

CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS

With organizations having to adapt to a constantly changing world, the capacity to have effective conversations is more important than ever. Whether the topic of your conversation is delivering a difficult message, giving tough performance feedback, or confronting insensitive behavior, the reticence most of us feel about having challenging conversations can be overcome.

Challenging Conversations covers all of the most challenging, intense, and emotionally charged types of conversations. Using a flexible five-step model, participants use work examples to practice new skills and have ample time for personal reflection on issues they face in their daily lives. These include speaking up without alienating the other person and being able to listen even if you are triggered by what you hear.

There are five interconnected steps to having a challenging conversation:

- S State your concerns directly
- P Probe for information to gain deeper understanding
- E Engage each other through wholehearted listening
- A Attend to body language
- K Keep forward focused when possible

All of these steps are important, although steps S, P, and E are the starting points. Depending on the situation, pick one as a conversation opener. Step A should be used throughout the entire conversation. Step K concludes the conversation.

Participant Materials

- Participant Workbook (with or without optional Game Plan and Reaction and Response Guide)



This program provides opportunities to build competence and commitment in preparing for and conducting challenging conversations. In an energizing, interactive, and safe environment, participants practice the types of challenging conversations that have become so much a part of daily life. Workplace situations are the key focus, but these skills are equally useful in managing difficult conversations with family and with others outside of work.

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