Contents

Erratum ix

Preface: Communications Training: The Next Level xi
Christopher A. Adin and Kelly D. Farnsworth

A Strategy for Effective Generational Communication in Veterinary Medicine 985
Elizabeth M. Charles and Kelly D. Farnsworth

In today’s veterinary practices, 5 generations (traditionalists, baby boomers, Generation X, millennials, and Generation Z), each with a unique way of looking at the world, are trying to work together effectively. Common strategies for managing this multigenerational workplace include vil lainizing “other” generations or merely tolerating their presence. Conflict, disagreements, and misunderstanding often get in the way of practicing quality medicine. Thus, veterinary health professionals must develop strategies that allow for effective communication, not only within the practice but also with clients, vendors, and other stakeholders, a strategy that builds bridges among the generations through engagement, regardless of generation.

Challenges in Intercultural Communication 999
Kelly D. Farnsworth

With the increasing diversity of our clients or potential clients it is important for us as veterinary professionals to recognize the opportunities this affords us to serve a larger demographic. However, along with this opportunity comes the challenges of serving clients for whom English may be a second language as well as clients who may have very different understanding of health care options for their animal. By seeking to become more culturally aware, we can have significant impact on the care of our patients. This article focuses on both awareness and skills to aid this process.

Valuing Diversity in the Team 1009
Adesola Odunayo and Zenithson Y. Ng

One of the most impactful ways to create a dynamic team is to foster diversity and inclusivity within the workplace. Workplaces have become more heterogenous as advances in human, women, and civil rights group have spurred greater labor force participation by members of historically underrepresented groups. Studies have shown that leveraging diversity has important implications for the promotion of positive organization change through facilitation of individual and organization performance. Diverse clientele may be more comfortable and feel more welcome working with people in a diverse workplace.
Compassion Fatigue: Understanding Empathy

Kelly Harrison

In clinical medicine, empathy is considered a central feature of holistic caretaking and successful patient interaction. It is unclear whether characteristics of empathy are innate, learned, or a combination of both. The means to evaluate clinical empathy are ill-defined, but perception of empathy has been shown to influence patient outcomes as well as professional well-being. This article reviews what is known about empathy in a medical setting and how it relates to negative mental health outcomes, such as compassion fatigue.

Suicide Warning Signs and What to Do

Christine Moutier and Maggie G. Mortali

Suicide is a serious public health problem, the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. Among veterinary professionals, the suicide rate has been shown to be significantly higher than in the general population. A complex health outcome, suicide is driven by multiple interacting risk and protective factors. This article will provide an overview of the problem of suicide, including suicide risk factors and warning signs, protective factors, and what we can all do to prevent this leading cause of death.

Addressing Unsatisfactory Performance in Employees

Christopher A. Adin

Veterinarians are placed in a leadership role over various teams, and delivering performance feedback is an essential part of being a good leader. Evaluation of underperforming employees is especially challenging, but it is important to recognize that poor performance almost never resolves without active input and support from the team leader. Although it seems counterintuitive, honest and specific performance evaluations can improve work satisfaction and enhance the relationship between the employee and supervisor. This article provides veterinarians with the tools to structure an evaluation system in their practice that will turn a dreaded task into a mechanism to improve workplace culture and performance.

Leading and Influencing Culture Change

Christopher A. Adin

Veterinary practices must continuously change to meet the needs of their clients, maintain the standard of patient care, and remain profitable. Ultimately, all changes boil down to the incorporation of new behaviors by the practice employees. However, human nature tends to resist change and most of the change initiatives will fail unless they are guided by a well-defined process of generating a sense of urgency, recruiting a team of opinion leaders, involving the employees, and removing barriers to change. This chapter reviews the barriers to change and will outline a proven process for enacting change in your team.
Veterinary Clinical Ethics and Patient Care Dilemmas

Callie Fogle, Joanne Intile, and Mary Katherine Sheats

Veterinary ethical dilemmas are common, complex, and unavoidable. Creating a transparent and deliberate approach to ethical issues empowers the entire veterinary team and reduces stress associated with these dilemmas. This article discusses ethical considerations and principles and proposes use of the 4Es model and core communication skills to address ethical dilemmas in veterinary practice. It reviews literature defining ethical issues in practice and provides case examples to show the application of our proposed methods. The goal is to provide veterinary professionals with an approach they can use to frame and address their own ethical decisions.

The Mentor-Mentee Relationship, Addressing Challenges in Veterinary Medicine Together

Yvonne Elce

This article provides a summary of the current veterinary and medical literature concerning mentor-mentee relationships. In particular, the authors discuss how mentorship may be expanded and improved to address current challenges faced by the veterinary profession. They consider both the positive effects of mentorship on retention and recruitment, mental well-being, and competency, as well as the potential negatives or downsides of mentorship. Although rigorous, controlled studies are rare, the available evidence indicates that mentorship may be a key method to restore career satisfaction in veterinary medicine. Further studies are needed as well as monitoring programs.

Communicating Patient Quality and Safety in Your Hospital

Beth Davidow

Discussing medical quality starts with defining quality. Human health care publications identify safety, timeliness, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and patient centeredness as important components of medical quality. Safety is foremost as medical errors are a leading cause of patient death. Studies examining patient outcomes have found that culture is critical. Cultures that emphasize communication, open discussion, and continuous improvement lead to improved patient survival and decreased medical errors. Leadership, training, staff meetings, and processes for gathering input all contribute to a culture of safety. Discussing medical errors with clients is difficult but can be made more manageable with a 6-step process.