

**Difficult Conversations WALE**  
**With Cyndi Schaeffer, PhD**

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- Icebreaker
- Why you need to have that conversation
- What are difficult conversations?
- Types of conversations and coaching
- The essentials for a good conversation
- Review and critique
- Practice
- Action planning and further development

**Agenda**

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- Be able to articulate why conversations and coaching are necessary
- Identify, list and practice essentials for a good conversations and coaching
- Identify and demonstrate tools to have conversations and coach
- Identify further developmental opportunities

**Objectives**

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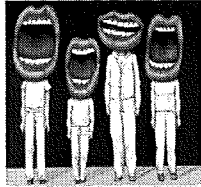
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**Why you need to have that difficult conversation**

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- You feel awful
- Others feel awful
- Your needs aren't being met
- Your organizations' needs are not being met
- It isn't fair to others
- Team work is being compromised
- You are doing a disservice to that person by not being honest
- It's your job

**Why**

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- Fear
- Embarrassment
- Anger
- Need to be liked
- Avoidance of conflict
- Lack the knowledge
- Lack the skill
- Don't acknowledge and/or don't prioritize coaching
- Hope the "problem" will go away

**Why People Don't /Won't have Those Conversations**

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- What keeps you from that coaching- conversation?

## Conversation

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### Worst

- Poor relationship
- Never coaches
- Waits too long
- Engages when angry
- Doesn't care
- Doesn't listen
- Lack of clarity
- Triangulates
- "Tells" employee the solution frequently
- Doesn't follow-up

### Best

- Relationship has already been established
- Coaching is essential activity
- Deals with issues in a timely manner
- Genuinely cares and listens completely
- States clear expectations
- Empowers employee whenever possible for solutions
- Regularly follows-up

## Worst and Best Practices

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- Poor performance
- "Power" imbalance
- Body odor or hygiene issues
- Ethical violations
- Poor interpersonal interactions
- Changes in job status
- Poor attitude
- Overuse of perfume
- Peers, boss

Others?

## Difficult Conversations- What are they?

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- Onboarding
- Relationship building
- Information exchange
- Employee engagement
- Apologize
- Employee recognition and motivation
- Change implementation
- Support
- Further clarity and direction
- Performance
- Behavior
- Development
- "Level-set"

### **Types and Combinations of Coaching and Conversations**

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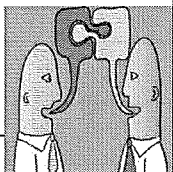
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- Privacy and setting
- Be emotionally present
- Having courage
- Seek to understand
- Clarify the problem/expectation
- Stay on task
- Affirm and validate
- Apologize for your part of the problem
- Empower whenever possible
- Follow up

### **The essentials for any good conversation**



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- Talk to your group about a difficult or coaching interaction you have been meaning to have

### **Conversation in Personal Life**

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- Know how you feel and be grounded
- Tone, tone, and tone
- Show or convey that you care
- If there isn't an already established relationship, try to develop a positive relationship
- Say what you have observed or the behavior/performance/attitude noted
- State the purpose of coaching
- Follow with open ended questions
- Breathe

## **Start the conversation**

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- Know your fears
- Do not wait until too long
- Be warm and caring
- Know how you feel
- Be grounded
- Never be angry or frustrated
- Be in the conversation
- Connect even with differences
- Observe yourself
- Know your personality and style
- Use emotional intelligence

## **Be emotionally present**

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**Self-Awareness:** Emotional self-awareness; accurate self-assessment; self-confidence; personality style  
**Self-Management:** Self-control, trustworthiness; conscientiousness, adaptability; achievement orientation; initiative  
**Social Awareness:** Personality style, empathy; organizational awareness; service orientation  
**Social Skills:** Help clarify and empower

## **Emotional Intelligence**

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Going back to that conversation and conversation you need to have....

- How long have you waited
- Are you mad?
- How do you feel about it?
- How do you sit "emotionally"?
- What is your personality style?
- Why haven't you had it? List out the barriers

## Conversation

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- Be culturally sensitive
- Acknowledge personality
- Non- verbal behaviors and silence
- Open-ended questions (clips)
- Paraphrasing
- Summary



## Seek to Understand- Active Listening Skills, p. 9

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- Empower solutions whenever possible
- Brain structures and cognitive mapping
- Cognitive dissonance
- State expectations

## Avoid "should" and Empower!

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- Make sure you or the individual restates the expectation or the understanding before the conversation ends
- Configures in brain

