our job responsibilities. It can help to build trust in teams. It promotes teamwork, and it is linked to success. Results can show whether we're being consistent or not, but in organizations, in order to be consistent, the first thing we need to make sure we are doing is debriefing.

Everyone has heard the definition of insanity — doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Yet many organizations don't think about that with debriefing. They don't debrief, and then they wonder why they're not seeing improvement or why they keep doing things over and over again, but aren't seeing any changes being made. In the CPI COPING Model, we look at how we can debrief.

Now, everyone's familiar with the Crisis Development model. We know that the first level is anxiety, and our response is to be supportive. We know our second level is defensive, and our response is to be directive. The third level is risk behavior, and our response is physical intervention. It's the fourth level that many times gets forgotten, and that's tension reduction, which our response is therapeutic rapport. Many times organizations will use therapeutic rapport with the individual involved in the crisis situation, but not with staff. We're gonna be focused on staff because we do wanna create consistency within our teams, so we need to look at what is going on with staff through that COPING model.

With the COPING model, we know that the C is control, and we're waiting for staff to be back in physical and emotional control. Orient is to establish the basic facts of the incident, so what actually took place from staff perspective.

We're looking at patterns because we wanna review staff responses to the incident. We also need to investigate. We wanna look at ways that we can strengthen the individual and team responses to crisis situations. We always wanna negotiate, which is to agree to changes that will improve future interventions. And this is one of the reasons we need to involve the entire team in this debriefing process. And we wanna give. We wanna give support and encouragement to our team members, and express trust and confidence in those team members. Now, that's the basics for debriefing, but we're gonna be taking a deeper dive into that.

Since we wanna promote consistency, let's look at areas where that can take place through this process. We can promote staff consistency by making sure that policy and procedures are known and followed, that the response that happened during that crisis was consistent with the training that our staff members have received, that the response was consistent with the philosophy of your organization, and that the response was consistent with the behaviors that were displayed during the incident.

So taking a deeper dive into that COPING model, a deeper dive into debriefing, we're going to look at several further layers of debriefing that can help us become more consistent in our responses. The first layer that we're going to look at is to establish the changes that need to be made. So during that debriefing, we first wanna consider control. Are the staff ready? Are they ready to sit down to discuss not only what happened, but what we can do differently next time? We still wanna orient because we still do want to identify those basic facts: what happened, who was involved, when did they get there, what everybody's response was during that situation. And we want to look at patterns which is identifying the trends that we might have seen, or potential precipitating factors among staff members.

As we investigate, we as a team wanna brainstorm options of what might be done differently next time. And we wanna negotiate and make a commitment to change. So not only looking at what we can do differently, but making the commitment for in the future that this is how we're going to respond. And as always, we do wanna give support and encouragement to the staff.

Now, as we look at layer one, we're starting to gather that information during debriefing, but in order to really create and promote consistency among the staff, we need to go even further. So we're gonna look at layer two of the COPING Model, layer two of debriefing, and that's to create the structure of the internal environment for change. We can't expect change to take place unless we help and support the staff to do that, and that's where that consistency comes from. It is all of us working together as a team to have this take place.

So, for control, we need to sustain the internal environment. Not only do we need to sustain the internal environment as that starts to change, we need to continue to maintain that.

As we look at Orient, this is the action for change. This is what we're going to do next time. We wanna discover are there attitude changes because we should start to see them as we're creating that consistency within the organization. The attitude should start to shift where we start to see staff members who are more on that same page in a response. And we always wanna make sure that we review that end goal, because this is how staff are going to know what we're trying to accomplish. So it's that reminder of where we're trying to go.

When we start looking at patterns, since we've already determined the changes that we wanted to make, we looked at those during the first layer, we now wanna start to record and track the accomplishments and progress that staff have had. We wanna provide an opportunity to practice. And we want staff to start to recognize early warning signs that we're getting off track, and that can be where those precipitating factors start to play in.

As an example, maybe a staff member is having a particularly bad day, that's recognizing an early warning sign that the staff member might not respond in the way that we were hoping that they would. So it's working together to see those things happen. We wanna investigate, and we wanna look at the communication system. How are staff members communicating to each other? In the moment of crisis, after the moment of crisis, before the moment of crisis, how is that communication happening? And is it helping that the communication is taking place?

