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

- **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!