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## Introduction

The identification of problems is the first stage of the problem-solving stage, and it involves differentiating facts from opinions. The evaluation of the problem involves going through other alternatives, and the needed measure and alternatives are considered, and implementation involves applying the identified alternatives to the existing problem. The health and social care sector are full of problems and challenges, and some analytical tools are considered in analysing it and thereby providing solutions to the identified problem. The solution to a problem cannot be worked upon except a clear definition of the problem and goals to be achieved. The first stage of the process involves effective communication between the person with the problem and the problem.

This report will look at the effect of problem-solving and decision-making on communication in healthcare delivery. The concept of problem-solving, the step, importance, and significance will be looked into. Additionally, this report will discuss the tools used in problem-solving, most especially the pestle analysis model. The report will also integrate problem-solving with communication in healthcare delivery, thereby looking at the causes, effects, and solutions on how healthcare delivery can be improved using the Fishbone model and Pestle Analysis. Furthermore, a practical example will be discussed using the of case study Mr Luke Dobson, a 43-year-old man with learning disabilities, (please see appendix one).

## Problem-Solving Skills

According to Seel, (2012), a problem can be defined as an event, task, or solution that is difficult to handle due to the complex nature of the situation. Problem-solving can also be defined as the process of articulating solutions to a particular problem (Jonassen & Hung, 2012). This skill helps the healthcare delivery system know why an issue is happening and the possible solution.

The problem-solving skill usually starts with identifying an issue, suggesting possible solutions, implementing the solutions, and coming up with necessary tools for evaluating the effectiveness of the solution (Doyle, 2020). The steps in problem-solving are:

- **Analysing the factor responsible for the problem:** the cause of a particular problem must be discovered to solve the problem. Solving a problem requires gathering and evaluating data, removing possible causes of the problem, and highlighting what needs to be done. The underlying cause of the problem must be specified. The standard or

expectation that is violated must be identified. Skills like data gathering, data analysis, fact-finding and historical analysis are needed for this stage.

- **Generation of Intervention stage:** After determining the cause of the problem, the possible solutions are to be listed out. This stage may sometimes involve teamwork for getting the solution to the problem. A set of alternatives can help to cover the bases, and different strategies should be implemented. Short and long-term alternatives must be specified. Other's ideas must be brainstorm upon, and alternatives that may solve the solution must be sought. This stage includes analysis, discussion, corroboration, teamwork, test development, mediation, and prioritising. there is a need for a healthcare provider to follow up on a patient protocol and make sure that the patient is taking the right medication correctly. Cumbersome follow-up mechanism leads to losing track of patient's enquiries.
- **Implement a plan:** after deciding on the course of action to be taken, the plan should be implemented. The necessary procedures should be taken to determine if the plan is working. The skills required for this stage include project management, project implementation, collaboration, time management, and benchmark development.
- **Solution effectiveness should be accessed:** after implementing a plan, systems should be implemented to know if the plan is working. Implementation will help to know if the plan is working or need to be changed. This stage requires communication, data analysis, survey, customer feedback, follow-through, and troubleshooting.

Finding the solution to a particular problem involves a problem solver going in some direction. The direction points towards the goal of solving a particular problem. The direction includes what achievement will the problem solver achieve by identifying the problem? What are the goals of solving the problem, and what is the timeframe for solving the problem? What are the tools that the realisation of the goal will require? Could it be for tactical decision-making? Solving a problem is to meet a particular need. The need is to solve a problem in existence, and it can be creative needs or critical needs. Creative needs are about generating new ideas, while critical needs are about evaluating new ideas.

Solving a problem depends on the skills and intelligence of the problem solver. The problem solver may decide to solve the problem alone but sometimes collaborate with others in solving the problem. Solving a problem is an exercise of reasoning and critical thinking. Solving a problem requires teamwork, analysis, evaluation, leadership, and communication. Problem-solving is integral in the healthcare sector, audit's in great demand.

