



ACHIEVE
CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP

PowerPoint Slides for
On-Demand Webinar

Difficult Conversations

Strategies for Challenging Discussions

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WE BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE SHOULD BE ABLE TO LIKE WHERE THEY WORK.

LEARNING GOAL

- Identify your learning goal for this webinar.
- Reflect on your motivation for participating.

MY GOALS

- To help you understand what is needed to identify when and how to conduct a difficult conversation.
- To give you practical tips to help you minimize the need for difficult conversations in the first place.

WORKPLACE CONFLICT STATS

- A CPP, Inc. study of workplace conflict reveals that employees in the U.S. spend roughly 2.8 hours per week dealing with conflict.
- 33% of employees report that the conflict led to personal injury and attacks.
- 22% report that it led to illness and absence from work.
- 10% report that project failure was a direct result of conflict.

WORKPLACE CONFLICT STATS

- A similar study by Psychometrics in Canada showed that 32% of employees have to deal with conflict regularly.
- More alarming is a recent study by Accenture revealing that, even in this challenging economic climate, 35% of employees leave their jobs voluntarily because of internal politics.

MY DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

- A doctor has to tell a patient about a bad diagnosis
- Parents have to inform their children that they are moving to a new city
- Having to let someone go
- Asking a supervisor for a raise
- Telling a supplier you are cutting back on their services
- Having to provide corrective feedback to an employee
- Addressing someone who is telling a racist, homophobic, sexist, etc., joke

HAVE YOU HAD ONE OF THESE CONVERSATIONS?

In the same survey, 525 respondents identified a single conversation that had **life-altering consequences**.

- **More than half** said the effects of this one conversation lasted forever.
- Nearly **two-thirds** permanently damaged a relationship.
- **One in seven** harmed a career.

WHO IS YOUR NUMBER #1?

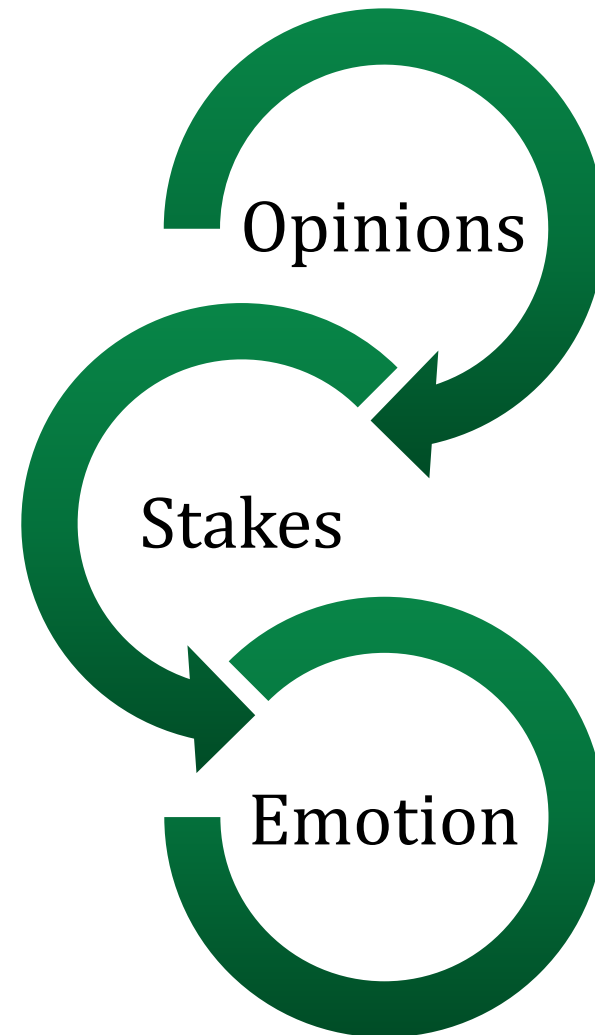
- Think about the person you find it most difficult to communicate with?
- Guess what statistics tell us?

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

We've all had difficult conversations in the past. Some went well, some did not.

- Think of some conversations you have had
- Identify what made them difficult

3 ELEMENTS OF A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION



MY DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Think about a difficult conversation you have been waiting to happen:

1. Identify the person you need to have the conversation with
2. Be clear about your relationship with this person
3. Summarize the situation

WHEN IT'S NECESSARY

Can it be solved generally?

Would a chat be enough?

Is it your role?

Is your information complete?

