



Podcast Transcript

Building Your Credibility and Team Skills: Effective Collaboration Skills in Healthcare

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Guest

Kathy A. Scott, PhD, MPA, RN, FACHE

- Partner and Co-founder of L3 Fusion LLC
- Holds a PhD in Healthcare Administration and Organizational Systems
- Holds a master's degree in Public Health Administration
- Multiple Chief Executive roles in healthcare systems
- Her doctoral research served as the science behind the best-selling book she co-authored "Stupid Gone Viral – When Science and Reality Collide."

Guest

Bridget Sarikas

- Partner and Co-founder of L3 Fusion LLC
- Co-author of the best-selling book, "Stupid Gone Viral – When Science and Reality Collide"
- Focused on transformational leadership that helps individuals and organizations maneuver through the chaos and complexity of today's organizations, and move to a healthier way of living, leading, and learning.

Host

Leana McGuire, BS, RN

- Extensive expertise with leadership development and executive coaching
- Best-selling author
- TEDx Speaker
- Expertise in content development, visual performance, speaking and podcast hosting.

Transcript

Episode 1: Effective Collaboration Skills in Healthcare: Collaboration Skills

Front bumper/intro]

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BRIDGET SARIKAS (GUEST):

I think it's so important too to be that active listener, because there's nothing worse than pretending like you're listening. (Laughter) You know, the phone is really close to you. You keep looking at it, you keep looking at your watch. You know, you're looking out the window, whatever it may be. And then when you say, "Oh, I'm listening." Well, you're really not.

LEANA MCGUIRE (HOST):

Welcome to our series on Collaboration Skills. I am Leana McGuire, your host for this Elite Learning podcast and with us today is Bridget Sarikas and Kathy Scott, authors of Stupid Gone Viral. Okay, let's talk about collaboration, ladies. Welcome!

SARIKAS:

Great to be here.

KATHY SCOTT (GUEST):

Thank you. Good to be here.

MCGUIRE:

Alright. Why, why is collaboration important?

SCOTT:

Oh, in the workplace, it's especially important, but it's also really important at home and in the community. But, you know, our world has gotten so much more complex and the, the ... in the workplace, we have to come together and solve complex issues as teams. And there's more teamwork than ever in our workplaces. And so, collaboration becomes very, very key. How do we work together, get the best ideas from the team out from the team, versus people protecting themselves, and get to the best results? So, collaboration is very important in today's world.

SARIKAS:

Yeah, I would agree and, and collaboration can be fun, right? I mean, when you isolate yourself and you're not part of a team, I don't know. For me, I just find that to be a bit boring. There's always times when you have to be independent in your work, but boy, when you get to be part of a team, just that creativity gets going, your curiosity is going. I mean, it is just, it's just more fun.

MCGUIRE:

I've heard a lot about the expression, "psychological safety" when it comes to collaboration or working together. Can you talk to us about that? Like what does it mean, or why is it important?

SCOTT:

Yeah, boy, think of the world we live in. It doesn't feel the safest anymore. People are polarized and take up their own identities and we don't always feel safe talking to each other or sharing opinions or ideas, because we're afraid we're going to offend someone. And so psychological safety becomes really important, because if you're going to get your team to really talk to each other and produce new ideas and get creative, they have to feel safe and so that's what psychological safety is, is all about.

And Dr. Amy Edmondson talks a lot about that. She's an expert in this field, but she talks about how we, we take a risk calculation. You know, we're always checking the room, thinking, should I speak up or shouldn't I? And if we're not feeling real safe, we opt for the best short-term solution, which is to be quiet, and that often can get in the way of long-term solutions. So it's, it's an important concept.

SARIKAS:

Yeah, I think it's extraordinarily important, to mean, when you're a part of a team and you're sitting there and you're afraid that someone is going to devalue what you're saying I mean, how many times you might be sitting next to someone, I know this has happened to me and they're like, "Uh, really?" "Like, yeah, really!" So, it makes you feel horrible. And then you start second guessing yourself. So that psychological safety is really important.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah, I can see that. And is that, would you say that's the leader's responsibility or is it the team itself that needs to create that?

SARIKAS: (Nodding head)

SCOTT:

Well, the leader sets the tone. So for sure, if they're not behaving in ways that people can trust, trust them, then other people usually follow suit so the leader can really shut the room down quickly. But everyone on the team is responsible for creating that climate and for holding each other accountable to it. So, but again, that takes some risk of speaking up if somebody is misbehaving.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah.

SARIKAS:

Yeah. And who wants to be the first one to do that, right? So, I think those rules of engagement are really important. When you set that out at the beginning of whatever discussion you're having so that everyone knows this is an open discussion, all opinions are welcome. We need those opinions, because if we don't have the, the collective thinking and creativity from the group, then something is lost and the project or process is really going to be lacking in something.

MCGUIRE:

Any advice for someone who's in a group and the person leading the team, the team leader or their leader, is not creating a culture of psychological safety. What could someone do in that case?

SCOTT:

Well, there's a lot of things that we can do to sort of get people's attention and get things back on track, whether you're the leader or a team member. And one of those ... and asking questions is just such a great way to kind of change the conversation up. So, and expansive questions are questions that they're not, "Yes/No." They're, they're asking someone to share more.

SCOTT:

Tell me your opinion or why, why are you saying that about this particular issue? So, you're trying to get people to keep going with it, which is important. And it's also showing respect to them, because when you ask them to keep explaining and, and make sure we understand their thoughts, you're saying I value what you have to say. We want to hear it. So that's a great skill we can all practice.

MCGUIRE:

Yes, yeah.

SARIKAS:

Yeah. I think practice is key there, because it doesn't come easy for everyone. But the more you practice it, the better you will get. And I think that whole component of listening is really important when you're asking those questions, because then that, that individual says, not only my value, but gosh they really are interested in that opinion of mine or in the direction that I think the project needs to go. So, it's a, it's a win-win, really.

MCGUIRE:

Nice! I like that you talked about asking questions, but another piece of that is actually listening, right?