## **Problem-solving skill in the workplace**

Problem-solving in the workplace is part of the duties of every worker in the workplace. Problem-solving involves understanding a problem and works towards achieving an effective solution, and it depends upon how complex the problem is. Problem-solving may involve mathematical operation or critical thinking skills (Indeed, 2020).

Some certain keys are needed and important to solve a particular problem effectively. They are.

- **Research:** this is an essential key related to problem-solving. The cause of the issue must be identified and understood by the problem solver. Information about the problem is gathered by brainstorming with other members. Experienced colleagues are also consulted for knowledge or acquired through online research (Indeed, 2020).
- **Creativity:** a problem can be solved without a piece of new knowledge, i.e., the problem solver knows more about the problem and quickly solves the problem. The problem can also be complex, requiring experience and a more systematic and logical approach to solve. The problem solver will need creative thinking to solve this type of problem.
- **Analysis:** analysing the situation is the first step for solving any problem. The analytical skills of the problem solver will help to understand the problem and develop solutions to the problem effectively. Analytical skills are also needed during research to differentiate between effective solutions and ineffective solutions.
- **Communication:** the communication of the problem to other team members is needed when identifying a solution to a given problem. The most appropriate communication channel is also needed to know when assistance is being sought. Communication of solution when it is discovered will reduce confusion and make the implementation of a solution more effective and easier.
- **Dependability:** a problem solver must have dependability skills. Dependency between team members will help increase value between the groups and identify and implement solutions quickly and effectively.

For problem-solvers in healthcare to solve a problem effectively, they must acquire more technical knowledge in the field. Strong working technical knowledge will enable the problem solver to easily solve the problem, and technical knowledge can be obtained through additional coursework, training, and practice. The problem solvers should also seek out an opportunity to

solve the problems, i.e., problem solver should volunteer to solve the problem, which will expose them to more opportunities to solve problems.

Problem solvers should also observe how other employees solve problems, which will help them improve their skills. Problem solvers should also observe the experienced college technique and ask relevant questions to help them in their field.

### **Tools and technique of problem-solving**

Healthcare and social care are always affected by how to solve a problem effectively and efficiently. Tools and techniques are provided to solve the problem in the workplace. The tools help to structure the ideals of solving the problem without destroying the goals and objectives. The following tools are used to solve any problem, whether it is decided or undecided.

One of the tools used to solve the problem of healthcare is the PESTLE analysis. The pestle analysis is a useful tool in healthcare for strategic planning. The strategies that will set the sector up for a long period are developed in larger parts based on the sector's factor. Pestle analysis helps the healthcare sector to analyse the areas that affect performance and operations. The practice of analysing pestle analysis is important for the strategic planning of healthcare organisations.

The component of pestle analysis to be analysed are:

- **Political factor:** the healthcare sector can be impacted by changes in tax regulation, increase in business tax, minimum wage, consumer protection, and employment regulation. An increase or reduction in tax duties paid by the citizen can either increase or reduce the government spending on healthcare. Political factors could have been the reasons, Mr. Luke was admitted a hospital that was twenty-five miles away from his family.

**Economic factor:** An example of an economic issue that directly and indirectly influences the financial performance in healthcare is unemployment, inflation, and interest rate. These factors influence the public spending policies and purchasing power. For instance, the manufacturing of equipment used in healthcare will reduce the number of workers lead to a high rate of unemployment which will result in the unemployed people not having the capability to get good health services. Furthermore, the complex treatments required by Mr Luke was not available close to his parents' home due to government cuts to public health funding. Keeping Mr Luke close to his parents would have made it easier to have his family near him.

