Managing Difficult Conversations

We have so many interactions in the run of a day, it's reasonable to expect that some of them are going to be difficult. Whether these are conversations that you have in person, or you manage a virtual team and need to speak with someone in another city, there are things that you can do to make these conversations go smoothly.

This training session will give you the tools to manage difficult conversations and get the best results possible out of them as we discuss different methods and communication techniques. This session can also be combined with "Dealing with Difficult Behaviours" content to create a broader overview of what makes a difficult behaviour or conversation.

Course Overview

You will spend the first part of the day getting to know participants and discussing what will take place during the workshop. Students will also have an opportunity to identify their personal learning objectives.

This workshop will help you teach participants how to:

- Define frame of reference
- Establish a positive intent and a desired outcome
- Use good communication skills during a conversation
- Draft a script for a difficult conversation
- Use specific steps to carry out a difficult conversation
- Access additional resources as required
- Maintain safety in a conversation

Choosing to Have the Conversation

Your first step in managing a difficult conversation (even if it happens suddenly) is to consider the potential outcomes and decide whether or not the conversation has enough value for you. This session will show participants ways to consider the consequences, as well as how to explore their frame of reference, establish positive intent, and identify what they want from the conversation.

Toolkit for Successful Conversations

Good communication skills are crucial for a successful conversation. This session will give participants tools for managing their body language, speaking persuasively, active listening, asking questions, and using probing techniques.

Choosing the Time and Place

This session will give participants tips on choosing a good meeting place and time for a difficult conversation (if they have that option).

Framework for Difficult Conversations

Next, participants will explore a seven-step framework for difficult conversations. They will also create a template to help them plan future conversations.

Staying Safe

In this session, participants will learn how to handle conversations which might be a threat to their safety.

Testing the Waters

To wrap up the course, participants will role play a difficult conversation that they have recently encountered.

Workshop Wrap-Up

At the end of the day, students will have an opportunity to ask questions and fill out an action plan.