SCOTT:

Oh, that's a good one!

MCGUIRE:

Yeah. Yeah, it is.

SCOTT: Yeah, so ...

MCGUIRE: How do we enhance our listening skills?

SCOTT:

So that's why I was trying to talk over you. I had something to say, sorry!

All: (Laughter)

MCGUIRE: Pardon.

SCOTT:

Um it's, it's really important to engage in self-checks, so pay attention to your behavior so ... my bad! And we can honestly, self-checks are checking in with yourself: How did that meeting go? ... or with someone that you trust, that's important, but you've got to get comfortable with the silence, and if we can get comfortable with silence, then we're just chatting it up, filling in the spaces, and other people don't have a chance to jump in.

So, getting comfortable with that. I mean, I've even seen a leader write down how many times people talked throughout the meeting versus how many times there was a pause for people to actually think about and listen and give that feedback back to the group. It's kind of fun too.

MCGUIRE:

Nice, I like that. I like that.

SARIKAS:

Yeah, I think it's so important too to be that active listener, because there's nothing worse than pretending like you're listening. (Laughter) You know, the phone is really close to you. You keep looking at it, you keep looking at your watch. You know, you're looking out the window, whatever it may be. And then when you say, "Oh, I'm listening." Well, you're really not.

SARIKAS:

And it totally demotivates the individual that you're sitting across from or the team that you're with. So really important to be actively listening.

MCGUIRE: It contributes to ... go ahead. I did it.

SCOTT:

Yeah, that's, that's just disrespectful. This is all I got to say. Yeah.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah. How many times are we formulating what we're going to say next and not really paying attention to the end of what their thought was? Right?

SARIKAS: Yeah.

MCGUIRE: It happens so frequently. So that's, that's great. So, practice. I love that you said work with someone you trust who will give you honest feedback, because there is always someone who will. Right? You don't, you don't want to go to the person that's just going to go, "Oh, no, it's fine!"

SCOTT:

Right. That's kind of a waste of time. (Laughter)

MCGUIRE:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SCOTT:

Get a coach, call a friend.

MCGUIRE:

Yep, yep, call a friend. Silence is not golden.

SCOTT: Record, record it!

MCGUIRE: Oh, yeah, that's good! That's really good. Yeah. But I mean, listening and hearing Like hearing is one thing, but really actively listening is another.

SARIKAS: Ahh.

SCOTT:

It is. And, you know, we think we can multitask. And of course, the older we get, the more we realize we can't! But, multitasking, as Bridget was saying, you're on your phone, you're on the computer, you're checking your messages. One, it is disrespectful, but, but two, um ... and they say when you're trying to multitask, it's like driving drunk, literally.

You cannot focus on all of those things at one time, even though we tell ourselves we can. So, it's important to look people in the eye, have eye contact. I mean, that right there motivates people. "I want to hear what you have to say." And, and, and then really listen with the willingness to understand something that you might not even agree with. But it's, it's important.

SARIKAS:

Yeah. And I think it's a, it's a healthy learning moment for the leader. You know, you actually, through that really concentrated listening component, you might actually learn something and decide, wow, I should have thought about that a long time ago. It's, it's unfortunate that I didn't, so glad that I had this conversation with you. So that active listening is really critical for a leader especially. Your views, you don't need to know everything, which is good. You most likely don't know everything. So, listen to others.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah, excellent. That's really good advice. And I think one on one it's maybe a little easier, although there are a lot of challenges with that active listening. But in a team collaboration environment, if you're all sitting around a boardroom table or a conference table and discussing any tips on how to make that more effective.

SCOTT:

Well, Bridget named one earlier that's really important. So, it's setting ground rules for the team, and it's saying up front, we're not going to have side conversations. I mean, getting the group to identify what gets in the way of collaboration. They'll, they'll come up with these ideas. But side conversations are dangerous. You're always wondering, "What are they talking about?"

SCOTT:

And, "They hate my idea." Or another one is that "phones off" ...

MCGUIRE: Nice.

SCOTT: ... or on vibrate, and you only check them. I know we're in healthcare, so you only, you only check them if, if it's some sort of emergency of some sort or have somebody else take care of it for you. So, there's, there's lots of ways to do that, but it's important to get the group to come up with those ideas and agree that they're important, write 'em down.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah. Good point.

SARIKAS:

Well, and, you know, usually, sometimes you see that behavior, because people are bored in a meeting. You know, set really important and effective agendas, you know, make sure that the time is really valued to the team as well. And you don't just waste people's time by hearing somebody just go on and on and on, you know? I mean, you know, time management is critical there.

SARIKAS:

Again, rules of engagement are so important. But really make those, make those conversations really something worthwhile. Make those meetings worthwhile to come to. Right? Don't, don't let boredom set in. And it does. You can watch it in a room. It's just a killer.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah, it really is. You gotta read the queues.

SCOTT:

Yeah, we spend a lot of wasted time in meetings, and and um my favorite is when you ask somebody, "So do you know why you're here, what this meeting is about?" And they go, "No, I have no idea." Like, "Wow!" You should come to the meeting prepared and understand, "We're here to do something!" And if we're not, then you shouldn't be there.

SCOTT:

So, agendas, put your key questions on the agenda. Say "This is what we're going to discuss. Here's the questions we need to brainstorm around and here's our timeframe." Add up the money in the room. How many people are there? What's their salary? How many hours are we here? Was it worth it? And if it wasn't, shouldn't be doing it.

Nice. Very good. Is there a tactful way to say "Why am I here?"

SCOTT:

(Laughter)

Wow, most people won't take the risk to ask the question. That's a good question! Is there a tactful way?

MCGUIRE:

It may circle back to psychological safety.

SCOTT:

I'm not sure. I think you could just say "So, what is this all about and what do you think I can contribute to this?" But you don't hear people ask that very often.

MCGUIRE: No, you don't.

SCOTT: It's usually after the meeting or in the hallway. Like, "What a waste!"