- **Socio-cultural factor:** the changes in demography, values, and beliefs of the various consumer goods should also be identified by the pestle analysis. The healthcare facility, e.g., hospital, should know the community it serves to avoid going against the established values and norm. Contents should be shown to support the socio-cultural set of beliefs and values of the community, increasing the performance of the healthcare. The residential home where Mr. Luke lived, had his duty of care, the manager of the home could have done more to assist the hospital staff, by allocating a particular nurse and carer to him.
- **Technological factors:** advancement in technology to healthcare manufacturers also has a hash effect on overall, there is a permanent change in the equipment used, and new treatment are developed. There should be a laid down plan on how the new improvement in technology will be used as an advantage to healthcare.
- **Legal factors:** the strategy could fail if the new law and legal procedure are not properly followed. The strata consider the legal implication of pending law, HIPAA compliance, and potential hospital mergers.
- **Environmental factors:** environmental sustainability practices is beneficial to the healthcare organisation. Environmentally friendly ways of disposal and green environment practices should be followed.

Another tool used for solving the problem of healthcare is the fishbone analysis. It is also called the “Cause and Effect Diagram,” and Kaoru Ishikawa popularises it in the 1960s. The fishbone analysis is a standard tool for problem-solving in a project (Baum, 2021). Fishbone diagram is a problem solving and tool used for finding fault, and it facilitates a thought process in explaining a problem by breaking down the problem into a standard four combining sources from which the problem solver can think of the possible causes of the problem.

Fishbone diagram helps team members visualise a problem root cause and truly diagnose the problem instead of focusing on the symptoms. The content of the problem is separated from the history. The analysis usually starts with a problem, and the structure diagram helps to identify and arrange the causes.

Fishbone analysis usually has six categories, but it can also change depending on the type of the problem. The traditional six categories are machine, method, manpower, material, measurement, and environment. This system gives insight into the problem and allows the problem to be studied to develop and implement the solution.

The use of fishbone analysis to analyse problems like patient experience, clinical outcome, etc., in healthcare usually provides an open atmosphere that creates understanding of the causes of the problem and identifies the solutions to the problem (Baum, 2021). Fishbone analysis diagram also creates a tool to identify the possible cause of a problem by driving creative thinking to discover the potential causes of the problem and also organise the causes to focus the attention of the problem solvers.

The fishbone analysis for problem-solving can be done by identifying and inviting the people familiar with the problem and can also manage the potential solution to the problem into a team. The possible causes of the problem should be brainstorm by the team. The causes of the problem should be organized into the fishbone. The cause which is more impactful with the highest frequency should be identified and arranged. Root cause analysis for the most impactful and identified cause should be arranged as “sub bones” on the diagram, and the root cause that will get attention and solution should be determined.

### **Problem-Solving and Communication in Healthcare Delivery**

Communication is the procedure of creating meaning by people psychologically, socially, and culturally, comprehending the message intellectually and how the problem starts and is resolved (Rosengren, 2000). Communication can also be defined as the process involved in moving an idea from a person to another person or group. Finally, it can be seen as a two-way process of communication in which information is passed from the sender through a medium to the receiver.

Communication is a two-way process that involves the transfer of information between two or more parties. It usually contains three major components, which are the sender, medium of communication, and the receiver. Communication involves the process of sending ideas and information from one person or group to another. Communication can be in the form of word of mouth, press release and press conference, a special event held by the organisation, postal, brochures, and fliers.

The major key to problem-solving is communication. Effective communication cannot be ruled out when solving the problem in healthcare, and in some cases, the problem that needed to be solved is effective communication. The lack of communication in healthcare delivery is one of the six fundamental values of healthcare needed to deliver high-quality compassionate care for patients ((DH), 2012). Communication is very important in the code and conduct of medical practitioners. Good communication also provides patient-system interaction. Personal

leadership skills, conflict resolution, and team motivation in healthcare are built by good communication (Hobgood, et al., 2002).

### **Barriers of Effective Communication in Healthcare Delivery**

Effective communication in healthcare can be affected by a lot of barriers. The barriers affect the flow of information from the sender to the receiver. The barriers to effective communication are lack of time, environmental factors, pain and fatigue, jargon, overload of information and values, beliefs, and assumption (Norouzinia, et al., September 2005). The healthcare sector is full of stakeholders, which comprise healthcare providers, patients, insurance carriers, and others. The dependence and interdependence among these stakeholders also provide barriers to effective communication in healthcare. The barriers are addressed by patient's health literacy, cultural understanding, and language barriers (Schyve, 2007).