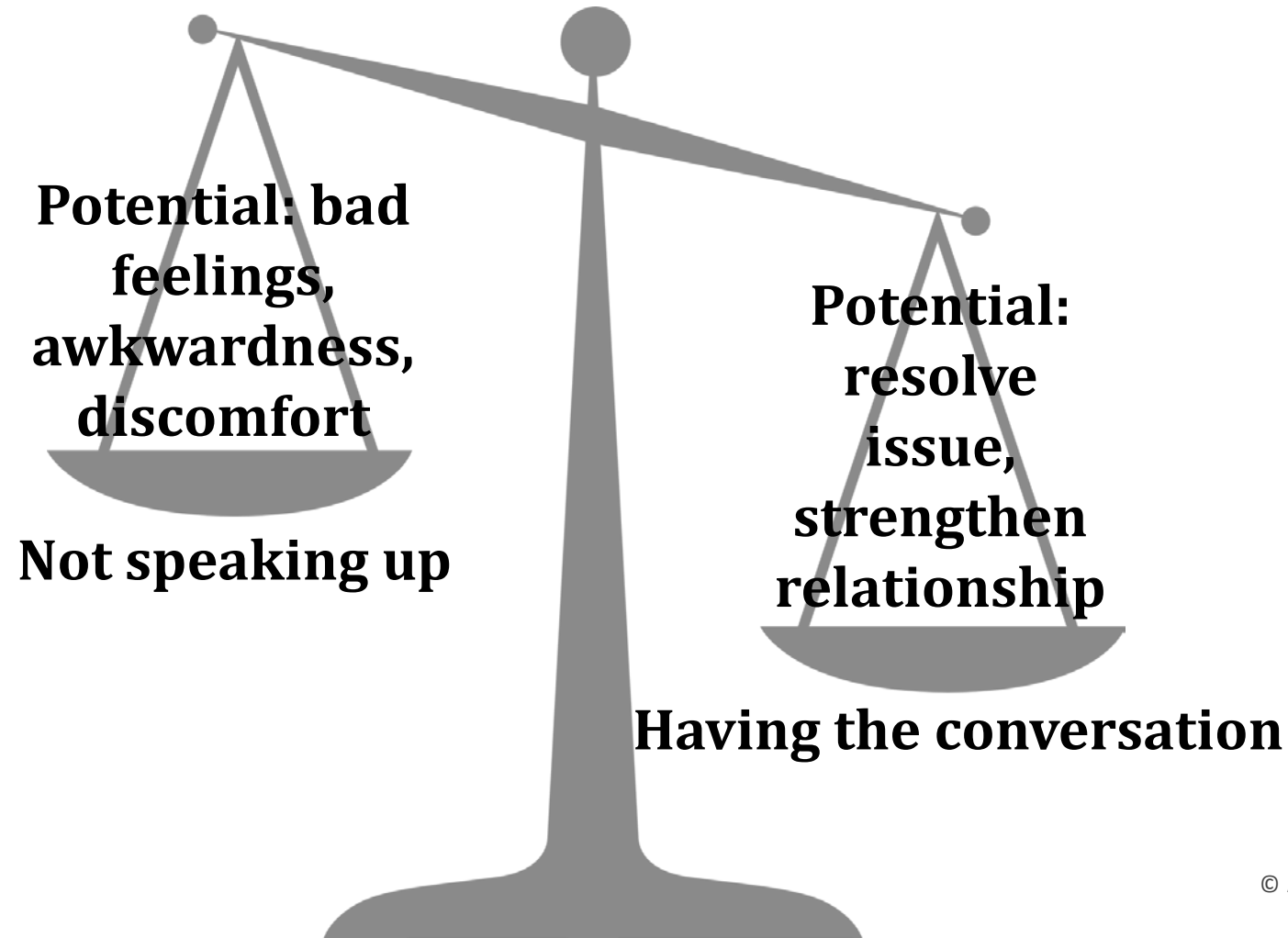
Is the conversation not part of an alternative message?

WHEN IT'S NECESSARY

Think about your situation:

- Can you resolve the issue generally?
- Is a chat enough?
- Are you the right person?
- Do you have enough information?

HOW TO STOP AVOIDING THE DIFFICULT CONVERSATION



THE DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

Two types:

SHARING NEWS

- Inform
- Emotions

PROBLEM SOLVING

- Issue
- Resolution

THE DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

Three main parts

PRIOR TO THE CONVERSATION

- Self-assessment
- Preparation

THE CONVERSATION

- Initiation
- Navigation
- Conclusion

AFTER THE CONVERSATION

- Follow-up (if required)

PREPARING FOR THE DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

Look at your history

- What patterns did you notice?
- What do you think this says about you and how you deal with difficult conversations?

