

Nancy Oley's Story

You would like to know about an interesting TOC experience I had. The Psych Lab has been moving toward collapse on a number of levels for some time, and things reached a crisis point this week. The two lab techs were not cooperating, and they were unable to solve some serious technical problems that if unresolved, would render the lab useless. I called a meeting of the parties involved. Everyone was upset. But instead of the usual, I decided to try the TOC approach of developing, collectively, a Current Reality Tree. First we agreed upon a common goal: to have the lab running smoothly and effectively. We put Post Its on the wall, one for each UDE standing in the way of that goal. The rules did not permit criticism of any idea, and we continued until we ran out of ideas. Then we arranged the UDE's in "if-then" order. This revealed four clusters of problems, each cluster emerging from a more generic UDE. This took 3 hours, and took into account everything from resentment over being paid too little and late, to not knowing enough to solve the problem. We were able to work as a team without rancor, and many ideas for solutions popped out right away (interventions to cut the negative branches). Both lab techs are now working together, and discovered a workaround for the technical problem in less than a day. I also recognize that I have to take care of some issues at my end as well. Anyhow, we haven't gotten to the "CORE" conflict formally yet. It was amazing! Now I have to put it down on paper and present it to the administrators with the power to solve some of the problems. ...That won't be as easy.