

RELATIONSHIPS

BETTER CONVERSATIONS

THE DIFFICULT CONVERSATION PLAN

THE PROBLEM

People talk past each other when the need to defend, correct, or win becomes stronger than the effort to understand.

1 LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND

Do all three before explaining your side.

1 REPEAT: Here is what I heard you say...

2 CLARIFY: What do you mean by...?

3 CONFIRM: Did I understand that correctly?

THE MAIN POINT I HEARD: _____

2 OWN THE MESSAGE

Replace accusation with what you observed, felt, need, and request.

I NOTICED: _____

I FELT: _____

I NEED: _____

I AM ASKING: _____

3 SET THE GOAL

Decide what a useful conversation should accomplish before it begins.

☐ Understanding

☐ A decision

☐ Repair

☐ A boundary

☐ A next step

A GOOD OUTCOME IS: _____

THREE PHRASES TO USE IMMEDIATELY

Slow the reflex to respond. Use one phrase, then leave room for the answer.

WHAT I HEAR
YOU SAYING IS...

HELP ME
UNDERSTAND...

WHAT WOULD A GOOD
NEXT STEP BE?

CONVERSATION I NEED TO HAVE: _____

WHO CAN HELP?

Counselor, mediator, sales trainer, pastor, HR professional, or communication coach.

BRING THIS TOOL
TO THE CONVERSATION.

LESS WINNING. MORE UNDERSTANDING.

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General educational worksheet only. Complex conflict, safety concerns, or workplace issues may need qualified support.