



CHAOS TO COHESION

Six Relational Shifts
That Strengthen Teams

Michael Walker & Rebecca Rose

CO-AUTHORS • SPEAKERS • TEAM DEVELOPMENT EXPERTS





Rebecca Rose, RVT

Rebecca brings RVT wisdom, leadership energy, and real-world veterinary team experience to every session. She has a gift for turning experience, empathy, and team insight into practical tools that help people feel heard, supported, and ready to lead.



Michael Walker, Q.Med

Michael is the conversation coach in the room — part mediator, part leadership guide, and part professional “let’s talk about the thing everyone is avoiding” enthusiast.





SHIFT 2

COMMUNICATION

The Roots That Let Teams talk



**CHAOS TO
COHESION**

Six Relational Shifts
That Strengthen Teams

SHIFT

2

COMMUNICATION

The Roots

Communication creates understanding.

Strong roots allow information,
ideas, and feedback to flow freely.



STRONG ROOTS. STRONG TEAMS. BEAUTIFUL RESULTS.

Six Relational Shifts That Strengthen Veterinary Teams

SHIFT 2

COMMUNICATION

The Roots That Let Teams Talk



Trust
The Soil



Communication
The Roots



Commitment
The Trunk



Accountability
The Fiber



Wellbeing
The Nutrients



Results
The Bloom

The 6-session arc

One hour at a time. One practice at a time.



Trust
The Soil



Communication
The Roots



Commitment
The Trunk



Accountability
The Fiber



Wellbeing
The Nutrients



Results
The Bloom

Trust creates safety. Communication creates clarity.



SHIFT 2 COMMUNICATION

The Personal 6-Shift Worksheets
continue as the through-line.

Each session.
One shift. One Focus.
One Celebration.



PERSONAL WORKSHEET

Results Are the Bloom

The bloom is what everyone sees. The roots are not. Yet the roots create everything the bloom becomes.



TRUST
The Soil



COMMUNICATION
The Roots



COMMITMENT
The Trunk



ACCOUNTABILITY
The Fiber



WELLBEING
The Nutrients



RESULTS
The Bloom

Use this worksheet to identify one relational shift that matters now, translate it into a clear 30-day commitment, and notice the difference it makes for the pet, the pet owner, the veterinary team, and the hospital.

NAME _____

ROLE _____

HOSPITAL OR ORGANIZATION _____

DATE _____



**Communication breakdowns rarely happen
because people do not care.**



They happen because pressure replaces clarity.

Assumptions replace clarity.

Emotions remain unspoken.

Expectations stay unclear.

**Silence is not the
absence of conflict.**

**Silence is often
unresolved tension.**

*The strongest teams are not tension-free;
they communicate through tension productively.*



Veterinary medicine is built on communication.

Every handoff, recommendation, client interaction, and leadership moment depends on how people speak, listen, respond, and repair.



Where does communication become most fragile in your hospital?



Most veterinary professionals recognize communication strain immediately.



The rushed tone.

The clipped response.

The assumption.

The sigh.

The silence in the treatment room.

What do people notice first when communication starts to strain?





Communication failures are often cumulative.

They are not always dramatic.

Missed Details

Information does not move cleanly.

Avoided Clarification

People guess instead of asking.

Unspoken Frustration

Small fractures become patterns.

Delayed Repair

Resentment grows underground.



Exercise 1: The conversation I avoided



Think about a conversation you delayed or avoided in a veterinary setting.

Why do you think or feel you avoided the conversation?

Write first.
Then share
one sentence.



Reactive vs. relational communication



The shift is not from conflict to no conflict. It is from reaction to response.

Reactive communication

“That’s not my responsibility.”

“Nobody told me.”

“You always do this.”