MCGUIRE:

Yeah, yeah, with each other. (Laughter) And then they come back for the next one, yeah.

SARIKAS:

But then there are sometimes where people invite themselves or mandate that they be invited, because they're afraid. You know, it's a little bit of that FOMO, right? They're so afraid they're going to miss out on something important that's said. And really, time is valuable. And when you're collaborating, if you're collaborating in a true collaboration setting, the value of you being there is really important. You have a role. If the meeting is not intended for that, why are you wasting your time? Right?

MCGUIRE:

Good point. Now we're gonna go back to silence. I jokingly said earlier that silence is not golden, but there are some times when, you know, when you mentioned how we're uncomfortable with silence. I think as a culture, I think, you know, think of the worst blind date you were ever on and there was no conversation and you know, everybody gets really nervous and the meter goes up, and it's just not comfortable at all!

(Laughter)

MCGUIRE:

But when we're paying attention to the silence, it ... does it helpful in some way? Can we work with it? Be attentive?

SCOTT:

Yeah. Getting comfortable is, is waiting ... is literally getting comfortable with waiting for the other person to formulate a response or to share. So, I think getting comfortable with it just takes some practice, but it involves ... um you could prompt someone if they are not responding, but you're not going to move on until you hear what they have to say.

SCOTT:

So, if they're taking a while, you could say, "No, I'm really interested in what you have to say, so I'm just gonna sit back and wait for it." But it's, it's ... we usually just prattle on and fill the void and never get to the important stuff.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah, good point! Yeah.

SARIKAS:

Yeah. It's so important. And I think it's good to use your mentor to help you with that. You know, if you are struggling with that, you know, just say, "Hey, can we do some role-playing here and help me figure out how to do that better so that I'm not so awkward or that I don't just keep on blathering on." And so, that can be very helpful.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah. Don't ever feel silly doing role-play. That's such, so, so valuable, and this requires patience as well, right?

SCOTT:

It does. And it requires getting a bit more comfortable in your own skin, you know, because when we're filling in those gaps, we're usually kind of nervous, and some of us are socially, more socially awkward than others. And so, it's telling yourself it's okay, and, and I think it's great to explain to the other person that I'm, I'm going to pursue this with you, because I really want to know what you're thinking about this. And you have good ideas, and it feels like you don't always get to share them. I really want to hear them. It's so respectful as well.

MCGUIRE: Yeah.

SCOTT: And then listen.

MCGUIRE:

And then listen! So empowering. I love that! That's fantastic. All right. Well, we have talked today about a few really important things. We've talked about psychological safety, which is, again, empowering. There's a lot to be said for that to have the bravery and safety to speak up and share your opinions. We've talked about listening and how important listening is and that whole process of collaboration and being attentive to silence, finding the, the patience and the empathy and valuing other people in that space of silence that we're not usually comfortable with.

MCGUIRE:

So that is episode one of our series on collaboration. We will have a second episode coming up with both Bridget and Kathy as we continue the discussion. Thank you so much for listening. This is Leana McGuire for Elite Learning by Colibri Healthcare.

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END BUMPER

Episode 2: Effective Collaboration Skills in Healthcare: Empathy

Front bumper/intro]

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC)

BRIDGET SARIKAS (GUEST):

I think. I think with this remote world, we also need to be cognizant of one of the things that I think people often do, which to me signals you're not engaged, is they turn their camera off. You know, it's like you're in this meeting for 30 minutes, whatever it may be, it's okay, if you've got whatever going on in the background. I really need to see you. I need to see that body language. I need to interact with you. But when you turn that camera off, that really signals that you're shutting down to a certain degree. And we gotta pay attention to that. I think we need to have cameras on. Everybody ready to go.

LEANA MCGUIRE (HOST):

Welcome back to episode two in our series on collaboration skills. I am your host, Leana McGuire for this Elite Learning podcast. And with us again are Bridget Sarikas and Kathy Scott, coauthors of Stupid Gone Viral. Welcome back.

SARIKAS:

Good to be here.

KATHY SCOTT (GUEST):

Thank you.

MCGUIRE:

Today, we're going to talk about something that is really important on so many levels and definitely when it comes to collaborating, is empathy. Can you tell us what empathy is specifically?

SCOTT:

Hmm. Yes. It's something that we're really lacking in today's world. So that's why I think it's important we, we focus on this, but it's, it's putting yourself in the other person's shoes and trying to understand where they're coming from. So, it's different from sympathy. It's, it's really trying to understand their thinking, their emotions, their responses to a situation.

SCOTT:

And in recognizing in ourselves that their experience is going to be different than ours, particularly if they're of a different age or gender or race. I mean, so we all experience the world differently, and it's a willingness to, to dig in and really try to understand where they're coming from. And that's not always easy.

MCGUIRE:

No.

SARIKAS:

Yeah, no, that's not always easy. I always say it's really recognizing someone else's humanness, right? I mean, sometimes we just forget that. We treat each other often like widgets, and we just keep on going.

It's like, take a moment, you know, that is a human talking to you right across from you. Let's, let's recognize that humanness and the value that they bring as a person.

MCGUIRE:

Right. And this differs from sympathy, how? Just, if you could just, I mean fairly obvious, but to be sure.

SCOTT:

Sympathy is totally ... yeah.

MCGUIRE:

Fairly obvious but just to be sure.

SCOTT:

Well, that's totally relating to the way they're feeling. You're, you're ... or your feeling sorry for them. So, it's not really understanding them as much as relating to their emotions (Like, I feel the same way). Um It's, so it's totally a different animal, but we often confuse the two ...

MCGUIRE: Right.

SCOTT: ... and especially when we're working or working with people who ... their ideas are pretty radical to us.

SCOTT:

We don't necessarily want to hear what they have to say and that it, it, that's a good message to us to dig in a little deeper and recognize it, get receptive to what they have to say, because they're coming from a different path and we need to hear it.

MCGUIRE: Hmm!

