



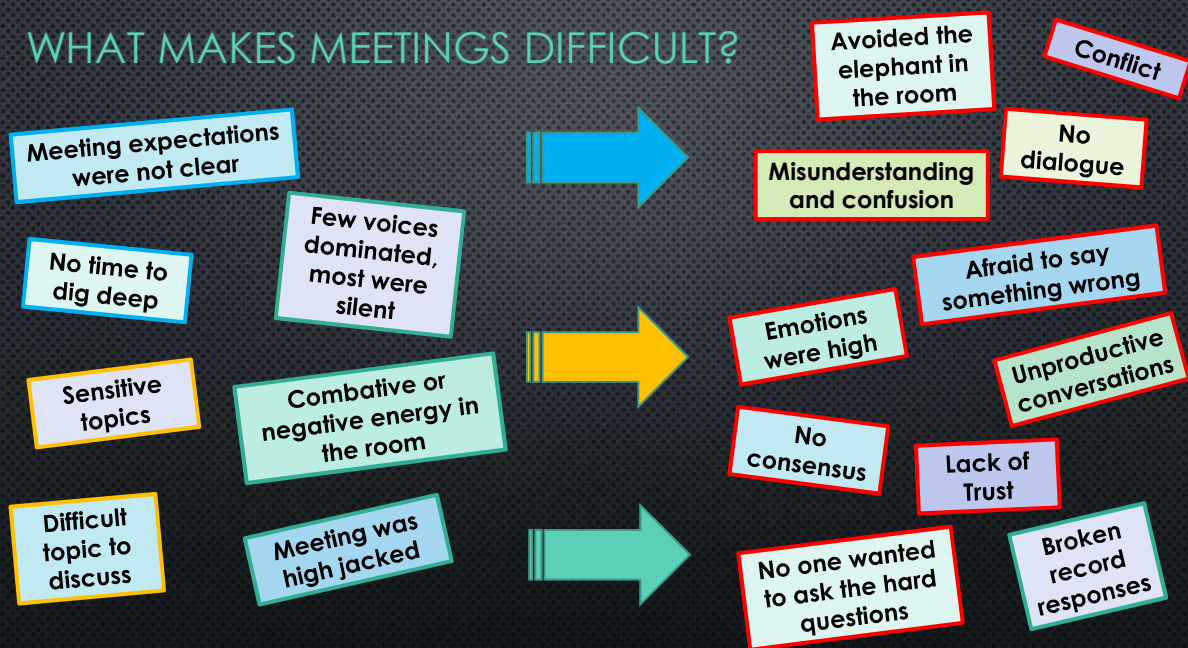
FACILITATING DIFFICULT MEETINGS & CONVERSATIONS

