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Equine Scenario Examples

a. Medical mistake (with a colleague AND a client)

Dr. Morgan is managing a colic case in the hospital and has just finished examining the horse. She goes to her office to call the owner with an update, when suddenly the horse collapses and passes away.

After reviewing the case, Dr. Morgan discovers that a technician, Sam, accidentally bolused a fluid line containing lidocaine, instead of the Vetivex pHylite solution. This likely contributed to a cardiac arrest. While the error wasn't directly Dr. Morgan's doing, she understands that, as the veterinarian in charge, the responsibility ultimately falls on her. She must now discuss this error with Sam and break the devastating news to the horse's owner.

b. Case management (with a colleague)

A pony named Buddy is brought to a veterinary clinic by his owner, Sarah, after sustaining a dog bite to his hind fetlock. Dr. Douglas examines Buddy, cleans and bandages the small wound and prescribes oral antibiotics. A week later, Buddy has more localized swelling and becomes more lame, so Sarah brings him back to the clinic. This time, Dr. Zach, another associate veterinarian, sees Buddy because Dr. Douglas is off that day. After reviewing the case notes, Dr. Zach decides to take a more aggressive approach, recommending more diagnostic testing and intra-articular lavage.

During the visit, Sarah expresses concern about why these additional steps weren't recommended sooner. Dr. Zach replies, "I would have approached this differently from the start. Wounds involving synovial structures need more proactive management, and it's unfortunate that wasn't done here."

Sarah, frustrated by the implication that Buddy's condition was mishandled, sends an email complaint to the hospital manager. In the email, she quotes Dr. Zach and accuses Dr. Douglas of delaying critical care for Buddy.

The hospital manager, Megan, receives the complaint and calls Dr. Douglas in for a discussion. Megan shares the details of the complaint and Sarah's frustration, including the fact that Dr. Zach suggested the initial treatment plan was inadequate. Dr. Douglas, feeling blindsided and betrayed, is upset by Dr. Zach's comments. He believes his treatment plan was appropriate for the information

gathered at the time of presentation and is angry that Dr. Zach would criticize him to a client instead of discussing concerns privately.

Megan acknowledges Dr. Douglas's frustration and encourages him to address the issue directly with Dr. Zach, as open communication between colleagues is essential. Additionally, Dr. Douglas and Dr. Zach have minimal communication with one another because of personality differences.

c. Asking for raise (with boss/supervisor)

Dr. Christy has been working at Pacific Equine Hospital for 2 years as an associate veterinarian. She has consistently received positive feedback from clients, helped increase clinic revenue by promoting preventive care packages, and regularly covers additional emergency shifts and weekends. Despite her contributions, Dr. Christy feels her compensation does not reflect her value to the practice, especially after researching industry salary standards in her region. She finds out her new male colleague who was just hired is making \$10,000 more than she is. She decides to approach her boss, Dr. Scott, the clinic owner, to request a raise.

- d. **Significant other:** You and your significant other are discussing a recent unexpected expense—your horse's emergency colic surgery. You paid the bill upfront, but now there's disagreement about how to handle the financial burden (credit card debt). You believe it should come out of a shared savings account, while your partner feels it's your responsibility since it's your horse. The conversation becomes heated, with underlying emotions about financial priorities surfacing.
- i. Also consider if children are involved, or a business decision
- e. **Family/friends:** Your close friend calls you in a panic because their Grand Prix show jumper has suddenly become lame and has a localized distal limb swelling of the affected limb. The horse is currently located at the trainer's facility in another state. Another vet has evaluated the horse and left treatment directions your friend is uneasy about. She would like you to call the trainer and give your opinion about the case and treatment recommendations. You explain that you're not comfortable providing recommendations when you cannot evaluate the horse yourself. However, your friend becomes upset, accusing you of being unhelpful and questioning your loyalty to them as a friend.
- f. **Strangers/Public:** Imagine you're at a horse show, having a rare moment to enjoy your own horse. Suddenly, another horse kicks your horse in the warm-up arena, causing an injury. You quickly assess the situation and realize your horse needs veterinary attention. You approach the other horse's owner, seeking accountability and cooperation, but the conversation becomes tense. The owner responds defensively, accusing you of not paying attention in the crowded arena.

