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GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE SUBJECT
At the end of the course, Individuals will examine the principles of organizational psychology; apply them within companies; critically reflect emotional behavior within companies *and* their impact on the development of this.

4. EMOTIONAL BEHAIVOR IN ORGANIZATIONS

4.1 Frustration and Anxiety
4.2 Stress-Strain and Pressure
4.3 Drug use in the Industry

4.1 Frustration and Anxiety
The main goal of this module is to help organizations, managers and employees handle anger, frustration and anxiety at work by increasing understanding of the basic causes of anger and frustration in the workplace and providing tools for dealing effectively with them.

The specific goals are to help organizations, managers, and employees:
  • Understand causes of conflicts that cause anger, frustration and anxiety in the workplace.
  • Manage work relations to minimize the occurrence of anger and frustration in the workplace.

"The ability to work well with people is as purchasable a commodity as coffee or sugar, but I'll pay more for it than any ability under the sun."

John D. Rockefeller

"Work without conflict is a hobby."
Malcolm Forbes

Understanding the Causes of Conflict – Citing survey results, the American Management Association reported that anger is alive and well in the workplace, often triggered by employee dissatisfaction with management and unequal workloads among employees. While this is certainly not the only reason for anger and frustration in the workplace, it clearly illustrates that this is a widespread problem. Managing work relationships with individual employees and teams of employees can reduce company liability helps reduce relationship conflicts. Key managerial actions that can keep conflict to a minimum are as follows:

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☺ **Regularly review job descriptions** – Obtain employee input to assure that the workload is reasonable and address any issues in a timely manner. Employee empowerment and participation in decision-making processes is helpful in avoiding hierarchy-based task and relationship conflicts. As much as possible, managers should ensure that job roles are clearly defined. This helps avoid confusion and reduce employee arguments (task conflict) based on their own interpretation of the job or task at hand.

☺ **Relationship building** - it is vital that managers build effective working relationships with employees in order to foster an atmosphere of collegiality and mutual respect. Regular one-on-one sessions between employees and managers, as well as regular informal staff or group meetings, can help ease tensions and provide opportunities to discuss and address issues before they escalate into conflicts.

☺ Good communication at all levels will also contribute to a feeling of trust. Managers should communicate verbally and in writing regarding expectations, plans and anticipated changes to keep employees informed about issues that will affect them. Similarly, managers should request regular written updates and status reports on individual and team efforts. This builds the atmosphere of trust that is necessary in creating employee loyalty.

☺ Providing training programs for managers and employees can also greatly reduce conflicts in the workplace. Training topics can include interpersonal communication, conflict management, delegation of duties, etc.

☺ Develop procedures for routine tasks so that everyone knows what is expected. When possible and if appropriate managers can:

> ✓ Solicit employee input by having them write procedures
> ✓ Get employees to review procedures and provide feedback
> ✓ Distribute procedures to employees
> ✓ Provide training on procedures

Corrective Conflict Management is what people who experience conflict do after the fact or what they intend to do to manage conflicts after they have occurred. It is important to distinguish between task and relationship (emotional) conflict when deciding the best response strategy and its effect on task effectiveness.

➢ Task conflict is about distribution of resources, procedures and policies, judgment decisions, and interpretation of facts. Generally, this type of conflict generates emotions that are less intense than relationship conflicts and can even motivate team members to search for optimal solutions. In these situations, collaborative responses, such as compromise and problem-solving, tend to have

positive effects. Open-minded discussion about opposing ideas, feelings and opinions can be very effective in resolving these types of conflicts.

➢ Relationship conflict, on the other hand, is difficult to settle to the mutual satisfaction of the parties involved. Tensions and frustrations that contribute to relationship/emotional conflicts are often rooted in differing personal values, views and ideologies. Changing these closely held personal views is difficult because they are fundamental to one's personal identity. Seeking middle ground or using collaborative strategies is not likely to be successful because the root problem (long held social attitudes and contracting ideologies) is unchangeable.

In some cases, relationship conflicts can't be solved and attempts at negotiation can even escalate the problem. It is often a good idea to remind team members that conflicts can be disruptive and suggest that the parties involved put aside personal differences and focus on the task at hand. Avoiding responses thus allows the conflict to become less prominent and provides time for feelings to cool down. Of course, avoidance strategies can sometimes lead to a time-bomb effect. Negative feelings may be curbed temporarily, but over time, frustrations can increase to the point of being out of control.

Therefore, avoidance may be a good temporary strategy to give the parties time to think about possible long-term solutions but managers should keep a close eye to be sure that the problem does not resurface. Other conflict management strategies include:

✓ Self-knowledge – Be aware of traits that bother you – they are often the same traits that offend you in others.

