

Teaching conflict resolution skills through a curriculum web initiative

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This paper describes the Managing Conflict and Difference Unit within the Resident as Collaborator module of PGCORed™—an interactive e-learning curriculum initiative designed to assist postgraduate trainees at the University of Toronto to understand what it means to be an effective collaborator. The goal of this unit is to provide the resident with an understanding of the larger picture of conflict resolution within the health care setting.

Faculty from across medical disciplines developed the curriculum. They identified and prioritized the conflict-resolution knowledge and skills needed by postgraduate year 1 residents. Five learning objectives were identified to provide support for residents who were likely to encounter conflicts and to require negotiation skills in their day-to-day lives:

- (1) recognizing when conflict arises;
- (2) recognizing the major sources of conflict in the health care setting;
- (3) identifying and naming different styles of conflict resolution;
- (4) gaining insight into the resident's own style; and
- (5) describing an effective approach to conflict resolution.

The unit contains a series of interactive scenarios for discussion, key messages from health care professionals about the nature of conflict, and video vignettes that illustrate different approaches to managing conflict. The vignettes portray a simple yet common scenario in which a resident employs each of 4 different approaches: avoidance, accommodation, competition, and collaboration. The interactive section then asks the resident to consider their own preferred approach to conflict, which adds the important element of reflection.

The Managing Conflict and Difference unit, as part of our interactive e-learning curriculum initiative, was designed for general use across specialties and provides residents with training when and where they need the information and skills. Once the entire Collaborator module has been assembled, the next step is test piloting by faculty and residents to evaluate each module and make refinements based on their feedback.