

Communication – Class 5 Group Work
Reflection
Communication Core Interpersonal Skills for Healthcare Professionals – Chapter 6

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Managing an unexpected change in intention

Edith is a 76-year-old mother of three. She has been falling regularly lately, and her last fall caused her to fracture her neck of femur. As Edith has indicated that she feels unsafe living alone, a family meeting to discuss her future living arrangements has been organised for today. One of her daughters has been happy to talk about Edith living with her, so the team is confident that this meeting will be positive with an agreeable outcome for all family members. The daughter who is happy to have Edith live with her arrives a little earlier to spend time with her mother, and during that time Edith experiences bowel incontinence. Because of her embarrassment, Edith has been successfully hiding this problem from her daughter. The daughter, while not showing her mother, has a strong emotional reaction to this event. A nurse cleans up the floor and Edith just in time for the meeting. The other children arrive feeling confident because they know their sister is happy to have their mother live with her; they have no idea of the 'accident' that just happened before the meeting.

- Suggest the possible interprofessional team members who should be present for such a meeting.
- Decide how the negative emotion of the daughter might unconsciously affect her responses in the meeting. Remember that her intent was positive, but she has had no time to process the event or her emotions, nor does she have any idea of the support services available for her mother, herself and her immediate family.
- Discuss the possible effects this negative emotion might have on the events during the meeting and on the people interacting throughout the meeting. Remember that all members of the family are present, including Edith.