✓ Manage yourself – Anger management is key to avoiding conflict escalation. Don't provoke the other party. Stay calm by speaking or responding to the other party in an unemotional tone of voice.

✓ If possible, move the discussion to a private area.

✓ Give the other person time to vent. Don't interrupt or judge.

✓ Verify that you are hearing and understanding accurately. Wait until the person finishes speaking and then ask him/her to let you paraphrase to ensure that you understand the issue.

✓ To gain further understanding, ask open-ended questions. Avoid "why" questions as these tend to make people feel defensive.

✓ State your opinion or response and request that the other person paraphrase what you have said.

✓ Acknowledge areas of agreement and areas of disagreement.

✓ Work the issue, not the person. Keep in the present and ask what can be done to fix the problem. If possible, identify at least one action that can be taken by one or both of you.

✓ Thank the person for working with you.

✓ If the conflict remains unresolved, decide if the other person's behavior conflicts with policies and procedures in the workplace. If warranted, present the issue to your supervisor or consider asking a third party to mediate.

Organizational conflict is currently one of the most studied topics in organizational behavior. Conflicts can have considerable value when they are managed constructively. The issue is not whether conflicts occur but how they are managed. Desirable outcomes result in greater quantity and quality of achievement, development of complex reasoning skills, and creative problem–solving. This leads to higher quality decision-making as well as healthier cognitive, social, and psychological development by enabling both managers and employees to be better able to deal with stress and cope with unforeseen adversities.

4.2   Stress – Strain and Pressure
The causes of conflict that can result in stress, strain, pressure, anger, frustration and potentially insubordination in the workplace is vital for employees and managers at all levels. When we have an understanding of these issues, we will be better able to respond in a positive manner when faced with conflicts that causes stress and pressure.

➢ Be aware of the common causes of conflict such as dissatisfaction with management, uneven workload distribution, differing personal views, attitudes and work ethic, and the perception on the part of an employee that he or she is not valued by the employer. These are among the most common causes of conflict. Personality clashes among team members and differing opinions on the way a task should be accomplished or the way decisions are made by that team are also significant issues.

➢ Know the two main types of conflict – Task or workplace conflict has to do with a specific job or an assigned project. Relationship or emotional conflict has to do with personality conflicts between workers.

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Manage work relations to minimize the occurrence of stress, strain, pressure, anger and frustration knowing how to deal with workplace conflict is an essential skill for managers:

➢ Learn how to manage conflict effectively – It is important to recognize issues and patterns that can lead to workplace conflict and to have the training and tools needed to prevent conflict from developing if at all possible.

➢ Understand the concepts of Preventive Conflict Management – This strategy can help to increase productivity. Managers should be able to facilitate building and maintaining employee and group trust and be able to develop high levels of consensus in work values. Creating an atmosphere of collegiality can improve employee interactions in the workplace and reduce stress levels that can lead to conflicts.

➢ Know some of the key concepts that will help you prevent conflict.

Conduct reviews of job descriptions regularly with employees to be sure you know what they are/should be doing. This will help avoid uneven workload distribution. Work at building relationships with employees that you manage and schedule informal staff meetings on a regular basis to encourage open and constructive communication between group members.

▪ Communicate clearly and openly with employees to build a relationship of trust.

▪ Seek training as needed, especially in areas that will help you develop the skills needed to manage both individual and team work relations.

▪ Develop policies and procedures to cover routine tasks and outline specific procedures for addressing the more complex workplace issues, such as an employee grievance process, a progressive discipline policy, etc.

▪ Provide education to staff regarding these policies and be sure all policies are implemented consistently.

▪ Understand the concepts of Corrective Conflict Management. On a case-by-case basis, be sure you understand the specifics of the incident and review all circumstances and courses possible and strategies before deciding on a course of action.

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SUMMARY: Tips for Handling Stress, Strains, Pressure, Anger and Frustration at Work. Understand the issues that can cause stress, pressure, anger, frustration and potentially insubordination.

Be sure that preventive conflict measures are in place to the extent possible.
1. Realize when your stress levels are high and use stress and anger management techniques to reduce your volatility.
2. Remember the context of work precludes any actions that may appear violent or disruptive.
3. Do not anticipate the motives of others but rather give them time to share their ideas, thoughts and views without judgment.
4. Be aware of employee workload issues and distribute tasks as evenly as possible.
5. Be circumspect in dealing with issues, consider implications before taking action.
6. Be sure policies and procedures addressing the specific behavior are in place.
7. Be sure staff is educated on these policies.
8. Seek or provide training on these topics as appropriate.

4.3   Drug use in the Industry

Abuse potential refers to a drug that is used in nonmedical situations, repeatedly or even sporadically, for the positive psychoactive effects it produces. These drugs are characterized by their central nervous system (CNS) activity. Examples of the psychoactive effects they produced include sedation, euphoria, perceptual and other cognitive distortions, hallucinations, and mood changes. Drugs with abuse potential often (but not always) produce psychic or physical dependence and may lead to the disorder of addiction.