SARIKAS:

Yeah, I think that's great. You know, often, as Kathy said, people will say, you know, in sympathy, "I feel the same." And my question to that often is, "Really?" "Do you?" "Do you really know how I'm feeling?" Because you haven't taken the time to really listen and understand. And, you know, you can't say that to everyone, but you certainly can say that to a friend who is just passing that out.

SARIKAS:

You know, it just doesn't matter. It's like, "Oh, yeah, I feel the same." Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, not really. So, there's a lot of ways you can draw them into that conversation so that they are more empathetic.

MCGUIRE:

Right. Are there key phrases that can help with empathy? Things that we should say instead of saying, "Oh yeah, no, don't worry about it" or "Get over it," or whatever the case may be. We hear this a lot when it comes to, you know, there's a lot of changes in healthcare constantly. And, you know, we often hear things like, "Well, they just need to get over it" or "This needs to just happen."

MCGUIRE:

So, you know

SCOTT:

That, that would be what you don't say: "They need ... They just need to get over it."

MCGUIRE:

Thank you! Thank you!

(Laughter)

SCOTT:

Yeah. Yeah. No, I think it's powerful to, to say, "I can't imagine what that would be like. Tell me more about that. That must have been really difficult." So it's, it's really recognizing that this is hard for them or fun for them, whatever it was. But you're not owning it on your own. You're trying to find out more about them and relate to them, as Bridget said, as, as a human being, person to person.

SCOTT:

Wow. You know, I've, I've had one of these conversations recently where someone said, "Yeah, so-and-so's mom died and, and, and, you know, I'm sure she's so upset about that" and kept going into her own personal feelings versus relating to that person in their relationship and what was going on. So it's, it's again, not about you. It's about the other person.

MCGUIRE:

Right. Right. Right.

SARIKAS:

And I think, too, when you engage in that kind of discussion, it also says, "I'm investing in you." I really am investing my time in hearing what you have to say. And the energy that comes from that, the goodwill that comes from that is huge. You can almost see the temperature change in, in how that conversation goes.

MCGUIRE:

I think, I think the phrase "Thank you for sharing" can be helpful too. Do you think?

SCOTT:

Yes, as long as it's not said sarcastically, "Thanks for sharing."

(Laughter)

MCGUIRE:

Yeah, that wouldn't work.

MCGUIRE:

So what about, for example, when you're sitting around the conference table, again, I keep bringing this back to somewhat of a team environment, and someone shares an idea, what's a good response in that environment versus face to face or one on one?

SCOTT:

Well, it really is good to say, "Thanks for sharing" when it's authentic. And, and to add to that, "That must have been difficult to share," you know, or "I never thought about it like that." You know, add to that some statement that is telling them that their statement had some value or impact is, is one way to do that.

SCOTT:

But when we ask, also ask questions, when people share an idea and build on their idea, "Wow, that's really powerful." You know, instead of one upping, how many times have we been in a meeting where everybody has to one up each other? That just, that just shuts the speaker down versus, "Wow, I love that idea! I never thought about it like that."

SCOTT:

And if, if you add on the blah, blah, blah, some other piece of the puzzle, think about how powerful that could be. So, build on other's ideas, give them credit for their ideas, and acknowledge that it was their idea. Those are all just ...

MCGURIE: Yes! Nice!

SCOTT: ... skills.

SARIKAS:

Yeah. I think it's important for the leader, the team leader and for other members of that team, to also just, just be curious. I mean, come into these meetings with, you know, that bag of curiosity right next to you. And, you're ready to pull it out, and that will help you as you start framing your questions and working with others to pull them out and into the discussion.

SARIKAS:

Because that curiosity, again, it, it can just create such a powerful energy in the group. And, one person does it, the second, you know, before you know it, everyone is actively engaged.

MCGUIRE:

Excellent. And I love that! So, both of your statements really speak to helping people, other people expand their thinking, right?

SARIKAS:

Absolutely.

SCOTT:

Absolutely. And we, we need a lot more of that, because the status quo isn't really working for us very well in our organizations today. So, we've got to encourage those unspoken messages to come out and,

and have more discussion about those. When, when we're talking about expanding other's thinking, let's talk about some specific questions that can help pull some of that stuff out for people. What might those be?

SCOTT:

Well, often just watch the room for starters. You can see people thinking. You can see body language. You can see emotion. So, it's okay to say to someone, "It looks like you have something to say about this. Please share your thoughts." Or, if somebody does share their thought ... and you can always ask others to "Tell me, tell us what you think of this," or "How would you go about implementing something like that?"

SCOTT:

Ask another person and encourage them to pile on in a good way to it. You know, continue the conversation. And if somebody shuts it down, because we always have those people in the room like, "No, no, I don't I'm not going to do that." ... or they throw out a completely different idea. It's okay to say, "Wait a minute, let's come back to what Leana had to say. I don't think we were done with that conversation." So, you can redirect and get people to come back, and they'll learn pretty quickly that, "Yeah, we're going to behave a bit differently in this, in this team and hear what each other have to say."

MCGUIRE: Nice.

SARIKAS:

Yeah, I think, I think body language is so important. But as a leader, you also have to be aware of your own body language in order for you to recognize other's body language. Right? So, and the leader, people, are all eyes are on you when you start talking. And so just everything you are doing, little just micro movements are picked up and people react to that.

SARIKAS:

I mean, you'd be surprised. So, I think being self-aware is important first in that area and before and then you really need to pay attention to the rest of the team as well.

MCGUIRE:

This all speaks to psychological safety that we talked about in the first episode, doesn't it? I love it. The empathy, encouraging, valuing other people's opinions, and pulling out/a helping them to think through different aspects of what they're working on. So, what are some examples when we talk about that skill of looking, you know, looking for the unspoken or the body language or whatever that may be?

MCGUIRE:

Can you give us some examples of what would not be very empathetic or supportive with body language?

SCOTT:

(Scott rolls her eyes.) (Laughter) Rolling your eyes!

SARIKAS: Yeah.

(Laughter)

SCOTT:

Grimacing. Looking around the room like you're bored. Just getting on your computer or your phone. I mean, those are all body language messages of "I don't really care. I don't really want to hear this." But, we, we see a lot of eye rolling in meetings. So, I think that right there is just a bad idea.