We wanna make sure that our staff are also getting staff training opportunities. We talk a lot in nonviolent crisis intervention about training not being a one and done, that the practice rehearsals and drills need to continue in order for our staff to continue to be able to maintain those skills in a safe and effective way.

We need to make sure that we are giving our staff those opportunities, so that they can respond appropriately and know exactly what they need to do when they step into this situation. We also wanna make sure that with the communication, there's a feedback loop. So staff are seeing and hearing how things are going, they're seeing and hearing how those changes are taking place. We wanna negotiate, and we wanna negotiate this as an ongoing process. Nothing is ever perfect. As hard as we may try, nothing is ever going to be perfect. It's an ongoing process.

So we wanna negotiate that ongoing process, and we wanna make sure that the team owns the vision of where they want this team to be. We also wanna continue to provide support for the plan, and we wanna make sure that staff understand what that support is going to be and what that support is going to look like. And as these changes are being made, as we're seeing the improvements with staff, as we're seeing more consistent responses through that debriefing process, we wanna make sure that we're giving staff the affirmation of success, the positive rewards. This is what's going to help them see and recognize that those changes took place.

We also wanna make sure that staff understands that change is hard. And it's easiest if we change one thing at a time. So while we might have recognized four or five things that we need to work on with this team, so that they do have consistent responses, so that they are consistently matching their response to the behavior, we wanna make sure that they recognize that we don't expect all of these changes to take place at one time. That's why this is an ongoing process, and that's why we continue to visit this consistently through the debriefing process.

The problem with debriefing is that it doesn't always take place. The question earlier in the discussion questions was "Does your organization debrief always, sometimes or never?" There are a lot of organizations who will say never. They might debrief for the individual involved, the student, the patient, the client, but they do not debrief for staff. It's very difficult to have changes take place if staff are not being given the opportunity to talk about the incident and what took place.

Now, there's a lot of reasons why a debriefing might not take place. For many organizations, it comes down to time. They feel that they do not have the time to sit down and discuss what took place. Some organizations will look at it and say it was only a verbal incident, so there was no need to debrief. And in some organizations, what we hear is that no one requires staff to do that. So if we don't require it, if we don't make the time, and if we only debrief the most serious of incidents, we're going to have a hard time helping staff have those consistent responses. It's going to be much more difficult for us to make sure that policy and procedures are being followed through those staff responses, and it's also going to be very difficult for us to know whether the response was consistent with the training, the philosophy, and with the behaviors that we're seeing.

I said earlier what insanity was, and without debriefing, that is what happens. It is insanity, it is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting different results. So unless we take the time to actually let this process take place and look at the incidents and look at how we responded and what we can do differently, no changes will be made within the organization. It will become the same thing over and over again, and then everyone will be surprised when it isn't being done well.

Now, there are obstacles to this. Many organizations will recognize the need for improvement and to help staff understand the importance of creating a consistent environment. So they have to work through the obstacles that may be in place that's preventing this from happening. Commitment to change needs to be throughout the organization, and it needs to be from the top down. It's very difficult to have a change come from the bottom up. We need upper management, we need everybody involved in that organization to be onboard with this change being made, because when they're onboard with it, and they understand the importance of it, they're more likely to make sure that the time is available, and that staff would be required to do it.

We need to determine when and where the debriefing will take place and make it part of a policy. We need to recognize that verbal incidents can be just as emotionally damaging as physical incidents. Staff need the opportunity to discuss these, and we need to make it mandatory that debriefing take place, and it needs to have documentation that goes with it. A debriefing that takes place without documentation is words that can easily be forgotten. When we have documentation of what was discussed, looking at what we investigated, what we negotiated, looking at all those pieces, those are changes that are more likely to take place. So we need to make sure that documentation is being done.

So if we look at a review of our objectives, what we wanted to do was to identify strategies to utilize the COPING model as a means to create staff consistency. We wanted to increase the understanding of why debriefing is important, and we wanted to validate the impact that staff can have on improving consistency within the organization. Through the slides that you've seen during this presentation, I wanted to show you how we can create that consistency through using that COPING model, and I also wanna thank you for your ongoing commitment to care welfare, safety and security. Thank you.