Finding Your Voice: Preparing for Your Most Critical Conversations

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Rules to Establish:

- Vegas Rule
- Protect the identities of the innocent
- Judgement free zone

Outline & Outcomes:

Outline

1. Preparing for a Hard Conversation
2. U of A – What did we do?
3. Policy Review Form

Outcomes

- Feel more prepared to discuss some hard things

- Come away with an idea for change in your own offices!

The Colors Test, Get to Know Yourself!

Blue **Gold** **Orange** **Green**

https://sfp.caltech.edu/documents/4296/the_mentoring_spectrum_true_color_test.pdf

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The Colors Test, Get to Know Yourself!

Blue

- Emotionally driven
- Seeks harmony in groups
- Enthusiastic
- Creative
- Sympathetic

Gold

- Loyalty driven
- Respects rules and authority
- Responsible
- Organized
- Appreciative

Orange

- Short-term driven
- Welcomes change and variety
- Adventurous
- Competitive
- Impulsive

Green

- Logically driven
- Independent thinker
- Focused
- Efficient
- Analytical

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Words Matter

Each bullet point below contains two synonyms for the same personality type. Red synonyms have negative connotations. Green synonyms have neutral or positive connotations.

- Confrontational vs. Assertive
- Sensitive vs. Perceptive

No single personality type is superior to any other.

Recognize the differences between your personality type and that of your conversation partner before engaging.

If you choose to put a label on personality types, think of using the green synonyms above rather than the red ones.

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Prep Yourself Before You Wreck Yourself

Pay attention to the signs that show you are entering a touch conversation:

- **Physical Signals:** Fist clenching, butterflies in the stomach, blood rushes to the head
- **Emotions:** Check in with yourself, are you feeling scared, hurt, angry etc.
- **Behavior:** Raised voice, becoming quiet

Not everyone views the conversation the same. Even if you're not feeling any of the above symptoms, watch for these in the person you are talking to.

If you identify any of these signals in you or your conversation partner, consider taking one of the following actions before engaging:

- **Breath** for 10 seconds
- **Write** down all of your thoughts, then read them out loud to yourself and imagine receiving those words from another person
- **Walk** for 10 minutes

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Don’t Forget the Following…

You care about this person a lot

You don’t want to disrupt the relationship

You need to communicate something

You want your point to come across

You might need this persons help in the future

Try to phrase things in a way that acknowledges that you care about them, and addresses the problem

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Another Way to Think of Things

When the conversation gets tough, ask yourself….

What do I really want for others?

What do I really want for the relationship?

What do I not want?

What are my motives?

- To win?
- Avoid embarrassment?
- Punish someone?

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”We are now a feeling based society. If we don’t like facts, we don’t believe them. If we do like something presented to us as fact, even if it is false, we tend to believe it. This is why disinformation campaigns targeting people on both sides of the political spectrum are so effective.”

Forbes

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Disagreement Is Important

A group with healthy conflict can generate new ideas

Your ideas are not true just because they are our own,

- We tend to fully believe our own ideas
- We can challenge our own ideas by asking 4 questions whenever any new idea comes to mind,
  - Is my idea correct?
  - Am I 100% sure that it is correct?
  - What if the opposite were true?
  - If the opposite were true, how would it change my behavior?

Activity

SCENARIO

Imagine you are cut off in traffic by a man in a red corvette.

- By yourself

- Write down your first impression of that man (gut reaction).
- Write down your answer to the following questions,
  1. Is my idea correct?
  2. Can I be 100% sure that it is correct?
  3. What if the opposite were true?
  4. If the opposite were true, how would it change my behavior?

- With your neighbor/partner

- Read your answers allowed and discuss

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”There is always a choice about the way you do your work, even if there is not a choice about the work itself.”

Fish!: A Proven Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results

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Policy Pitch, Part 1

Our Round Table Activity

- Collected “hot issues”
- Each team member placed two anonymous stick notes per issue
  - Argument in favor
  - Argument against
- Discussed sticky notes as a group
- Team chose top 4 issues to ‘pitch’ to management
- Split into pairs, each with a different issue

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Policy Pitch, Part 2

- Developed “Policy Review Form” (Thank you NAU!)
- Worked in groups over the next month,
  - Research
  - Complete Form
  - Practice pitch to the team
- Formal “Policy Pitch” do Director of Counseling and Director of Compliance with requested change
- Gather feedback from Directors
- Back to the drawing board on any requested changes from the Directors, or follow up items
- Shared outcomes with the team

Policy Review Form

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Best Practices

- Establish your own group expectations of a ‘judgement free zone’
  - Ex. 10 different personalities = 10 different ways of doing things
  - And that isn’t a bad thing!

- Be very specific with your “Policy Change Proposals” as it is more impactful
  - Ex. List relevant federal guidelines vs. hyperlinks

- This is a multi-month process, be sure to follow through and respect other peoples time

- Be prepared for leadership to say ‘no’ and ask questions you weren’t expecting.
  - Learn and grow!
  - A ‘no’ doesn’t mean there wasn’t a lot learned from the experience.

Thank you

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