

Through Brooke Anderson's recent talk in class, I have realized an important concept of systems involving human actors. Several of her stories and examples included a reoccurring theme focused on issues with management/authority. Not having the same vision or values as those that are leading you can often be a conflicting issue. Through her experience, I have realized the theme of how authority can often be a boundary on the system.

First, Brooke shares her story about being hired at the brand-new hospital in Weston, Wisconsin. Brooke's vision of what the first few days of work would be like compared to what they were like were vastly different. This was the first signal of conflicting management styles between Brooke and the hospital administration. As the hospital gained experience as was open longer, they realized a need to push open-heart surgery in-house. Brooke, as a systems thinker, quickly realized this was not beneficial for the overall success of the system (hospital). Brooke, being in a middle-manager/supervisor position, argued her point to her superiors. These points about focusing on something the hospital did not have complete capabilities to do well were ignored and tagged and resistant. Through time, Brooke began to lose authority from her direct reports as she experienced them working around her when they needed help. Two different boundaries were placed on this system because of Brooke's interaction on the issue. First, the boundary of diverting resources and talent coupled with the possibility of increasing liability from a procedure that is not the hospital's specialty had the potential for a detrimental impact. Brooke realized that, at least presently, the hospital did not have the abilities to provide that service and by doing so, they were putting patients at risk as well as a number of opportunity costs that may not be easy to document or realize. The boundary placed by the administration of this expansionary thinking the hospital had on developing and pushing open-heart surgery was a huge barrier on the success of the system. In addition, Brooke began to experience of lack and respect to the power she had. People were not using her as a resource. A barrier was placed on Brooke herself with her wealth of knowledge and systems thinking approach. By not using actors in a system to their full potential, the administration was indirectly suppressing the system by suppressing Brooke.

Another example of a boundary placed on the system by administration was in the UW Hospital's cost cutting approach to get rid of mattress pads. Brooke detailed to us how nurses had been using these pads not in their original intended way, but as support tools to help move patients. These pads worked well for the purpose and were cheaper and safer than other means deployed by nurses. When the hospital administration looked to cut costs, they saw these mattress pads as something that was, or should have been, obsolete. What they did not do, was consult different areas of the system to see what they were being used for and the possible cause and effects of their removal. Once removed, numerous issues came to light as it was realized the pads were indeed still necessary for the hospital's functions.

This is a common theme within upper management and politics in society. The prompt asked to relate to a story about systems in my own life, but sticking with the topic of a theme, I decided to write about a theme I often experience. When money and budget structuring is involved, it is easy for the actors in these situations to develop tunnel-vision and only see what reinforces their beliefs. Sometimes it takes discussing with other cross-functional areas of the

systems to realize what the consequences both negative and positive of one's actions might be. One important lesson and reoccurring theme Brooke helped me to realize is how administration, when done incorrectly, can inhibit and place boundaries on systems. Things happen because of the structure authority has put on the system. Asking enough questions can help you expand those boundaries. Brooke has taught us that as system thinkers, challenging authority is extremely necessary, as we may think vastly different then them. Sharing in a system thinking focused point of view, systems around the world are eligible for enrichment.