



## Scenario: Managing Conflicting Advice Between Health Care Providers

Moana is an RD working in a community health centre. During a recent appointment, one of her clients mentioned that another member of the healthcare team recommended that the client follow a low-carb diet to help manage glycemic levels and promote weight loss. Moana disagrees with a low-carb approach for this client. She was unsure about how to proceed in managing the nutrition care for this client and called the College for help.

In the context of interprofessional practice, there are times when other healthcare providers recommend nutrition treatments that conflict with an RD's professional opinion. Conflicting perspectives between healthcare providers are difficult to manage. Mixed messages are confusing for clients and a difference of opinion often involves difficult conversations between colleagues. Applying the conflict management approach shown in the box will help minimize conflicts and keep RDs focused on client-centred outcomes.

### CONFLICT MANAGEMENT APPROACH

In this scenario, Moana must avoid putting her client in the centre of any conflict with her colleague. It would be prudent to tell her client that she will get more information from the other healthcare professional before making a final treatment recommendation. By showing respect for her colleague, Moana will avoid confusing the client and help maintain their confidence in the healthcare team.

Moana is encouraged to approach her colleague with a collaborative attitude to discuss her concerns about the low-carb diet. She may share her scientific research on low-carb diets and respectfully listen to her colleague's reasons for recommending the low-carb diet. Moana may not have all the information about her client's health or wishes. Some clients have complex comorbidities that require varying treatment approaches. Is there any other information Moana needs to know about her client's health? Given the situation, can she and her colleague find some middle ground on a treatment option that would be best for the client?

### Conflict Management Approach

- Approach others with a collaborative attitude and an open mind.
- Select an appropriate time and place to communicate with the other health provider.
- Listen attentively to the other's point of view.
- Obtain all the facts.
- Focus the discussion on the approaches that best serve the client.
- Appreciate that differences can enrich decision-making to provide more comprehensive client services.
- Document the discussion and results in a respectful manner.

### HELP THE CLIENT MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION

Evidence-based practice recognizes that science alone is not sufficient when considering nutrition treatments; it also encompasses professional experience and expertise, the client's preferences, and balancing risks and benefits to achieve safe client-centred outcomes. To help her client make an informed decision, Moana will need to present all the information fairly and respectfully, factor in her client's perspective and, where possible, present some middle ground with respect to the conflicting nutrition advice. Her focus should always be on achieving successful treatment outcomes for her client.

### HELPFUL COLLEGE RESOURCES

Go to the [www.collegeofdietitians.org](http://www.collegeofdietitians.org) and enter topic 'interprofessional collaboration' in the search box. If viewing this article online, click on the links to access the documents:  
[Interprofessional Collaboration Addressing Conflicts Between Health Care Professionals](#)  
[Interprofessional Collaboration \(IPC\) e-learning Module](#)  
[Enhancing Interprofessional Collaboration](#)  
[Effective Use of Knowledge in Interprofessional Teams](#)  
[How do you Know you are Communicating Well?](#)