MCGUIRE:

That was well-demonstrated.

(Laughter)

SARIKAS:

Yeah, that was a great one. That was a perfect eye roll. You know, one of my huge pet peeves is when people tap their pen on the desk ...

MCGUIRE: Ugh!

SARIKAS: ... or their fingernails. I, that just is like, you know, nails on a chalkboard to me. It's like, come on, stop that. Engage.

MCGUIRE: This thing. (McGuire clicks her pen repeatedly.)

SARIKAS: Oh, yeah. That's really horrible, yeah.

MCGUIRE:

I used to work with a guy that did that all the time. It was painful.

SARIKAS:

Annoying.

SCOTT:

Yeah.

(Laughter)

MCGUIRE:

So, anything that's distracting

SCOTT: Did you ever mention it to him?

MCGUIRE: Oh, yes! Yes, I did.

(Laughter)

SCOTT:

Okay.

(Laughter)

MCGUIRE:

I sure did. Yeah. Any others that you want to mention? Body language?

SCOTT: Hmm.

MCGUIRE: Arms or something the way you hold your arms?

SARIKAS:

Oh yeah. Crossing your arms. You know, when you're sitting back and you're crossing your arms. I mean, you know, even, you know, just having a general conversation with someone, when you cross your arms, boy, that's signals to me, "Uh, oh, here we go." You know, it doesn't signal a positive feeling at all.

MCGUIRE:

Right. Now ...

SCOTT: My, my ...

MCGUIRE: Go ahead, Kathy.

SCOTT: My fear is when, when, the person who ... they're very attentive to one person, and this is often because it's, they're saying something that they agree with. And then the next person speaks up and they just kind of sit back and look around the room like, "Ugh, there she goes again." You know? And that's, that's a very clear message that the message was not well-received. So, don't do that. (Laughter)

MCGUIRE:

And it tends to make everyone in the room uncomfortable, because they see it, and they feel uncomfortable or maybe empathetic for the person that made the statement in the first place that, you know.... And I love the way when you rolled your eyes, because as someone who asked the question first, I know you, and I found it funny, but if that was someone who was really asking questions ... and we talk about virtual collaboration as well as in person ... that can really take away that psychological safety in a big hurry.

SCOTT: ... in a nanosecond! You bet.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah. Because in your mind, you're thinking, was that a stupid question? I, maybe I should just shut up? And, you know, it's just you can see the withdrawal happen from people when that happens. So, that's a really good point.

SCOTT:

So, I'm sorry I did that to you, Leana.

MCGUIRE: (Laughter)

SARIKAS:

Yeah.

SCOTT: I'm sorry.

MCGUIRE:

It's okay, Kathy. Just don't, you know, let it happen again. We'll be fine.

(Laughter)

SCOTT:

Alright. Alright.

SARIKAS:

I think. I think with this remote world, we also need to be cognizant of one of the things that I think people often do, which to me signals you're not engaged, is they turn their camera off.

MCGUIRE:

Oh!

SARIKAS:

You know, it's like you're in this meeting for 30 minutes, whatever it may be, it's okay, if you've got whatever going on in the background. I really need to see you. I need to see that body language. I need to interact with you. But when you turn that camera off, that really signals that you're shutting down to a certain degree.

SARIKAS:

And we gotta pay attention to that. I think we need to have cameras on. Everybody ready to go.

MCGUIRE:

Man, I'm glad you brought that up, because that, that's a tough one. And even I, there's been situations where the speaker or the presenter will say, please turn your cameras on, and people still don't. It's just a real sign of disrespect, and there's no empathy there. That's the equivalent of a virtual, virtual body language that we shouldn't be, shouldn't be using, right? It's shutting, literally shutting them out.

SARIKAS: Yeah.

MCGUIRE: Good point. Man, that, that can be a tough one. All right. So, we have, we've talked about empathy. Empathy ties into everything, doesn't it, basically? ... because I'm thinking about episode one.

SCOTT:

It really does, because collaboration is about people coming together and relating to each other. And, and without empathy, it's pretty tough to get people to wanna speak up and collaborate with each other. So. You bet.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah. And I like the way you earlier said that it's not just, it's not just at work. It crosses the border to personal lives and community and pretty much everything.

SCOTT: It really does.

SARIKAS:

Yeah, I think that's right. You know, something interesting this morning as I was driving into the office, there was a big sign right on the highway, and someone had put it up, and it said, "Empathy." And I thought, "Wow, what a great reminder," as I'm going into the office today, but I hope people paid attention to that. But again, something so out of the ordinary, it was just sticking in the middle of the side of the road.

SARIKAS:

And I thought it was great. I thought we need a little bit more of that out there.

MCGUIRE:

We need a whole lot more of that! Yeah, we really, really do. So again, I think I asked a question similar in the first episode, and I'm assuming that your answer is going to be the same in a sense. Is this the leader's responsibility, the team lead's responsibility to show empathy as an example? Or...?

SCOTT:

If you want to have a collaborative team? Yes. So, and if, if you are working with a group together, it's one thing if you have a bunch of individuals doing their own thing. But we've been talking a lot about teams. It's not just about ... if you're working one on one, you definitely need to demonstrate empathy to whoever you're working with.

SCOTT:

But when you're working with a team, you're role modeling it for the entire group, and it's, it's, it's harder, because you have more personalities in the room, you have more diverse views. And it, it isn't always easy. But like Bridget said earlier, they're always watching you as the leader. You are on stage all the time. And, even when the meeting's over and you're out in the hallway.

SCOTT:

So, yes, it is definitely a skill of leadership in today's world.

SARIKAS:

Yeah. And one that is lacking. So, you know, and there's plenty of boy, there's plenty of self-help videos out there that can help you get in touch with that so that you can learn. Right? I mean, again, you don't have to do it overnight, because then it comes across kind of fake, because you're just hurrying up to try to do something.