The concept of abuse potential encompasses all the properties of a drug, including, for example, chemical, pharmacological, and pharmacokinetic characteristics, as well as fads in usage and diversion history. Addiction is defined as a chronic, neurobiological disorder with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental aspects, characterized by one or more of the following: impaired control over drug use, compulsive use, continued use despite harm, and craving.

The Benefits of Going Drug-Free.
The available data continue to indicate that substance abuse has a significant impact in the workplace, with costs estimated at over $100 billion annually. Data show that:
- Seventy-one percent of illegal drug users are employed.
- Alcoholism causes 500 million lost workdays each year.
- Drug and alcohol-related problems are one of the four top reasons for the rise in workplace violence.
- Of those who called the cocaine helpline, 75 percent reported using drugs on the job, 64 percent admitted drugs adversely affected their job performance, 44 percent sold drugs to other employees, and 18 percent had stolen from co-workers to support their drug habit.

- A study conducted by the Institute for Health Policy, Brandeis University, found substance abuse to be the number one health problem in the country, resulting in more deaths, illnesses, and disabilities than any other preventable health condition. While we do not yet have comprehensive data on the specific impact of workplace substance abuse, the data and studies available are compelling. For example:

- Drug-using employees at GM average 40 days sick leave each year compared to 4.5 days for non-users.

- Employees testing positive on pre-employment drug tests at Utah Power & Light were 5 times more likely to be involved in a workplace accident than those who tested negative.

- The State of Wisconsin estimates that expenses and losses related to substance abuse average 25 percent of the salary of each worker affected.

Despite recent news reports about the increased use of drugs, we continue to be encouraged that workplace substance abuse is a problem for which a solution exists. When the issue is addressed by establishing comprehensive programs, it is a "win-win" situation for both employers and employees. The following examples are illustrative. A study of the economic impact of substance abuse treatment in Ohio found significant improvements in job-related performance:

- a 91 percent decrease in absenteeism;
- an 88 percent decrease in problems with supervisors;
- a 93 percent decrease in mistakes in work; and,
- a 97 percent decrease in on-the-job injuries.
- At Southern Pacific railroad, injuries dropped 71 percent.
- An electric supply company with 150 employees experienced a 39 percent decrease in absenteeism and a 36 percent increase in productivity.
- A construction company with 60 employees reduced workers' compensation claims by $50,000.
- A manufacturer with 560 employees experienced a 30-35 percent decrease in industrial accidents.

Statistics such as these suggest not just that workplace substance abuse is an issue that all employers need to address but also that it is an issue for which there is an answer. Taking steps to identify those with substance abuse problems and offer a helping hand will not only improve worker safety and health but also increase workplace productivity and competitiveness.

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U.S. Department of Labor
No one wants to believe that a friend or a co-worker has a substance abuse problem. Subtle changes in behavior may not be recorded because no one knows how or wants to confront the problem. If there is a problem, ignoring it will not make it go away.

An employer that implements a Drug-Free Workplace Program, and becomes a carrier certified drug-free workplace may be protected (in most cases) from workplace accidents that are a result of employees working under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Studies have shown a well-planned program to reduce substance abuse can increase productivity, reduce accidents, and decrease costs due to insurance claims. An employer implementing this program will also receive additional benefits:

➢ All employees will become more aware of the importance of safety in the workplace and will benefit from a safer work environment.

➢ When an employee incurs a work-related injury, and refuses to take a drug test when requested, the injured employee may forfeit eligibility for workers' compensation benefits, regardless of the cause of the accident.

➢ An employee who loses a job or is denied employment as a result of a positive drug/alcohol test, may not qualify for unemployment compensation benefits. In that case, the contributory employer could be relieved of charges in connection with the unemployment claim.

➢ If drugs are found in the employee's system at or above threshold levels, the injured employee may not be entitled to workers' compensation benefits (Note: Case law may affect the injured employee's eligibility to benefits). This benefit is provided to employers who are carrier certified and in compliance with the program. If the employer is not carrier certified as a drug-free workplace, and the injured employee is able to show that the cause of the accident was not related to the presence of drugs in his/her system (i.e., if a heavy piece of equipment falls on the worker through no fault of his or her own), he or she may still be entitled to benefits.

Substance abuse problems do not get better if left alone, they only get worse. When these behaviors are ignored, workers who have a substance abuse problem continue to be a risk to themselves and their co-workers. By taking steps to eliminate drugs in your workplace, you will have a safer work environment, a more productive workforce, reduced workdays lost as a result of work accidents, and possibly lower workers' compensation costs and premiums.