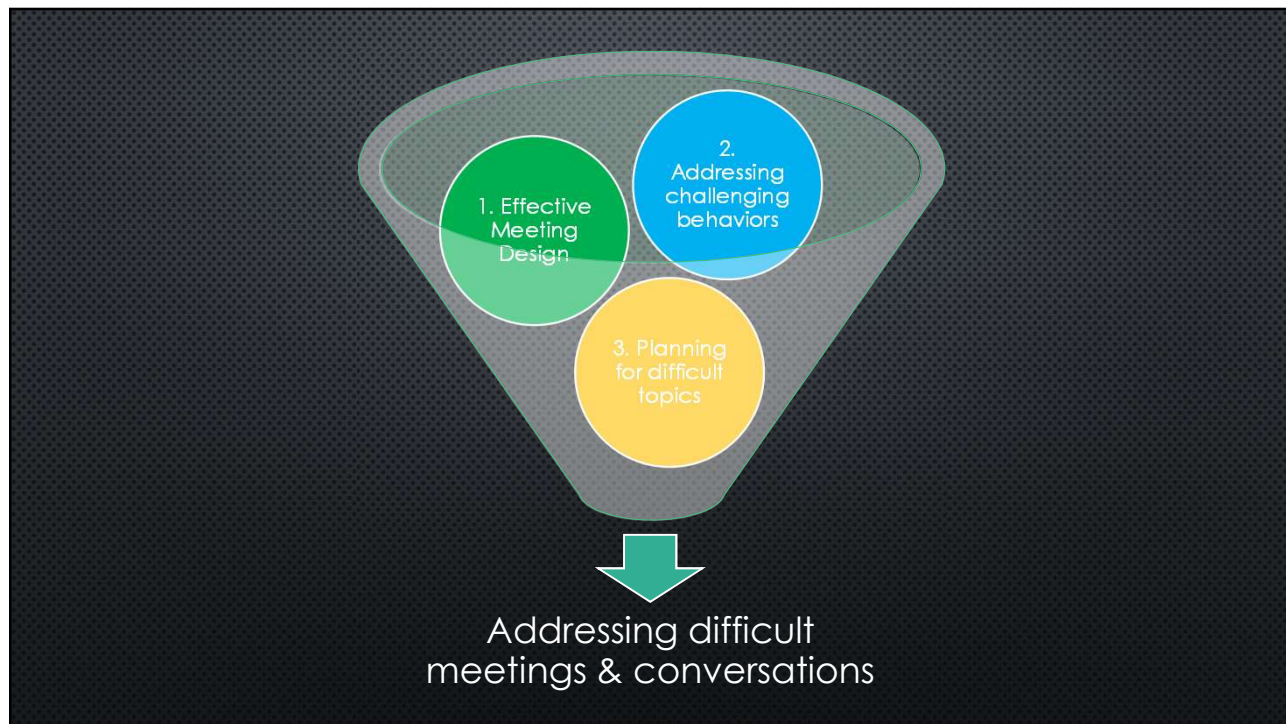
QUARTERLY FACILITATION TRAINING

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WHAT MAKES MEETINGS DIFFICULT?





GENERAL TIPS ON CONFLICT

- OUR INTERNAL FEELINGS ABOUT CONFLICT SHAPE HOW WE RESPOND TO CONFLICT
 - CHOOSE HOW TO ACT BY BEING MINDFUL OF THESE FEELINGS
- CONFLICT CAN BE GOOD
 - BY WORKING HARD TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER
 - CREATE SPACE TO ALLOW INDIVIDUALS A SAFE SPACE TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWPOINTS AND PERSPECTIVES, AND TO LEARN FROM OTHERS
- USE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND LISTENING SKILLS
- COMMAND AUTHORITY AND GET PEOPLE'S ATTENTION
 - SOUND CONFIDENT AND DON'T MAKE EXCUSES
- "WHEN THEY GO LOW, WE GO HIGH!"
 - CONTAIN THE URGE TO BE AGGRESSIVELY VERBAL. DON'T BE BAITED
 - RECOGNIZE YOUR FEELINGS AND FACILITATE WITH WISDOM
- WHEN THINGS GO AWRY – TAKE A BREAK
 - BE TRANSPARENT
 - REGROUP AND REFOCUS

**People almost never
change without
first feeling
understood.**

Douglas Stone
Author of
Difficult Conversations

1. EFFECTIVE MEETING DESIGN

- DEVELOP GROUND RULES
 - BUILDING THEM TOGETHER BUILDS OWNERSHIP AND INFORMS HOW THE GROUP WILL FUNCTION
- GET THE GROUP TO BE RELAXED AND CENTERED
 - CONSIDER AN ICE BREAKER OR TEAM BUILDING EXERCISE
- CONSIDER MULTIPLE MEETING DESIGNS
 - ALLOW TIME TO HAVE DIALOGUE – CONCENTRATE ON FACILITATING DIALOGUE, LESS ON MANAGING THE PROCESS
- FOR 12+ PARTICIPANTS, CONSIDER A LARGE GROUP PLANNING METHOD (E.G., WORLD CAFÉ)
 - HELPS WITH BETTER LISTENING
 - SUBDIVIDE IN TO 4-5 PERSONS TO ADDRESS A QUESTION OR ISSUE
- ENSURE EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE

EXAMPLE GROUND RULES DURING CONFLICTED MEETINGS

- ONE PERSON SPEAKS AT A TIME.
- WE WILL USE I STATEMENTS TO EXPRESS WHAT WE THINK AND FEEL.
- WE WILL LISTEN TO ONE ANOTHER AND EMPATHIZE WITH THE OTHER PERSON'S POINT OF VIEW.
- WE WILL PONDER OUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS BEFORE WE SPEAK.
- WE WILL KEEP CONFIDENCES UNLESS THE GROUP AGREES TO SHARE SELECTED INFORMATION BEYOND THE GROUP.
- WE WILL ATTACK ISSUES, NOT PEOPLE.
- WE WILL TRUST THAT WE DISCOVER GREATER TRUTH BY HEARING MULTIPLE VIEWPOINTS.

SOURCE: THRIVE, SMUTNY

RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

- **R** = TAKE **RESPONSIBILITY** FOR WHAT YOU SAY AND FEEL WITHOUT BLAMING OTHERS
- **E** = USE **EMPATHETIC** LISTENING
- **S** = BE **SENSITIVE** TO DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATION STYLES
- **P** = **PONDER** WHAT YOU HEAR AND FEEL BEFORE YOU SPEAK
- **E** = **EXAMINE** YOUR ASSUMPTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS
- **C** = KEEP **CONFIDENTIALITY**
- **T** = **TRUST** THAT GREATER TRUTH COMES THROUGH DIVERSITY

ADAPTED FROM: KALEIDOSCOPE INSTITUTE

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA WITH CHALLENGING TOPIC

Meeting Purpose

Icebreaker

Ground Rules

Table Discussion #1 – Record responses on 3 questions

Table Discussion #2 – Mix groups, add to recorded responses, ask one deeper question

