

3 quick lessons for your team

Consider the following situations in practice. How would you handle each one?

Lesson 1: Everyone has strengths

Let's say Dr. Brook is a task-oriented, brusque doctor with high expectations—and she just joined your practice. Dr. Peterson, your other associate, is fun loving and easy to get along with. Team members may initially feel intimidated by Dr. Brook's attitude, which leaves no room for mistakes, and favor Dr. Peterson. But as time passes, team members may realize Dr. Brook offers more of a challenge; striving to meet her expectations makes them better at their jobs. Dr. Peterson's attitude may not give them the guidance they need to succeed.

* How would you work with each doctor?

Lesson 2: You choose your work

Imagine you've worked at a practice for nearly 10 years. Then the doctor hires a new associate, Dr. Smith. Dr. Smith is very young, and your co-worker Callie feels uncomfortable. She doesn't feel like Dr. Smith gives her enough respect, and she may even wish Dr. Smith would just leave. Every time Dr. Smith does anything differently, Callie tells the practice owner, your team members, and clients.

What Callie needs to know: Your practice owner values her and her work, and if she gossips, tattles, and makes waves, she could cause serious morale problems. The choice: Accept the new associate or find a new practice where she can be happier.

* What would you choose? Why?

Lesson 3: Gentle reminders work wonders

ABC Animal Hospital has a policy that team members will discuss payment options with clients after the exam is complete. But Dr. Andrews always discusses the bill with clients in the exam room. It's difficult for your team because sometimes he makes arrangements that don't follow the practice's policy. However, if you asked Dr. Andrews why he's trying to handle finances during the medical part of the exam, you may discover that he's used to doing it that way because that was the policy at his old practice. Maybe he isn't comfortable having money discussions, but he's not sure how to get out of the conversations once clients broach the topic. It may help to give him a few examples of what he can say the next time clients corner him in the exam room. The result: Dr. Andrews will practice medicine, team members will handle the money talks, and everyone's happier.

* What would you say to a doctor like Dr. Andrews?