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**Crucial Conversations:  
The abridged version**

URMC  
Critical Care Symposium

Mike Ackerman  
Director, Sovie Center of Advanced Practice  
and  
A guy who loves a good conflict.

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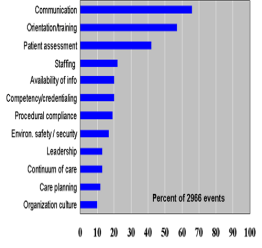
What does it take  
*to deliver the best care on earth?*

MEDICINE of THE HIGHEST ORDER

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*Communication issues are present in 65% of all sentinel events reported to JCAHO*

**Root Causes of Sentinel Events**  
(All categories; 1995-2004)



Root Cause	Percent of 2866 events
Communication	65%
Orienton/training	50%
Patient assessment	45%
Staffing	20%
Availability of info	15%
Competency/credentialing	15%
Procedural compliance	15%
Environ. safety/security	10%
Leadership	10%
Continuum of care	10%
Care planning	10%
Organization culture	10%

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**Communication Issues**

- Are present in more than 75% of wrong site surgeries and delays in treatment
- Are present in more than 60% of medication errors and ventilator “events”

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- 65% of nurses report personally experiencing verbal abuse in the last year – from other nurses, physicians, patients and patients’ family members<sup>1</sup>
- 52% of nurses report that abuse or disrespectful behavior is “often” or “frequently” tolerated<sup>1</sup>
- 77% of hospital caregivers work with colleagues who are condescending, rude or verbally abusive<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ulrich B, Lavandero R, Hart K, Woods D, Leggett J, Taylor D. Critical Care Nurses’ Work Environment: A Baseline Status Report. Crit Care Nurse, 2006; 26(5): 46-57

<sup>2</sup>Maxfield D, Grenny J, McMillan R, Patterson K, Switzler A. Silence Kills. Accessible at [www.silencekills.com](http://www.silencekills.com)


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Divorce rate in America????

~50%

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The relationship between communication and teamwork



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Fists of Fury





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### Communication

Communicate:  
To convey knowledge  
To get a message across to others  
Transmit information, thoughts, ideas or feelings so that it is satisfactorily received or understood


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### Communication skills

- Reduces resistance and increases acceptance
- Creates a non-defensive, open atmosphere
- Resolves differences on values, priorities and interpretations

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Describe what is going on on your unit regarding communication and dialogue training.



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### Silence Kills: The Seven Crucial Conversations for Healthcare

[www.silencekills.com](http://www.silencekills.com)

American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN)

VitalSmarts: A company specializing in organizational performance that provides research and consulting services. [www.vitalsmarts.com](http://www.vitalsmarts.com)

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## Silence Kills: The Seven Crucial Conversations for Healthcare

National study of > 1,700 physicians, nurses, clinical-care staff, and administrators  
 Involving 13 urban, suburban, or rural hospitals  
 Focus groups, interviews, and work place observations during 2004  
 Identified categories of conversations that are difficult, yet essential to address in health care

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## The Seven Crucial Conversations for Healthcare (continued)

- > 50% of the health care workers saw the occurrence of at least one of these categories
- < 10% fully discussed their concerns with the co-worker
- About 50% said their concerns persisted for a year or more
- 20% of physicians said they have seen harm come to a patient as a result of these concerns
- 23% of nurses said they are considering leaving their units because of these concerns

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## The Seven Crucial Conversations for Healthcare (continued)

The 10% who are confident in their ability to raise these concerns observe better patient outcomes, are more satisfied, and are more committed to stay with their jobs.  
 Implications: If more health care workers learned to do what the 10% do, there would be significantly fewer errors, higher productivity, and lower turnover.  
[www.silencekills.com](http://www.silencekills.com)

