

Role-Play #7 Accounts Payable

General Information

Nicky who has worked in the accounting unit for 6 years and Gene who has worked there for two years have recently had an argument that was public and disruptive. Gene approached the supervisor about the conflict.

There has been a lot of change in the organization in the last two years, including leadership changes, system changes and staff cutbacks. All of these factors have had a negative impact on morale. The supervisor fears the organization is on the brink of seeing lost productivity in the form of sick leave abuse, high staff turnover, grievances etc. She is willing to invest in mediation when interpersonal problems are still relatively small to try to make teams more resilient.

Gene's Additional Information

There have been three different people in the supervisor role in just two years and now you have a new teamwork system. The amount of hands that a single invoice file must pass through before it is sent to the client is ridiculous and the stupid process keeps changing. Files are always going missing. You are overwhelmed and you end up laughing at the stupidity of it all quite often.

Your teammate, Nicky is foul and gives you a hard time. Nicky always wants to know where you are even though you've explained that when you're not at the desk, you are tracking down information you need to do your job. You have made some mistakes and lost some files due to the steep learning curve, but you have always owned up to it. You will not take responsibility for the amount of chaos in this unit.

Yesterday Nicky accused you of losing a file and you calmly said that if it was truly lost, a new one would have to be created. Nicky cursed you out in front of other staff. It was humiliating. You believe you are easy to get along with. This is your first job and you need a good reference. You will try to do better with Nicky, but you are nervous about mediation because you really don't like conflict.

Based on "High Tension" written by Cheryl Picard. © The Centre for Conflict Education and Research, Carleton University 2007 with modifications by ADRIC