Relational communication

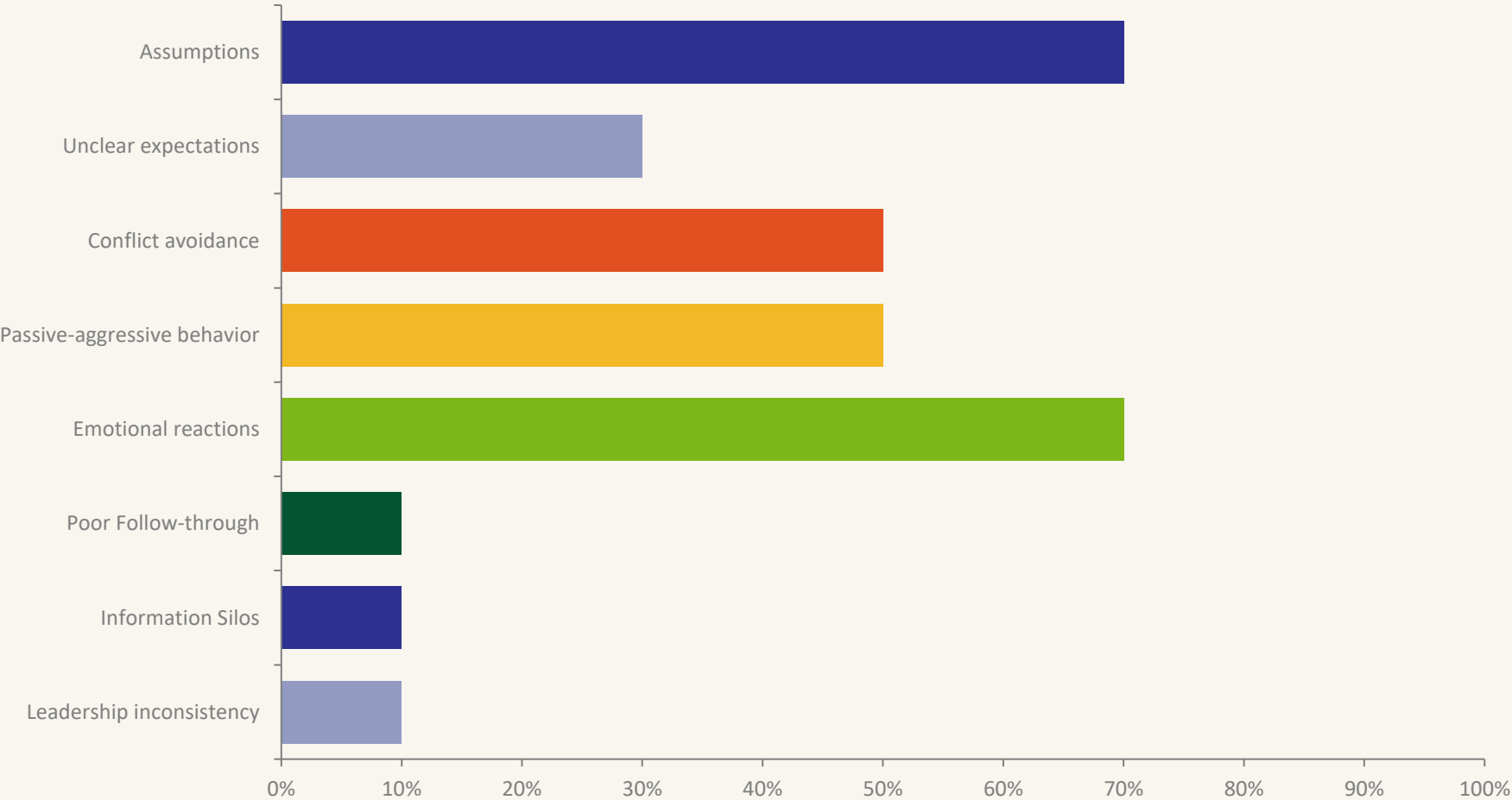
“Can we clarify expectations?”

“Help me understand your perspective.”

“What outcome are we trying to create?”



Which communication challenges occur most frequently within veterinary practices?





The **BIFF** communication tool

A practical structure for tense moments, emails, client interactions, and team conflict.



B

Brief



I

Informative



F

Friendly



F

Firm

BIFF *helps reduce escalation while keeping the message clear.*



BIFF in action



Same concern. Different structure. Different impact.

Reactive response

“You never communicate changes clearly and now everyone is frustrated.”

BIFF-style response

“I want to make sure we are aligned moving forward. Updated treatment changes need to be communicated during patient handoff so the team can respond consistently. Let’s review the process together.”





Trust does not grow because conversations are perfect.
Trust grows because conversations are repaired.



Revisit

“I would like to revisit our earlier conversation.”



Reset

“Can we reset?
Does that make sense?”



Understand

“Help me understand what happened from your perspective.”

3 starters to a difficult conversation.





Trust does grow when we invest in the 4 pillars of trust, individually and together.

Reliability

I will
show up.



Empathy

I see you.



Authenticity

I will
be real.



Responsibility

I own
my impact.





The 30-Day Communication Commitment

Choose one communication behavior to strengthen consistently over the next 30 days.

My communication commitment

What this looks like in action

How I will know progress is occurring

Do not try to fix
every conversation.

Build one behavior.

Repeat it.

Make it visible.



HANDOUT INTEGRATION



**CHAOS TO
COHESION**
Six Relational Shifts
That Strengthen Teams

PERSONAL WORKSHEET

Results Are the Bloom

The bloom is what everyone sees. The roots are not. Yet the roots create everything the bloom becomes.



TRUST
The Soil



COMMUNICATION
The Roots



COMMITMENT
The Trunk



ACCOUNTABILITY
The Fiber



WELLBEING
The Nutrients



RESULTS
The Bloom

Use this worksheet to identify one relational shift that matters now, translate it into a clear 30-day commitment, and notice the difference it makes for the pet, the pet owner, the veterinary team, and the hospital.

NAME _____

ROLE _____

HOSPITAL OR ORGANIZATION _____

DATE _____



**CHAOS TO
COHESION**
Six Relational Shifts
That Strengthen Teams

OUR TEAM SMART GOAL

TURNING OUR FOCUS INTO ACTION

RESULTS ARE THE BLOOM

The roots create the bloom.



TRUST
The Soil



COMMUNICATION
The Roots



COMMITMENT
The Trunk



ACCOUNTABILITY
The Fiber



WELLBEING
The Nutrients



RESULTS
The Bloom

Use this worksheet together to choose one shared focus, define the team behavior that will move it forward, and create a visible 30-day plan for action, support, accountability, and celebration.

TEAM OR DEPARTMENT _____

VETERINARY HOSPITAL OR ORGANIZATION _____

FACILITATOR _____

DATE _____





WHAT'S BEEN MOST VALUABLE?

Communication creates understanding.

Clear communication protects
the patient,
the team,
the client,
and the relationship system.



**When the communication
roots are healthy, trust can
keep growing.**



Communication creates clarity.

Clarity strengthens alignment. Alignment strengthens commitment.



From

“Can we communicate clearly?”

Leads to

“Can we follow through consistently together?”

Next session:



Commitment

