Crew Resource Management (CRM) is the safety system employed by high reliability organizations to help ensure positive outcomes in high-risk situations. CRM originated in 1979 to address the impact of human errors on the safety of commercial aviation flights. The National Transportation Safety Board defines CRM as “using all available sources—information, equipment, and people—to achieve safe and efficient flight operations.” CRM involves leadership development, team training, safety tools, measurement systems, and simulation to:

- Improve teamwork
- Utilize effective communication skills to ensure better decisions and provide feedback for continuous quality improvement
- Use cross-checking tools to catch mistakes before they become serious and avoid mishaps
- Proactively address potential problems
- Manage fatigue

The Medical Community has Widely Endorsed the use of CRM Concepts as a Way of Improving Patient Safety:

- In their report Health Care at the Crossroads: Strategies for Improving the Medical Liability System and Preventing Patient Injury, the Joint Commission recommends CRM for improving healthcare and states that implementing CRM concepts "could increase the timeliness and accuracy of communications - breakdowns of which are commonly implicated sources of serious adverse events. This could also help to enlist clinicians and support staff in committing to a common goal - safe and effective care - in the often high-pressure and chaotic environments of healthcare."

- The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the division of the Department of Health & Human Services dedicated to improving "the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of health care for all Americans", lists Crew Resource Management as a complementary way to improve patient safety because "some mistake-proofing devices reduce the need to attend to process details. This reduced cognitive load can free resources and facilitate effective participation in decision making typical in CRM."

- Numerous studies have been conducted which reveal a positive outcome of CRM training in healthcare settings including the International Journal for Quality in Health Care study “Effect of crew resource management training in a multidisciplinary obstetrical setting” which concludes CRM "contributes to a significant improvement in interprofessional teamwork."

- In his 2000 Testimony on Patient Safety and Medical Errors, John M. Eisenberg, M.D., Director, AHRQ, stated: 'Our current culture emphasizes an approach often referred to as 'name you, blame you, shame you'. We know that such approaches only encourage clinicians to hide their mistakes. As the IOM report notes, we can learn
from the experience of the aviation industry in this regard. Once fraught with accidents, the aviation industry today can serve as a model for how to build a safe system. The key to their success was abandoning a 'blame the individual' approach. Abandoning that approach led to an increase in reporting of errors and 'near misses'. They rigorously analyze those events and re-engineer the plane's systems and processes, using human factors analysis and applying teamwork, guidelines, automation, simplification, and standardization to as many functions as possible. Our health care system must take similar steps. By creating an environment where clinicians can share their mistakes, we can begin to develop systems that will ensure that these errors will not be repeated."

LifeWings is Uniquely Qualified to Help Your Hospital Employ CRM to Improve Patient Safety and Financial Viability:

Adapting the key concepts of CRM to healthcare has had significant results. In 2001 LifeWings founder, Steve Harden, a CRM expert for both the U.S. Navy and FedEx, co-author of "CRM: The Flight Plan for Lasting Change in Patient Safety", the definitive how-to text on implementing aviation-based safety tools in healthcare, and co-founder of Crew Training International, the world's largest provider of CRM training for aviation organizations, developed a program that applied CRM principles to healthcare delivery teams. His program, the LifeWings Patient Safety Improvement Program has reduced medical errors, improved employee satisfaction, and saved lives at more than 85 healthcare facilities nationwide. The overwhelming success of the program and the intense public interest in improving healthcare quality has resulted in significant media attention and client praise.

The LifeWings adaptation of CRM for implementation in healthcare:

- Prepares healthcare leadership to lead a permanent and sustainable cultural change initiative;
- Provides world-class, customized, experiential, evidence-based teamwork and communication skills training;
- Establishes teamwork performance standards and creates willingness in the staff to hold one another accountable to those standards;
- Re-ignites a passion for great care and instills a sense of "ownership" in the process of care at all levels of the organization;
- Creates site-specific, purpose-built safety tools that hardwire behavior change and mitigate the effect of inevitable human error;
- Develops comprehensive measurement systems to document results and monitor progress goals.