Difficult challenging conversations: feel the fear and do it anyway!

Gillian Page

Few people like having difficult and challenging conversations, but the ability to do so in a professional way and with understanding and compassion is an essential key skill for any person in a lead role in practice. Very few things are as impressive as an individual who can discuss challenging situations with honesty, clarity, integrity and, perhaps most of all with all the strong emotions that can arise, objectively.

Most of us in a leadership or management position will have had to have these conversations at some point

in or working lives and, whilst this is never easy, understanding how to prepare for and deliver these messages can help a positive and productive relationship be maintained with the individual affected.

This session will look at what difficult or challenging conversations might mean to different people and how preparing for these conversations is central to achieving positive outcomes.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand what might make a conversation difficult or challenging, and why people find it difficult to deliver
- Identify and recognize the barriers that may make holding these conversations difficult
- Learn effective techniques for conducting difficult conversations

Measuring and improving our quality of care

Bradley Viner

Improving the quality of care that we offer to our patients and their owners is surely the highest priority of all the veterinary team. Congresses such as this provide a vast amount of information that veterinary professionals can take back to their workplace, but the challenge is converting that knowledge into a change in behaviour. Every organization, be it small or large, has an inbuilt inertia to change.

This presentation outlines the principles behind some quality-improvement processes and aims to highlight the tools that can be used to encourage change and maintain an improvement. In particular, an audit cycle can be used to measure performance and then to measure how changes that have been introduced have, one hopes, brought about an improvement in performance.

The act of measuring performance has been shown to bring about an improvement in its own right, but by instituting changes to ensure best practice is being followed, even more significant change can be expected. Once such processes become embedded within a practice, it is soon realized that, whereas all members of the team are competent, as humans we rarely perform optimally all the time. Continual improvement requires the development of a learning culture where all members of the practice learn to understand that they need to work together effectively as a team to support each other and strive for excellence.

One or more examples of such audit cycles will be discussed to illustrate the principles behind this presentation, that will be firmly rooted in real veterinary practice rather than in abstract theory.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the principles of quality improvement
- Learn how to measure clinical outcomes to improve performance
- Appreciate how quality-improvement tools can be used to embed cultural change within a practice

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following statements about guidelines is incorrect?
(A) They help to establish best practice
(B) They must be followed at all times
(C) They help provide a uniformity of care
(D) They reduce the likelihood of successful challenge when things go wrong if they have been appropriately followed
2. Which of these answers is correct?
(A) Veterinary professionals are trained to perform optimally at all times
(B) A clinical error is an issue of professional misconduct and other team members have a responsibility to report it to the RCVS
(C) It is vital that all members of the veterinary team recognize that their work is very rarely perfect before they are able to embark on quality-improvement processes
(D) Achieving optimal clinical outcomes depends solely upon effective communication between the veterinary surgeon and client
3. What is the clinical audit cycle?
(A) A form of practice-based research
(B) A means of embedding best practice into our work
(C) A way of pinpointing who is not working effectively within a practice
(D) Quick and simple

Delivered by: Dr Viner

Guest (guest)

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