SARIKAS:

So again, practice that, you know, there's plenty of, plenty of things, ah, ways to get that help to do that.

MCGUIRE:

Excellent! And that being said, for those listening, it is not entirely the team lead's responsibility. If you feel, if you have empathy, show it, don't, - you know? Because ... don't you think? ... if the, if the general group is not being empathetic, that doesn't mean, "Let's go along for the ride."

SCOTT:

For, for sure. And it's really easy to fall into, you know, the cultural norms. So, if it's, you know, being hard on each other, cutting each other off, etc., it's really easy to get into that mode. But the beautiful thing about this is you as an individual can really change the dynamics in the room, and it's so amazing and fun to watch.

SCOTT:

Just a thoughtful question to someone who hasn't had a voice and see how it changes everything quickly. It's very cool.

SARIKAS:

Yeah, I think people need to understand that they are influencers. Don't, don't go into that meeting, you know, not thinking that you can't add value. You can influence in the smallest of ways that can have the largest impact. So, I think it's changing your mindset.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah, absolutely. And you get a lot of respect for that. I mean, like we said, we've said a few times, you don't have to have a title to be a leader. Right? That shows leadership.

SARIKAS: That's right.

SCOTT: That's right.

SARIKAS: Exactly.

SCOTT: That's right.

00;21;31;19 - 00;21;56;23

MCGUIRE:

Okay, great second episode. Thank you so much for joining us again on our series on collaboration skills. Today we talked or this episode, we talked about empathy, and we've talked about helping people expand their thinking in a different way. And then, you know, skills for looking for the unspoken and being conscious of how we're coming across with our body language as well as our words.

MCGUIRE:

So excellent episode. We will be back for a third episode. Bridget and Kathy will join us again, and we look forward to you joining us with that. And this is Leana McGuire for Elite Learning by Colibri Healthcare.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC)

END BUMPER

Episode 3: Effective Collaboration Skills in Healthcare: Feedback

Front bumper/intro

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC)

KATHY SCOTT (GUEST):

One thing that I think is an important component of all of this is we all have strengths that we bring to the team. And, and so often we focus on our deficits. And we need to spend way more time focused on our strengths and, and making them even stronger, because that's where we find our joy and that's what our, our teammates see.

LEANA MCGUIRE (HOST):

Hello and welcome to our third and final episode in our collaboration skills series. I'm Leana McGuire, your host for this Elite Learning podcast. And joining me again are Kathy Scott and Bridget Sarikas, coauthors of the book Stupid Gone Viral. Welcome back!

BRIDGET SARIKAS (GUEST):

Love being here.

SCOTT: Thank you.

MCGUIRE:

This is good stuff! We're gonna talk today, today, about something that's really important with collaboration. Well, you can tell me just how important it is. Let's talk about feedback.

SCOTT:

Ooh, I'll give you some feedback. You're doing a really good job here.

MCGUIRE:

Oh, thank you. I appreciate that. I was scared for a minute there.

(Laughter)

SCOTT:

That's what happens with feedback.

MCGUIRE: Right? Yeah.

SCOTT: Just the moment you hear someone say, I want to give you some feedback. You like, tense up, hold your breath, and think, "Ugh, here we go."

MCGUIRE:

Yes. That's true.

SCOTT:

... which is sad. But feedback is really important for any of us, if we want to continue to improve the way we lead and the way we live. And so, we need feedback ... and not just negative, but we need that too. And we'll call it negative feedback today. But we also need feedback on things that we're doing well and our strengths, and the specifics that go with it.

SCOTT:

So, we'll talk about all of that.

MCGUIRE:

Good.

SARIKAS:

Yeah, I think feedback ... it is an art and how to give it effectively. But I think what's so important is, is to make sure that you both feel comfortable in that situation. That's really critical, because when you're uncomfortable, it comes across really negatively. Everybody feels bad. You walk out of the room. It's just, it's awful. And I think the other thing that's really critical is to make it as real time as possible, because quite often we give these feedback, that these annual reviews, they're a year later, they've forgotten all the good that probably did happen.

SARIKAS:

So, the closer to real time you can give that feedback, the better.

SCOTT: Yeah.

MCGUIRE:

So, the fact that we tense up when someone says, "Can I give you some feedback?" Does that speak to the fact that we are given more negative feedback than positive?

SCOTT:

Boy, I think so.

MCGUIRE: ... and that's why that expectation?

SCOTT: ... or maybe it just takes us back to when we were kids, you know, my dad, "Kathy Annette!" ... and I'm like "Ugh." (Laughter) Yeah. I'm not sure. But it certainly sets that up in, in me ... that kind of a response. And I think it's helpful to talk to each other about that, to say, "Yeah, giving feedback can be difficult." Or, I have an aversion to it. Or, I'm trying to give better feedback to my team.

SCOTT:

And I, I, I'm really working hard at this. All of those are good things to say to sort of break the ice and help people see that giving feedback is really important, and it is an art, and you do need to work at it to do it effectively.

SARIKAS:

Yeah, I think it can be, you know, I think when we look at negative feedback. I think it could be more constructive. Right? I mean, you may have done something that didn't get the results, the desired results, but you can be very constructive in that feedback rather than always being so negative. And I think we are conditioned to a certain degree.

SARIKAS:

You know, I had a supervisor one time who said, when I was giving a review of someone, they said, "Well, at least make sure you put down four negative things, because we don't want them to have a perfect review." And I said, "But they, but they didn't do anything incorrectly." I mean, they were fine. You know, it was very much a technical skill.

SARIKAS:

So, it was like, "But they were fine." "Well, we can't have a review like that." So, there is a lot of that conditioning that's out there, and we got to get rid of that kind of thinking.

MCGUIRE:

Boy, that's, that's it. I don't think you're alone in that. There's certainly been, you know, annual reviews are 1 to 5, but nobody gets a five.

SARIKAS: Right.

MCGUIRE: You know, you can't give anybody a five. And you're thinking, well, why? I don't understand.

SCOTT:

Right. Yeah.