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**Table 1: Critical Elements for Standard One—Skilled Communication**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The healthcare organization provides team members with support for and access to education programs that develop critical communication skills including self-awareness, inquiry/dialogue, conflict management, negotiation, advocacy and listening.</li> <li>Skilled communicators focus on finding solutions and achieving desirable outcomes.</li> <li>Skilled communicators seek to protect and advance collaborative relationships among colleagues.</li> <li>Skilled communicators invite and hear all relevant perspectives.</li> <li>Skilled communicators call upon goodwill and mutual respect to build consensus and arrive at common understanding.</li> <li>Skilled communicators demonstrate congruence between words and actions, holding others accountable for doing the same.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The healthcare organization establishes zero-tolerance policies and enforces them to address and eliminate abuse and disrespectful behavior in the workplace.</li> <li>The healthcare organization establishes formal structures and processes that ensure effective information sharing among patients, families, and the healthcare team.</li> <li>Skilled communicators have access to appropriate communication technologies and are proficient in their use.</li> <li>The healthcare organization establishes systems that require individuals and teams to formally evaluate the impact of communication on clinical, financial, and work environment outcomes.</li> <li>The healthcare organization includes communication as a criterion in its formal performance appraisal system and team members demonstrate skilled communication to quality for professional advancement.</li> </ul>
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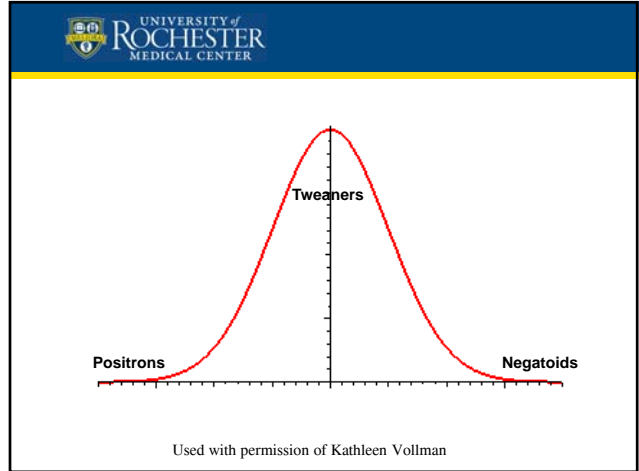
Reprinted with permission from the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses. AACN Standards for Establishing and Sustaining Healthy Work Environments: A Journey to Excellence, 2005:17-18. Available at: <http://www.aacn.org/acn/policyandpractice/HWEStandards.pdf>. Accessed March 18, 2006.

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**Table 2: Silence Kills – 7 Crucial Concerns Requiring Crucial Conversations**

- Broken Rules**—taking shortcuts, not following procedures or standards that can lead to patient harm. Examples might include failure to check second identifier prior to administering a medication, not using infection control precautions or bypass “time-out” procedures prior to an invasive procedure at the bedside.
- Mistakes**—difficulty following directions, demonstrating poor clinical judgment, or inadequate assessment of patients. Examples might include: inability to effectively triage patients or set priorities of care, missing the importance of critical symptoms or test results, attempting to manage difficult situations without the appropriate skill level or competency.
- Lack of support**—Examples might include: unhelpful behaviors, refusing to answer a question or provide needed patient information, impatient and making it difficult for others to ask for assistance, complaining when asked to help or refusal to assist others, or nonhelpful critique of others.
- Incompetence**—Examples might include questionable interventions, inability to deliver a standard of care, lack or critical thinking skills, or lack of knowledge and skill required by one’s position.
- Poor teamwork**—nonsupportive team behaviors. Examples might include: cliques that divide the team, not valuing or acknowledging the contributions of others, unhealthy competition with others, not being dependable, or looking good at other’s expense.
- Disrespect**—Examples might include: disrespectful language such as being condescending, rude, abrupt, insulting. Using aggressive and angry language. Dismissing behavior such as telling others to shut up or ask who cares what they think. Dismissive remarks about another’s role on the team, educational preparation, or years of experience.
- Micromanagement**—Examples include those who abuse their authority (whether by role or by position) pull rank, bully, threaten, or force their point of view on others.

Adapted from Maxfield D, Grayson J, McMillan B, Patterson K, Switzer A. Silence Kills: The Seven Crucial Conversations for Healthcare. 2005. Available at: <http://www.elsevier.com/locate/S0167527305001000>. Accessed March 18, 2008.



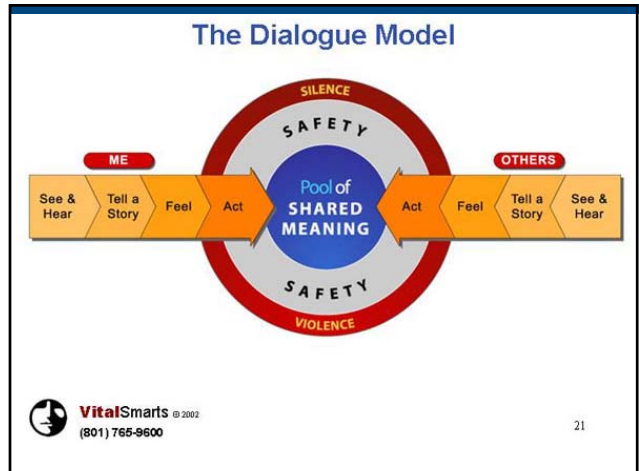
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### What Is Crucial Conversations About?

Everyday conversations when the stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions are strong.

A set of dialogue skills that helps you to be 100% candid and 100% respectful while obtaining positive outcomes and enhancing relationships.

Is about dialogue, problem solving, and results.





## Crucial Conversations Principles

- Get Unstuck
- Start with Heart
- Learn to Look
- Make It Safe
- Master My Stories
- STATE My Path
- Explore Others' Paths
- Move to Action