Crucial Conversations in Stressful Times
Objectives

• Define “crucial conversations” and how to handle them when stakes are high.
• Explore creating a safe environment for dialogue.
• Learn to manage high emotions, strong opinions, and challenging situations.

What is a Crucial Conversation?
7 Tips for Handling Difficult Conversations

• Remain Calm.
• Know your objective.
• Develop a rapport.
• Engage in Conversation. Try to draw out the person’s feelings by engaging in conversation.
• Be Empathetic. One of the quickest ways to calm someone is by being empathetic.
• Avoid Arguing.
• Shake if Off.
What a Crucial Conversation is NOT!
The 8 Principles of Crucial Conversations

1. Get Unstuck
2. Start with Heart
3. Learn to Look
4. Make it Safe
5. Master My Stories
6. STATE My Path
7. Explore Others’ Paths
8. Move to Action
Building Trust

Personal History Exercise (in pairs)

1. Who has been the biggest influence in your life?
2. What would be your do over career?

What did you learn from each other?

4 minutes
TRUST IS THE FOUNDATION

No quality or characteristic is more important than trust. It is the foundation for building a relationships.
What is a Crucial Conversation?
In pairs, choose a situation and discuss what makes it difficult and how you’ve handled it?
Why don’t crucial conversations tend to go well?

• Emotions tend to rule
• Your body physically reacts
• We are under pressure
• We are stumped
• We act in self defeating ways
Partner Discussion

What conversations am I not holding or not holding well?

Share an example of a conversation which is long overdue.

Am I holding the right crucial conversation?
Learn to Spot Crucial Conversations:

1. Watch for physical signals. (stomach tightening)
2. Notice your emotions. (feeling of anger)
3. Watch the behavioral signs. (raised voice)
Managing Conflict
COMFORT WITH CONFLICT

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most comfortable, how would you rate your own comfort level with conflict?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VERY UNCOMFORTABLE

VERY COMFORTABLE
Causes of Conflict

• Different points of view (see a situation differently, want different outcomes)
• Personalities
• Background, culture, gender
• Changes (too many, too fast)
• Strong feelings/frustration
1. Get Unstuck

When routine conversations turn crucial we can respond in one of three ways:

We can avoid them

We can face them and handle them poorly

We can face them and handle them well
Get Unstuck – Group Discussion

When it comes to your patients/team/organization, where are you stuck? What do people gripe about? What do people complain about when they go home?

What are the problems people are always trying to fix?

Share an example of a complaint or gripe that is long overdue to be resolved.
2. Start with Heart

What Am I Acting Like I Want?

Unhealthy Goal

- Be right
- Look good/save face
- Keep the peace
- Win
- Punish, blame
- Avoid conflict

Goals of Dialogue

- Learn
- Find the truth
- Produce results
- Strengthen relationships
Start with Heart

Avoid the Sucker’s Choice: Search for the elusive “and”

1. Clarify what you want
2. Clarify what you really don’t want
3. Combine the two into an “and” question that forces you to search for more creative and productive options than silence or violence.

(Don’t choose between two bad choices)
3. Learn to Look

Learn to Spot Crucial Conversations:

1. Watch for physical signals. (stomach tightening)
2. Notice your emotions. (feeling of anger)
3. Watch the behavioral signs. (raised voice)
4. Make it Safe

- Apologize when appropriate
- Contrast to fix misunderstandings
- Create Mutual Purpose

Have I established Mutual Purpose?
Have I maintained respect?

Share an example of how we can “make it safe” for our colleagues.
5. Master My Stories

The 3 Stories To Watch For

Victim Stories – “It’s not my fault”

Villain Stories – “It’s all your fault”

Helpless Stories – “There’s nothing I can do”
Master My Stories

Think about what stories you tell friends, family, or co-workers when you’re frustrated or upset at something that has occurred?

Don’t sugarcoat your stories!

What’s a better way to respond?
6. STATE My Path

**STATE:**
S - Share your facts
T - Tell your story
A - Ask for others’ paths (what)
T - Talk tentatively
E - Encourage testing (how)
7. Explore Others’ Paths

Explore with added AMPPs:
Ask
Mirror
Paraphrase
Prime

Am I actively exploring others’ views?
8. Putting Decisions to Action

1. Who?
2. Does What?
3. By When?
4. What’s the follow up?
Putting Decisions to Action

1. Who?
2. Does What?
3. By When?
4. What’s the follow up?
Role Plays

• Giving Feedback to a Senior Faculty member
• Conversations about a difficult prognosis.
• Dealing with difficult families who are angry and frustrated.
• Dealing with someone who disrespects you and criticizes your ideas in public.
Capturing the Message

1. **BE OPEN Minded:** Let go of your assumptions, biases, and expectations.

2. **THINK:** Mentally interact with the speaker’s ideas or information.

3. **CLARIFY:** Ask questions to get more information and settle points that aren’t clear.

4. **CONFIRM:** Offer summaries to check your understandings.
How Do I Begin?

• I have something I’d like to discuss with you that I think will help us work together more effectively.

• I need your help with what just happened. Do you have a few minutes to talk?

• I think we have different perceptions about_________. I’d like to hear your thinking on this.

• I’d like to see if we might reach a better understanding about_________. I really want to hear your feelings about this and share my perspective as well.
Summary

- Remain Calm.
- Know your objective.
- Develop a rapport.
- Engage in Conversation. Try to draw out the patient's feelings by engaging in conversation.
- Be Empathetic. One of the quickest ways to calm an angry or difficult patient is by being empathetic.
- Avoid Arguing.
- Shake if Off.
Take the next steps now!
Facilitator: Marsheila DeVan
Marsheilann@yahoo.com  C: 805-868-9269