



L.I.S.T.E.N. Strategies for Negotiating Difficult Conversations



Language

Strategies

- Use "I" statements
- Avoid generalizations and generics
- Lift the language

Identify

Strategies

- Consider if identities are being challenged
- Consider conversational roles

Structure

Strategies

- Identify stakeholders
- Construct guidelines
- Assess the setting

Topics

Strategies

- Untangle the topics
- Set priorities

Emotions

Strategies

- Recognize emotions
- Develop emotional fluency

Needs

Strategies

- Identify Conflicting Needs
- Identify Mutual Needs
- Develop approach to meet both

P O I N T E R S

- ✓ Listen for meaning behind the words.
- ✓ Use I-statements, summarize, repeat, & reflect.
- ✓ Avoid generalizations like "always" and "never."
- ✓ Avoid assumptions; check for meaning.
- ✓ Try to not label, accuse, insult, or be harsh.

- ✓ Identity is a product of experiences, expertise, contributions, values and beliefs.
- ✓ Conversations can become difficult when we challenge each other's identities.
- ✓ Understanding our roles helps us strategize how to understand each other better.

- ✓ The right people, the right space, the right time.
- ✓ *Praise in public, criticize in private.*
- ✓ Minimize unnecessary delays and be prepared.
- ✓ Agree on a respectful framework.

- ✓ Separate conversations for separate topics.
- ✓ First things first; set a tone, create momentum.
- ✓ Seek easy wins early; build on your success.
- ✓ Plan, prepare, & commit undistracted time.

- ✓ High-performers care passionately about their work. Some emotions in the workplace is good!
- ✓ Also, recognize that anger, frustration, & stress are everywhere, including the workplace.
- ✓ Consider pausing the conversation when negative emotion gets in the way.

- ✓ It helps to identify, respect, and try to satisfy legitimate needs that are (1) similar, (2) different, (3) compatible, and (4) in conflict.
- ✓ Seek solutions that satisfy as many needs as possible.
- ✓ The NDR Office can link you to skill-building!