WE NEED TO TALK:
Overcoming the fear of having a difficult conversation

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OUTCOMES
- Understand what constitutes a difficult conversation and when it's needed.
- Recognize the value of and barriers to engaging in difficult conversations.
- Understand the importance of follow up in order to effect change and hold employees accountable.
- Implement a personal plan for strengthening your ability to navigate current and future conversations

“A difficult conversation is anything you find it hard to talk about”
- Stone, Patton, & Hoen, 1999, p.xvii

“A difficult conversation is one that required courage on the part of one or both parties”
- Sanderson, 2005, p.4
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EXAMPLES:

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

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WHAT BROUGHT YOU HERE?

Think of a conversation you have been putting off

Got it?.........................Let's GO!

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

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How do you handle difficult conversations?

___________________________________

___________________________________

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___________________________________
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**AVOIDANCE**
- Fear of unknown consequences
- Losing the relationship
- Being the object of anger
- Being hurtful
- Being perceived as bad

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**THE DILEMMA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inaction</th>
<th>Action</th>
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**INACTION**

If you don’t act now then you could:

- Mislead the person by giving them the impression that there is no problem
- Rob the other person of the opportunity to improve
- Damage the productivity and efficiency of your library
- Lower the morale among others
- Things could get worse…….
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**ACTION**
- Strengthens relationships
- Anxiety decreases
- Trust and respect flourish

“Difficult conversations provide an opportunity to increase morale, develop collaboration, and foster positive workplace” - Farrell

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**PREP WORK**

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**COMMUNICATION: THE FACTS**

“It’s how you looked when you said it, not what you actually said.”*

- 7% Words
- 38% Vocal (Tone)
- 55% Nonverbal

* The Definitive Book of Body Language, Alan and Barbara Pease
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**COMMUNICATION TIPS**

- Active Listening
- Body Language
- Tone
- “I”
- Paraphrase
- Ask Questions
- Don’t “should on” people

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**WORKING ON YOURSELF**

- Outcomes
- Assumptions
- Awareness
  - Emotions
  - Attitude
  - Needs/Fears
  - Contribution

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**MISTAKES WE MAKE**

- Reacting
- Over simplification
- Not enough respect
- Emotions
- Environment
- Straight talk
- Blame Game
- Generalities
- Threats
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The Process

The Ask
The Opener
Learning Conversation
Advocacy
Building Solutions
The Ending

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The Ask

“How to Ask to Have The Conversation”
- Dalhousie University

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EETJXvMG00s

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The Opener

An opening statement or introduction to the conversation should be clear about the purpose of the meeting or conversation.

- State the problem
- Why it is important
- Impact on performance and/or organization
  - Specific incidents should be used as evidence of behavior or performance linked with the impact of the issue.
THE OPENER

- I'd like to talk about ____ with you, but first I'd like to get your point of view.
- I need your help with what just happened. Do you have a few minutes to talk?
- I'd like to see if we might reach a better understanding about______. I really want to hear your feelings about this and share my perspectives as well.
- I'd like to talk about_____. I think we may have different ideas about how to ________.

PRACTICE!

Write a possible opening for your conversation

LEARNING CONVERSATION

Inquiry

- Cultivate an attitude of discovery and curiosity.
- Your reality may not be their reality.
- Don’t run on assumptions
- Listen!
- Ask open ended questions
- Acknowledge that you’ve seen and understood
  - Paraphrase
  - Summarize the response
“When you accept and honor people for who they are and what they are experiencing, they are more likely to open up and explore with you.”

-Marcia Reynolds

Learning Conversation

Sometimes Conversations Go Badly......

“Video Demonstration of Difficult Conversations: Underlying Cause of a Performance Issue”
-Dalhousie University

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrN0emxXs_k

Advocacy

It’s your turn!

- Bring up the issue- neutrally and factually
- Differentiate between person vs. behavior
- What has the person missed?
- Clarify your position
- What do you think?
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**Building Solutions**
- Give them a benefit for changing
- Engage in negotiation
- Problem-Solving
- Formalize the agreement into a series of next steps

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**The End**
- Clarify and summarize
- Follow up with another meeting or discussion
- Documentation
- End with something positive
- Disengage

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**Three Things**
“Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters”
- Margaret Wheatley
   Author, Consultant