## **Restatement and Follow-up**

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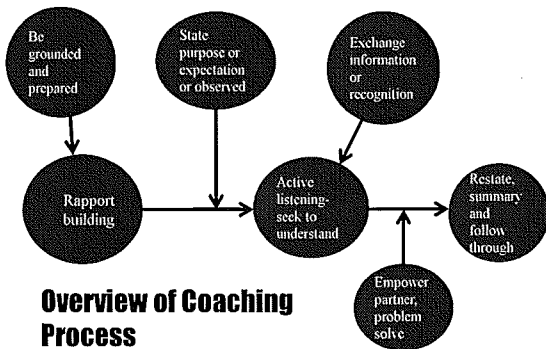
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## **Overview of Coaching Process**

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- Video - Ethical Issues
- Video - Passed Over for Training
- Video - Video - Throwing Team Member "under the bus"

## **Critique the Video- p. 16**

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- Scenario 1
- Scenario 2
- Scenario 3

## **Practice and Supportive Feedback, p. 31**

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- Role play several scenarios

## **Group Exercise**

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- Don't wait too long
- Practice and practice
- Be easy on yourself while learning
- Find a coaching mentor or partner

## **Closure**

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## 7 Active Listening Skills

1. Nonverbal and verbal behaviors
  - a) Eye contact
  - b) Body language
  - c) Facial expressions
  - d) Culture and gender
  
2. Use open ended questions
  - a) Start questions with "I'm curious what you mean ...." "Could you help me understand why...?"
  - b) Avoid closed ended questions..."do you think you are right?"..."Do you think that will really work?"
  
3. Paraphrasing content: thoughts and ideas
  - a) Using own words acknowledge thoughts and ideas
  - b) Using own words paraphrase emotional statements used
  - c) Don't repeat verbatim
  - d) Avoids jumping in with solutions
  
4. Perception checking "self"
  - a) Know how you feel
  - b) Put your "self" and ideas/thoughts/arguments, emotions on the "side"
  - c) Try to get in the other person's "shoes"
  
5. Summary statement or reflections- validating content and emotion
  - a) Check out their emotions with words you think reflect their feelings
  - b) Empathize with emotions
  - c) Be "in the moment" don't cloud empathy with your feelings
  
6. Passive listening- attentive, no interruptions
  - a) Allow speaker to talk , uninterrupted- does not jump in with solutions
  - b) Give complete attention
  - c) Watch facial expressions and body language
  - d) Provide minimal encouragers to show you are listening
  
7. Empowers employee to identify solutions and strategies.

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## Roleplaying

### Take a turn - Switch roles

1. Your coworker, Margaret, is an introvert. During meetings you have noticed that she does not talk very much. Yet, following the meetings, you hear that Margaret is upset or doesn't agree with the new procedure decided.

Initiate a coaching session with Margaret. Ask her open-ended questions. Follow up with paraphrases. Help Margaret identify solutions. Resist the temptation to offer Margaret solutions. Summarize the expectations and what you both agreed.

**Observer role:** How many open ended questions were asked of Margaret? Did the "coach" jump in and try to solve the employee's problem/issue? Did the "coach" paraphrase and reflect what the employee said? Did the "coach" restate expectation if appropriate and summarize?

2. Your coworker, Monique, is upset. You have heard from several employees that she is telling her team that she is frustrated and angry at you. You inadvertently gave two people the same assignment to work on- Monique and Jose. They both began to work on the project and you forgot that you had made the assignment to both.

Initiate a coaching session with Monique. Ask her open-ended questions. Follow up with paraphrases. Help Monique identify solutions. Resist the temptation to offer Monique solutions. Summarize the expectations and what you both agreed.

**Observer role:** How many open ended questions were asked of Monique? How did the coach handle the issue of the double assignment? Was an apology made? How did the apology work? Did the "coach" paraphrase and reflect what the employee said? Did the "coach" restate and expectations if appropriate, and summarize?

**3. Beth often smells of bad perspiration odor. You have noticed the odor. Others have noticed the odor. Beth is your colleague.**

Initiate a difficult conversation with Beth. Ask open ended questions.

**Observer role:** How many open ended questions were asked of Beth? Did the colleague paraphrase and reflect what the employee said? Did the colleague invite the colleague to problem solve some solutions about the new work assignments? Did the "coworker" restate and expectations if appropriate, and summarize?

**4. Bill is your supervisor. During meetings with others, you hear him take the "credit" for your team accomplishments.**

Initiate a difficult conversation with Bill.

**Observer role:** How many open ended questions were asked of Bill? Did the employee paraphrase and reflect what the employee said? Did the employee invite the supervisor to problem solve some solutions about the new work assignments? Did the employee restate and expectations/ or desired outcomes if appropriate, and summarize?

**5. Your customer (a stranger) in the lobby is playing their iPod music too loud. Other stakeholders have complained.**

Initiate a difficult conversation with the customer.

**Observer role:** How did the employee establish a relationship with this stranger? How was their tone? Did the employee invite problem solving with the customer? Was the expectation restated?

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