MCGUIRE:

Good point. Well, I would like to talk about some skills that, that can help us give that negative feedback. But I also, before we do that, can we talk about the importance of the positive feedback and what the result of that can be when giving it to people?

SCOTT:

Boy, positive feedback is, is so powerful. So, when you, when you see someone do something well or you see a strength in someone, so often we don't give them feedback on that. So, one of the ways to really boost your team is to genuinely say, I want to give you some feedback on your performance yesterday. You were amazing!

SCOTT:

And, and here's what I saw that made such a difference. So, you got, you have to get specific. Otherwise, it's just like a ...

MCGUIRE: Nice.

SCOTT: ... way to go pat on the back, which is nowhere near as powerful as saying, "When you stood up and looked at so-and-so and asked that question, it changed the conversation. That was really powerful. Do more of that." And end your, end it, end your conversation with "Do more of that."

SCOTT:

And it just is a motivator, and people remember it for years.

SARIKAS: Yeah, they do.

MCGUIRE:

Well, that was I'll give you some positive feedback on that. I'll give you a high five even, "How's that?"

SCOTT: Woo!

MCGUIRE: That was good. (Laughter) Absolutely. Bridget, you want to elaborate on that?

SARIKAS:

Yeah, I was just gonna say you know, Kathy, mentioned the energy and everything that comes from that. And you really want individuals to want to come into work every day. And the energy you create from that positive feedback just gives them that, that motivation to say, you know what, I can, I can come back again. I can do that, you know, now that might, that might, that individual, that leader, whoever ... they saw me. And they really appreciated what I did, and boy, that is gosh, that's just a huge motivator.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah. If you heard statements like that on a regular basis when, when someone said to you, I'd like to give you some feedback, you're more likely to get excited than to cower.

SCOTT:

Yes. Yes. Wouldn't it be beautiful?

MCGUIRE:

Yes.

SCOTT: Beautiful thing.

MCGUIRE: And my assumption is that that would decrease retention, would it not, with people, if all you ever heard was negative?

SARIKAS: Yeah.

MCGUIRE: That's not exactly inspiring to stick around.

SCOTT:

No, no. And people, people want to feel valued wherever they are. And if you're just giving them negative feedback all the time, they're going to move on. Um ...

MCGUIRE: Yeah.

SCOTT: They're, it's, it's just too difficult today to be in those kinds of environments when there's just so much chaos in the world and so many other opportunities. So, look at your turnover rates, and if they're not where you want them to be ... They're, we're talking about some skills that could really help bring that down and retain your valuable employees.

MCGUIRE:

Nice. Yeah. Nice.

SARIKAS:

I think we can. We also forget that we can do that peer to peer.

MCGUIRE: Yes!

SARIKAS: It's really helpful when you see that someone did something and you say, "Wow, I'd like to, I'd like to be able to do that. That was amazing how you conveyed that message or whatever that, that is where you have the influence as well. So, peer to peer is really important in that feedback arena.

MCGUIRE: Yeah, because I think often times we see something and we think, oh, that's really great, but we don't verbalize ...

SARIKAS: Right.

MCGUIRE: ... you know to the person.

SARIKAS: Exactly.

MCGUIRE: Yeah, I think that's really important. Okay, let's get to it. Negative feedback. Uh ... there's, there are ways to deliver that, right? I mean, we have to give that feedback in order for people to grow and improve.

MCGUIRE:

But there are ways, right?

SCOTT:

Yes, there are ways. One of the most important things is to give feedback about someone's behavior, not their character, not their values. So, when you give, when you get feedback about behavior, you need to describe it and the impact it had. So, you're not just saying you know, "I didn't like that." You're saying, you know, "When you did this," the other person immediately shut down.

SCOTT:

So, and then go on to give them some constructive ways to move forward or tell them, you know, "I want, I want you to work on this, and I'm willing to help you with this." ... or whatever, whatever. But it's not just a slap and don't do that again. So, so identify the behavior and the consequences of the behavior and then talk about some alternatives.

SCOTT:

That's, that's a good way to go about it.

MCGUIRE: Mmm.

SARIKAS:

And I think sometimes it's good to take, take each other outside of the environment. So instead of "Come into my office, we're going to have this conversation with you where everybody's already on edge." You know, let's go grab a cup of coffee and sit down and have a conversation that leads to that very constructive feedback you are talking about, what got you there and how, how they can go about improving. But sometimes when you give it in a little bit more of a relaxed environment, people tend to hear it, because you want them to hear the message. You really want them to listen, because they do need to improve, and you want to give them that opportunity. So, I think the more relaxed that environment can be, the better they will hear.

MCGUIRE: Good point.

SCOTT:

Yeah, that's an investment in them, and you want to make sure they and the meeting feeling that way (or the encounter I guess I would say that). Do it privately.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah. Like you care ...

SCOTT: Mm hmm.

SARIKAS: Right.

MCGUIRE: ... genuinely care. Is it okay to have a third person in the room if it's someone that you've had past experience with who didn't handle feedback well? ... or, does it depend on the situation?

SCOTT:

Yeah, it could be. It's also, though, would be helpful to ask ... I mean ... if, if someone really messed up and you feel like you need to address it, to say to them, "Boy, yesterday ... didn't go well. Can, can you tell me from your view of the world what was going on?" Let them start. Because often, I mean, I've had this happen to me.

SCOTT:

"Oh, yeah. Boy, I was really off." And, and then you can get them to talk about it and identify some solutions. So that's another helpful way to get somebody to hear the message but participate in the conversation. So, it's not parent to kid, it's more a collaborative conversation around how can, how can we do this better? So, you can, that's another skill that can be rehearsed, practiced, and then, "Try it out." You know?

SARIKAS:

Yeah, that's where role-playing can really come in handy, because it can be awkward as you are learning to give that kind of behavior and especially for new individuals who are having to do their first review. I

mean, there's so much anxiety. I hear a lot of young people, "Oh, my gosh, I have to do a review today. I don't even know where to start."

