The Blame Game: What Role Do I Play?

Lydia R. Zager, MSN, RN, ANA-BC
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Mary Ann Parson’s Lectureship
February 12, 2010
Based on Work by:

Phyllis Beck Kritek, RN, PhD, FAAN
Conflict Engagement Specialist
Sole Proprietor, courage

and

Center for Nursing Leadership
15 years of Experience from its
Leadership Development Programs
Core Components of Center for Nursing Leadership’s Leadership Development Programs

Develops Over Time – There are “No Quick Fixes”
Key Leadership Development Competencies

- Success based on *Self Awareness*
- Build on existing skills sets in:
  - Conflict
  - Communication
  - Relationship building

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Model Validated by External Health Care Forces

- IOM Studies
- Patient Safety Movement
- IHI - Five Million Lives Campaign
- “Silence Kills” Research
- Magnet, Baldridge, Leapfrog, etc.
- Joint Commission Standards
  - Disruptive Behavior Policies/Practices
  - Conflict Resolution Training Expectations
Prevention of Blame / Bullying…
Begins with Self - Awareness

- I must recognize what role I play in the process.
- I must know what I bring to the game and what I can change.
“Things (or other people) do not change. We change.”

Henry David Thoreau
What is it About Blame?

✓ To find fault with
✓ To hold responsible:
  
  *(They blame me for everything)*
  
✓ To place responsibility for:
  
  *(Blames it on me)*

Webster’s Dictionary
Blame Can Result in:

• Abuse/Verbal abuse
• Behavior that humiliates, degrades or otherwise indicates a lack of
• Respect for the dignity and worth of an individual.
• Abuse / Written :
• Offensive letters or e-mail messages

• Alberta Association of Registered Nurses
Research has shown...

- “Organizations where blame is the norm, group members are likely to be less creative and perform poorly.”
Impact on the Organization

**INDIRECT COSTS**
- reduced morale
- reduced commitment
- breakdown of relations
- reduced efficiency
- reduced performance
- reduced productivity

**INTANGIBLE COSTS**
- organization image
- creativity
- quality
- anticipation
- working climate
- open to innovation
Constantly Blaming Takes Its Toll

- Causes anger, resentment and negative thoughts.
- Destroys trust
- Contributes to fatigue, stress, sadness, and chronic disease.
When I blame, I do not take ownership for my own mistakes nor do I learn from them.

Nathanael Fast, of the Department of Management and Organization at the University of Southern California.
Personal Indications that Can Lead to Blaming Others

• Believe I am rarely wrong.
• Dwell on the past
• Use other people's irresponsible behavior to justify my own
• Believe apologizing is a sign of weakness
• View negative events/relationships are out of my control.
• Don't think I can change anything for the better.
• Believe life is unfair and often feel sorry for myself.

• Vaszily, (2010). SixWise.com
This Leads To

- Conflict
- Bullying
- Lateral Violence
When you blame others, you give up your power to change.

Dr. Robert Anthony
Prevention of Blame… Self-Awareness

- **Active Listening**
- **Caring Communication**
- **Hot Buttons**
  - Recognizing & owning
  - Turning off / owning the Buttons
- **Shadow**
  - Recognizing the shadow
  - Integrating the shadow

- **Reframing**
- **Watching from the Balcony**
- **Taking Accountability for My Role**

Dr. Phyllis Kritek, 2009
Do You Know

What Your “HOT” Buttons Are?
Strategies to Help Recognize & Turn off the “Hot Buttons” that Result in Blame

- Shoulds
- Fallacy of Fairness
- Fallacy of Change
- Conditional Assumptions
- Assumed Intent
- Magnifying

Shadow Self
“that which we think we are not.”
Carl Jung
The Journey Forward of Self Awareness Is Not An Easy One...
Reframing my attitude from blame to…
What I can do to change the situation…
Will change what happens and
Open new possibilities.
Benefits - Outcomes

- Interruption of the “Blame Game”
  - Can help stop bullying and build trust

- Reframing “Blame”
  - An opportunity for self growth & accountability

- Results =
  - Healthier, safer and more satisfying work environment
“We must be the Change we wish to see in the world.”

Gandhi
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