Public Health Communication Part 7: Organizational Communication

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The California-Nevada Public Health Training Center

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Learning Objectives

After this tutorial you will be able to…

1. Understand the relationship between an organization's culture and communication

2. Identify the tensions between a business orientation and the ethical obligations of serving multiple populations within a public health environment

3. Identify potential sources of conflict that effective communication can manage

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Definition of
Organizational Culture

- socially constructed

3

Definition of
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- socially constructed
- historically transmitted

4

Definition of Organizational Culture

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- system of symbolic action

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Definition of Organizational Culture

- socially constructed
- historically transmitted
- system of symbolic action
- functions to create and sustain some sense of shared purpose and identity

6

Definition of Organizational Culture

- socially constructed
- historically transmitted
- system of symbolic action
- functions to create and sustain some sense of shared purpose and identity
- Powerful force internally and externally

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Cultural Symbols

- **Cultural Artifacts:** e.g., Architecture, art, clothing, décor, or any material object.

- **Cultural Practices:** e.g., Ceremonial activities, rituals, traditions, customs, rules, norms, decision-making practices.

- **Cultural Discourse:** e.g., Formal or informal conversations, written texts (e.g., brochures, handbooks), or anything verbal that conveys any aspect of the culture.

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Exercise

- Identify a cultural symbol from each category from the previous slide in your organization that produces some meaning (i.e., a value that is important to the organization and, presumably, important to the public as well):

  - **Cultural Artifacts**
  - **Cultural Practices**
  - **Cultural Discourse**

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Diversity in
Health Care Organizations

- Monolithic Organizations

- Plural Organizations

- Multicultural Organizations

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Multicultural Organizations

Organizations should:

• recognize that people have biases that may impede a more culturally sensitive way of providing health care to a diverse population.

• make an effort to have its members learn about other cultures.

• make sure that all members know and adhere to the laws related to discrimination.

• make diversity a priority.

• celebrate diversity not just "tolerate" or manage it.

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Exercise

• Assess the degree to which the institution you belong to represents a multicultural organization.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Least Multicultural   Most Multicultural

• Identify at least one specific way your institution is attempting to promote a multicultural environment.

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Business Orientation vs. Ethical Obligations

- **Ethics**: Value judgments concerning degrees of right and wrong, good and bad, in human conduct.

- **Ethical Dilemma:** A situation where an organization or individuals within the organization must apply standards and make decisions between two real (and, often, "legitimate") choices involving ethical issues.

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Business Orientation vs. Ethical Obligations

- **Economic Analysis:** Decisions primarily based on financial considerations.

- **Legal Analysis:** Decisions based on laws, regulations, rules that govern behavior.

- **Philosophical Analysis:** Decisions based on a particular "philosophical" orientation that guides behavior.

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Business Orientation vs. Ethical Obligations

• Historical Perspective

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Business Orientation vs. Ethical Obligations

• Historical Perspective

• The Bureaucratic Influence

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Business Orientation vs. Ethical Obligations

- Historical Perspective

- The Bureaucratic Influence

- The Business Model

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Business Orientation vs. Ethical Obligations

- Historical Perspective

- The Bureaucratic Influence

- The Business Model

- Ethical Obligations

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Managing Conflict

- **Definition of Conflict:** Conflict within the organization results when there is disagreement between interdependent parties who perceive they have incompatible goals.

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Types of Conflict

- Pseudo Conflict

- Substantive Conflict

- Ego Conflict

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Managing Conflict

Pseudo Conflict

– All parties should make an effort to engage in "active listening" to ensure that each side of the issue is understood accurately.

– All parties should ask clarifying questions to minimize misunderstandings.

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Managing Conflict

Substantive Conflict

– All parties should focus on the issue rather than personalities.

– Concentrate first on facts not opinions.

– Make a distinction between individual concerns and the larger concern of the organization.

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Managing Conflict

Ego Conflict

– Let others express their views but do not allow personal attacks.

– Suggest a cooling off period before discussing the issue again.

– Encourage everyone to describe what is happening rather than judging.

– Remain calm.

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Myths of Conflict

- Conflict should be avoided at all costs

- Conflict occurs because people don't understand each other

- Conflict can always be resolved

- Conflict can be eliminated just because of more communication

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Summary

Organizational Communication and Public Health

- Organizational Culture
- Cultural Symbols
- Business and Ethical Obligations
- Multicultural Organizations
- Managing Conflict

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References

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