PREPARING FOR THE DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

Examine your feelings

- Do you have an emotional reaction to the situation?
- Are you making any assumptions?

PREPARING FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

Now think about your situation:

- Identify the feelings that come up
- Explore the assumptions you are making about the situation
- Get curious: What are some possible reasons for the situation?

TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

- Practice *unified detachment*
- Don't try to “win”
- Help them feel safe
- Be clear about your goals
- Remember to get curious
- Choose the right time & place
- Take a nice deep breath

TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

- Practice *unified detachment*
 - Reframe
 - Separate the person from the problem
 - Keep the issue and the desire for a solution front and centre

TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

- Don't try to “win”
 - Watch your power needs
 - A real win involves both parties
 - This is not a power struggle

TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

- Help them feel safe
 - Watch for signs that they do not feel safe
 - Let them know that you are there to hear them

TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

- Be clear about your goals
 - State them
 - Be positive
 - Mutual purpose

TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

- Remember to “get curious”
 - Consider your attitudes
 - Wonder about what is going on
 - Ask lots of questions

TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

- Choose the right time & place
 - Advanced notice
 - Neutral is best
 - Private

BEGINNING THE DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

- Open safely
- Set the tone
- Blame your role
- Be direct
- Be respectful
- Why you are there

OPENING EXAMPLES - SPECIFIC

- *“I’d like to talk about Dad’s will. We both have different ideas of what he intended and what we think is fair to both of us. I’d like to understand why you see things the way you do.”*
- *“I’d like to share my concerns about Sam’s behavior in class. I’d like to hear more about what you think is contributing to it.”*

OPENING EXAMPLES

- *I'd like to discuss something with you that I think will help us work together more effectively...*
- *I'd like to talk about ____ with you, but first I'd like to understand your point of view.*
- *I need your help with _____. Do you have a few minutes to talk?*
- *I think we have different perceptions about _____. I'd like to hear your thinking on this.*
- *I'd like to see if we might reach a better understanding about _____. I really want to hear your thoughts about this and share my perspective as well.*

CHECKLIST FOR CREATING AN OPENING

- ✓ Open safely
- ✓ Use their name
- ✓ Watch your tone
- ✓ Blame your role or state joint interests
- ✓ State the issue directly and respectfully
- ✓ State your intention for a positive exchange

DELIVERING THE DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

- Let them talk
- Acknowledgement
- Manage the emotions
- Be consistent
- Don't forget to breathe

CONCLUDING THE CONVERSATION

The conversation must end with either of the following:

- Call to action
- Resolution to the problem.

Have a goal in mind, but be open to input.

– this is a *CONVERSATION*

THE DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

Two types:

SHARING NEWS

- Inform
- Emotions

PROBLEM SOLVING

- Issue
- Resolution

DELIVERING BAD NEWS

Six things to keep in mind:

1. Be prepared
2. Explain how the decision was made
3. Don't include your point of view
4. Avoid debate
5. Focus on next steps
6. Don't convey mixed messages

PROBLEM-SOLVING

Four things to keep in mind:

1. Reframe the conversation
2. Plan what you are going to say
3. Choose your points wisely
4. Offer something

FOLLOWING UP AFTER THE DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

- Follow-up, when necessary, must be handled well.
 - Chose a realistic timeframe
 - Make sure it is measurable
- What are some follow-ups that would work for you?

FOLLOWING UP AFTER THE DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

Self-reflection

- What went well?
- What can you improve on?
- What happened that you didn't expect?
- Were you able to stay on track?
- Could you keep your emotions from hijacking the conversation?
- What else do you need to remember for next time?

REFLECTION

WENT WELL

WENT POORLY

LANDMINES

Watch out for:

- Under-preparing
- Over-preparing
- Making assumptions
- Not being respectful enough
- Playing a zero-sum game
- Getting “hooked”
- Oversimplification

THE RECEIVING END

Think about being on the receiving end of a difficult conversation – what was it like?

- What did you do that made it better?
- What did you do that made it worse?

HOW TO PREVENT THE NEED FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

- Address issues as they arise
- Acknowledge their value
- Make good better
- Communication is key
- Create a culture of support

HOW TO PREVENT THE NEED

Open, honest communication is at the core of any successful human interaction.

Practice that, and you will find your need for difficult conversations reduced.

**“People almost never change
without first feeling
understood.”**

DOUGLAS STONE:
*DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS: HOW TO
DISCUSS WHAT MATTERS MOST*

ADDITIONAL EVENTS & RESOURCES

- Other Public Workshops
- On-Location Training
- Live and On-Demand Webinars
- Blog Articles
- Free Monthly Webinar

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