SARIKAS:

You know, "I don't know how to begin. And, and there are some negative components to it." So really helping them, you know, with that role-playing very early on can be very helpful.

MCGUIRE:

Nice. Very good. Okay. So, it's important to be able to deliver both. And is this something, negative feedback, is this also something that can be done peer to peer?

SCOTT:

Absolutely. I mean, you know, we all play a part in this. And, and if you're, especially if you have a good relationship with someone, your feedback is, the intent of feedback is to help someone become more excellent. Help someone succeed. And when you're going about it for that reason, it's usually pretty, pretty obvious. People know that versus, I'm mad at you, and I'm going to give you some feedback.

SCOTT:

Don't do that! Wait until you can get your head in a better space. And, and also think about it. Part of this feedback thing is I have to be able to take feedback too.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah. There's that's Yeah.

SCOTT:

... and put yourself in their shoes. So, it's a two way street.

MCGUIRE:

Yeah. So, receiving feedback, tips on that.

SCOTT:

Ooh. Bridget, tips on receiving.

(Laughter)

SARIKAS:

Well, again, I think you have to, I think you have to first have your own vulnerability present. Right? Receiving feedback. You have to be open to hearing that. You know, take that anxiety down a bit, but then say, maybe I could have done that better. Right? And even when you leave that session, really think about it. Don't, don't get mad, right?

I mean, think about, I just get told something that, gosh, I need to work on, and go back to a colleague or someone else and say, did you, did you see that as well? Gosh, how can I do that better? Any tips on how I can do that better? I mean, how you react to that feedback is so important.

You know, I know that sometimes when I've been in bad situations and I will sit and I will write myself a note. Because I know that if I go out and I say what I'm really thinking, I'm going to get myself in trouble every time. So it's really good on, even if you're receiving that negative feedback and you're thinking about, "Gosh, I want to say X," you know, go back.

Think about it. Write down what you might really want to say, and then come back with, you know, what you what you should be saying. All right. Calmer heads generally prevail.

MCGUIRE:

Speaks a lot to preparing. I love that.

SCOTT:

You know, there really is. And as leaders and we've talked about this before, but the higher up you are in an organization, the more the feedback is filtered.

MCGUIRE: Ahhh.

SCOTT: And so, you know, you're, you don't get feedback as much, which is really a shame, because we all need that. So, another way is to, and this sort of paves the way for feedback, but is to ask ... when I meet with one on one, my one on one's/direct reports, always say, let's talk about this last meeting or let's talk about what went down with this group. What could I have done differently to have made that a better outcome? So, you're putting yourself out there asking for the feedback. And that's scary, and you feel pretty vulnerable, but it gives people permission to, to give you feedback.

SCOTT:

And they're usually pretty kind about it, but not always, especially at home. (Laughter) But yeah, but we have to be receptive to feedback and ask for that as well.

MCGUIRE:

Right. Right.

SARIKAS:

Yeah. I think we often say you have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. I'm sure you've said that in earlier episodes, but we really need to do that, and it's okay. And when we show that vulnerability, that's okay, too.

MCGUIRE:

Right. Love it. Love it. So, throughout this three-part series, feedback being a very important piece, it sounds like collaboration is a set of skills, right? We talked about empathy in a previous episode. We talked about, you know, embracing the silence. We've talked about psychological safety. Now we're talking about giving and receiving feedback, both positive and negative. So, it sounds like a set of skills.

MCGUIRE:

So, is that something that can be practiced or learned?

SCOTT:

Yeah, I think it's a really great question, because so often we focus on the technical. And leadership is really about leading people. I mean, how, how many, how many managers have you heard say, "This job wouldn't be so bad if I didn't have to manage people?" (Laughter) Yeah, it's, it's a, hard work. It really is. And so, I think especially in healthcare, we'll take an excellent clinician and put them in a leadership role.

SCOTT:

And we don't help them learn the skills that you need in relationships. And that is, that is a very important leadership competency or set of competencies that can be learned, should be practiced. And, and we can continue to improve on those skills throughout our, our careers and lifetime. So, yeah, we can all do it. I'm, I'm, if you're uncomfortable with it and some people are, or with different aspects of it, there's no excuse.

SCOTT:

You still need to learn the skills and practice it. It's important.

MCGUIRE: For both positive and negative.

SARIKAS:

Yeah, I think, Yes, exactly. And I think quite often people, people will say, "I just don't have time for that." You know, "That's something, you know, I'll do later." Or the worst kind of feedback is when you have a, you're giving a review, and you have the other person fill out that review for you, and then you go, "Oh, that was a really good review. Yeah, here you go." That was positive feedback, you know? I mean, so you do need to get comfortable. You do need to practice, and you've got to find the time.

MCGUIRE:

Excellent! Anything else you'd like to add on collaboration?

SCOTT:

I, just one thing that I think is an important component of all of this is we all have strengths that we bring to the team. And, and so often we focus on our deficits. And we need to spend way more time focused on our strengths and, and making them even stronger, because that's where we find our joy and that's what our, our teammates see.

SCOTT:

So, while we've talked about practicing these skills are very important. Practice them in a way where you can continue to increase your strengths, not just improve your deficits. And, and it makes it way more enjoyable.

MCGUIRE:

Well said!

SARIKAS:

Amen!

MCGUIRE:

That's amen! There you go. Okay. Well, thank you so much, both of you, for participating in this series as our subject matter experts. It's great content, and you shared it in such a way that we felt, we felt supported, and there was lots of joy. And you have great expertise and do more of that! (Laughter) No, I'm just trying to give positive feedback!

MCGUIRE:

So, we've, we've, we've wrapping up this series on collaboration skills, and hopefully you've enjoyed it. Thank you again for joining us, Kathy and Bridget. We really appreciate it. And please check out the other courses and podcasts on [elitelearning.com](https://www.elitelearning.com). There's a lot of information and a lot of great, great stuff to learn there for you as you advance through your career.

MCGUIRE:

This is Leana McGuire for Elite Learning by Colibri Healthcare.

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END BUMPER