

crucial
confrontations™

A PERSONAL SUCCESS STORY

Accountability In The Operating Room



“Crucial Confrontations™ Training has given me the skills to know what to do when I’m in the middle of a high-stakes accountability discussion.”

Dr. George Watson, Fallon, Nevada

I am the Chief of Staff at a small hospital 60 miles from Reno. Our staff consists of two OBGYNs and one family practitioner.

Last year, a woman carrying twins came into our hospital 28 weeks along. During the night, she went into labor and lost both babies. After this incident, the OB committee reviewed our policy of not keeping patients who were less than 36 weeks along because our facility has a minimal nursery and lacks a neo-natal intensive care unit.

Two weeks ago, a woman who was 34 weeks along was admitted. She was breached and her condition warranted an immediate C-section if she went into labor.



About VitalSmarts

An innovator in corporate training and organizational performance, VitalSmarts helps teams and organizations achieve the results they care about most.

With award-winning training products based on more than 30 years of ongoing research, VitalSmarts has helped more than 300 of the Fortune 500 realize significant results using a proven method for driving rapid, sustainable and measurable change in behaviors. VitalSmarts has been ranked twice by Inc. magazine as one of the fastest-growing companies in America and has taught more than 2 million people worldwide.

VitalSmarts is home to multiple training offerings, including Crucial Conversations®, Crucial Confrontations™, and Influencer™. Each course improves key organizational outcomes by focusing on high-leverage skills and strategies. Along with Influencer, their latest book, the VitalSmarts authors have written two New York Times bestsellers, Crucial Conversations and Crucial Confrontations. VitalSmarts also offers on-site consulting, research, executive team development, and speaking engagements.

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I was leaving town and only one anesthesia provider would be in-house. In addition, Dr. R., this patient's general practitioner, had already scheduled an elected C-section that day, and the operating room would be tied up until 11 a.m. the next morning.

Crucial Confrontations™ Training helped me to identify and discuss a gap. We had agreed to not keep high-risk patients in the hospital, and yet we had admitted this woman.

First, I approached the OBGYN who would be in-house that weekend. He had already spoken with Dr. R., but due to a long-standing relationship with the family, Dr. R. was adamant about keeping the patient in the facility. He felt he was capable of handling the situation. However, both the OBGYN and I felt we were sitting on a time bomb.

I knew I needed to hold a crucial confrontation with Dr. R. I approached him and explained we weren't sure what would happen, but if this patient went into labor it meant an immediate C-section. I described the gap by reviewing our policy about not keeping high-risk patients and relayed my concerns. Then I presented the consequences he hadn't considered, which were that if she went into labor and got into trouble, we may not be able to save the baby or the mother.

He responded, "Well, what do you think we should do?"

I replied, "The patient needs to be transferred to Reno. If she goes into labor they can do an immediate C-section and she'll have 24-7, in-house coverage."

Reluctantly, he agreed. That Thursday, the patient was transferred to Reno.

After I returned, I learned the woman had delivered Friday morning. There were complications, and they immediately went to C-section and the mom did well. The baby spent two days in the NICU.

Crucial Confrontations™ Training has given

me the skills to know what to do when I'm in the middle of a high-stakes accountability discussion. Before the training, I struggled to hold others accountable, but now I can effectively get commitment and closure.

Two weeks after my confrontation, Dr. R. thanked me for persuading him to make the right decision.

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— Dr. George Watson