Table Discussion #3 – Mix groups, add to recorded responses, go bold

Report Outs & Reflection – Capture the collective experience and insights of all

Next Steps & the Way Forward

2. ADDRESSING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

- ENGAGE IN RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE
- SLOW THINGS DOWN
 - TAKING A FEW BREATHS OR TIME OUT, ALLOW FOR A FEW MINUTES OF INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION AND WRITING
- BE TRANSPARENT AND MANAGE THE MOMENT
 - MAKE OBSERVATIONS, ASK PARTICIPANTS TO HELP IN DETERMINING HOW TO MOVE FORWARD
- REGROUND
 - GENTLY RESTATE THE GROUND RULES AND THE PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE DIALOGUE.
- ASK QUESTIONS TO GET UNSTUCK
 - ASK REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS TO ALLOW THE GROUP TO RE-ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE
- FOCUS ON BEHAVIOR AND ITS IMPACT, NOT INDIVIDUALS
 - BE COMPASSIONATE WITH YOUR WORDS, BE CURIOUS, DON'T ASSUME YOU KNOW THE PERSON'S PERSPECTIVES

HONING YOUR LISTENING SKILLS TO KEEP CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS AT BAY

Paraphrase	Reflective listening that tests what you heard was the speaker's intent, used to avoid miscommunication or confusion
Creative Questions	Provides opportunity to gain more information and insight , helps to correct distortions
Perception Check	Tests your observations of the state of emotions; used when emotions are running high
Direct Expression of Feelings	The leader or facilitator expresses his or her emotional state in order to get a sense of group's mood
Fogging	Used when facing criticism and offers no hard resistance to your critic; prevents an endless cycle of back-and-forth
Negative Inquiry	Turns your critic into your coach vs. your opponent by inviting your critic to name specific behaviors that are upsetting to him or her
Story Listening	Allows you to go deeper and understand the narrative

3. ADDRESSING CHALLENGING TOPICS

- BUILD RELATIONSHIPS: SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO TAKE RISKS. SELF-DISCLOSURE PROMOTES OTHERS TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES.
 - USE ANONYMOUS POLLING TO RESPOND TO SENSITIVE TOPICS
- CHALLENGE OTHERS TO "GO DEEPER": CREATE AND ASK QUESTIONS THAT ALLOW FOR MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE AND PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER. COULD LEAD TO NEW WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT THE ISSUES.
 - BE CURIOUS AND OPEN MINDED AND LET THE DIALOGUE UNFOLD BY FACILITATING VS CONTROLLING THE PROCESS.
 - ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO SHARE THEIR PERSPECTIVES.
 - EXPLORE SITUATIONS WITHOUT JUMPING TO THE ANSWERS
- PROVIDE MULTIPLE WAYS TO ABSORB CONTENT: PEOPLE ARE AT DIFFERENT PLACES ON THE CONTINUUM AND LEARN DIFFERENTLY.
 - OFFERING MULTIPLE WAYS TO ABSORB THE CONTENT WILL BE BENEFICIAL TO THE GROUP. WHAT IS EFFECTIVE FOR ONE PERSON IS NOT FOR ANOTHER.
 - PEOPLE BRING DIFFERENCES IN OPINIONS, ATTITUDES, BELIEFS AND EXPERIENCES. AUTHENTICALLY SEEKING TO LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND EVERYONE'S VIEWPOINTS PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES.
- END YOUR MEETING ON A HIGH NOTE: IN CONCLUSION TO THE MEETING, REFLECT ON THE DIALOGUE, ACKNOWLEDGE THE DIFFICULTY AND THANK EVERYONE FOR THEIR ENGAGEMENT IN A RESPECTFUL WAY

FACILITATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

- DOCUMENTATION: DO YOU HAVE FACTS OR DATA THAT HELP VISUALIZE THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT. WARNING: DON'T LET THE FACTS DETER FROM DIALOGUE AND NEW IDEAS
- PRESENT A CASE, BUT DON'T SOLVE IT: DON'T START THE MEETING WITH A PRE-DETERMINED SOLUTION. ALLOW PARTICIPANTS TO BE PART OF SOLUTION SOLVING
- TEST OPTIONS AND LEAVE THE POSSIBILITY OF NEW OPTIONS: ASSESS THE PROS AND CONS, GIVE PARTICIPANTS OPPORTUNITY TO BRING NEW IDEAS OR MAKE UPDATES TO OPTIONS
- ENGAGE EVERYONE THROUGH SMALL GROUP INSIGHTS: ALLOW EVERYONE TO ENGAGE AND HAVE SMALLER GROUP DISCOVERY AND CONNECTION

QUESTIONS