The case study of Mr. Luke Dobson shows the effect of ineffective communication in healthcare delivery. Mr. Luke is suffering from ineffective communication. His situation can be studied in three aspects, as explained by the story. The first aspect of the story showed the pattern of ineffective communication between him and his parent from a very young age. Coupled with the fact that he is the only child, he is also suffering from learning disabilities and epilepsy, which makes his parent isolate him for ten years and this further brings about the lack of communication.

The second aspect of the case study showed the lack of communication between Mr. Luke and his caregiver. Even though he can use sign language to communicate, there is a mix up of communication between Mr. Luke and the new caregiver. The new doctors tried to treat him based on the symptoms they can see but did not know the effect of the care given on the patient. The previous caregiver should have been present to give the doctor a direct message on how he reacts to treatment.

The third aspect of the case study showed the lack of communication between all the parties involved in Mr. Luke's care. There is a mix up of communication between Mr. Luke's parents, the specialist nurses, and the doctors in the new hospital. The new doctors could have asked for the presence of the specialised nurse in charge of Mr. Luke's case or probable the report of previous treatment or one of the family members of Mr Luke should have been present to give detailed information about the previous treatment.

This barrier can be improved with other patients by using one of the problem-solving tools listed above.

**Personal Experience:**

My personal experience was taking over the shift from night shift staff to find out the medication chart was not signed for one the medicine administered, by the night shift colleague. During the handover, she confirmed that, she had done the morning medication. The chart was not signed for one medication, which created some discrepancy thereby, raised concerns. The medication that was not signed, was not given to the patient, to avoid overdosing. This is one of the many problems that arises in the health and social care industry on a daily basis.

**CONCLUSION**

The evaluation of the problem involves going through other alternatives, and the needed measure and alternatives are considered, and implementation involves applying the identified alternatives to the existing problem. Effective communication cannot be ruled out when solving the problem in healthcare and social care, and in some cases, the problem that needed to be solved is effective communication. Concrete effort must be put in place by the sector to eliminate any factor of ineffective communication. Finally, the strategies to be adopted to increase effective communication in healthcare between providers, also, between provider and patients include the outdated communication system should also be improved.

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## Appendixes:

### Appendix1:

**Case Study – 2**

**Background:**

Mr. Luke Dobson was a 43 years old man with severe learning disabilities and epilepsy. He was an only child and had lived in a residential home for 10 years since his parents, who are now in their 70s, had difficulties in keeping him at home. They still visit him on a regular basis and want to be included in decisions about his care as much as possible. Luke's family described him as a charming, strong and energetic man. They said it took Luke quite a while to get to know people and it took even longer for people to get to know him. They thought this was probably because his behavior was different, and he could not communicate verbally. He used a mix of Makaton sign language and some of his own special signs. He occupied a single room in a shared flat with 3 other residents as personal independence was promoted. The majority of his carers had been employed for a number of years and he knew them all well. All residents had detailed personal care plans which were regularly updated using information from residents, family and carers. All the carers had achieved a minimum of NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care and the manager of the residential home was an experienced registered nurse. Luke seemed happy and content living at the home and he had made a few good friends amongst the other residents. One night Luke suffered a stroke and was admitted to a general ward in a hospital on the other side of town which was about 25 miles (3 bus journeys) from where his parents lived. Over the following weeks his care and treatment were the responsibility of a multidisciplinary team including doctors, nurses and physiotherapists. For most of the time he was in hospital, carers from his residential home visited him regularly and he was also visited occasionally by specialist community nurses. Unfortunately, after a period of indecision and miscommunication about how to treat him, his physical condition deteriorated rapidly, and he died.

