


Tackling Difficult Conversations

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Conversations that can be Difficult

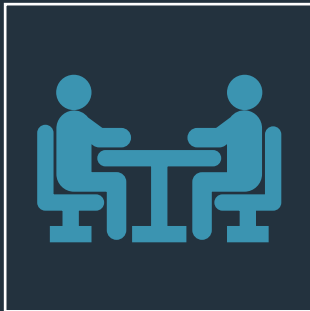
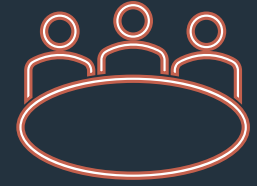
- Telling someone bad news
 - Giving someone developmental feedback
 - Asking for something you need/want
 - Raising an issue
 - Sharing a different perspective
 - Discussing cultural differences
 - Addressing behaviors or misunderstandings
- 

What Makes a Conversation Difficult?



- Emotions
- Competing Values
- Uncertainty
- Previous Experience
- Assumptions
- Perceived Status
- Relationship
- Level of responsibility

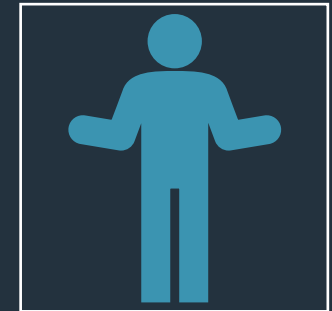
Reflection



Think of a recent difficult conversation.



What was the focus of the conversation?



What made the conversation difficult from your perspective?





Beliefs about conflict

What have you been taught
about conflict & where did
those lessons come from?



“The choice to avoid difficult conversations often masquerades as kindness!” unknown



Conflict

Normal and inevitable.

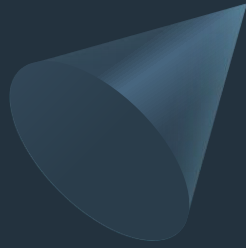
Can be internal and external

When mismanaged, conflict can cause harm.

Encourages new insights, fosters innovation, and drives change.

Ignoring/avoiding hinders learning, growth, and creativity and can dismiss diverse perspectives.

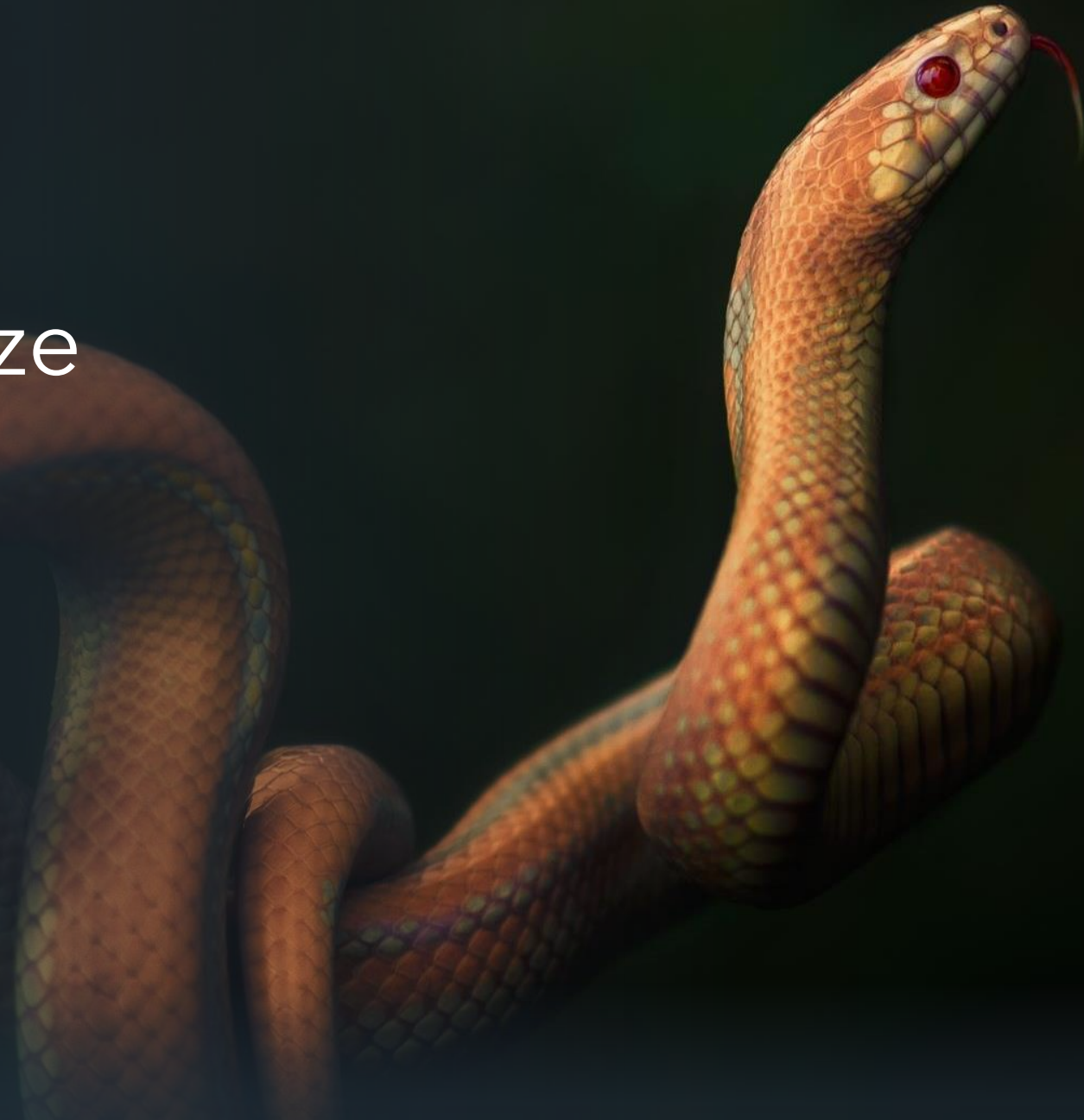
Understanding your difficulties with conflict is vital in creating a plan for how you want to be!



I understand the
benefits of
conflict, that
doesn't change
the difficulty!



Perceived
threats send
us into fight,
flight, or freeze
mode!



The SCARF model

S

STATUS

Looks at the relative importance of people

'I am valuable'

C

CERTAINTY

Looks at our ability to predict the future. How certain are we?

'I know where I stand or what will happen'

A

AUTONOMY

Looks at our perception of having control over our environment

'I have a choice'

R

RELATEDNESS

Looks at our relationships and sense of fitting in

'I belong'

F

FAIRNESS

Looks at our perception of being treated fairly; for you and for others

'I am treated fairly and others are treated fairly'

Competence

The experience of mastery and being effective in one's activity

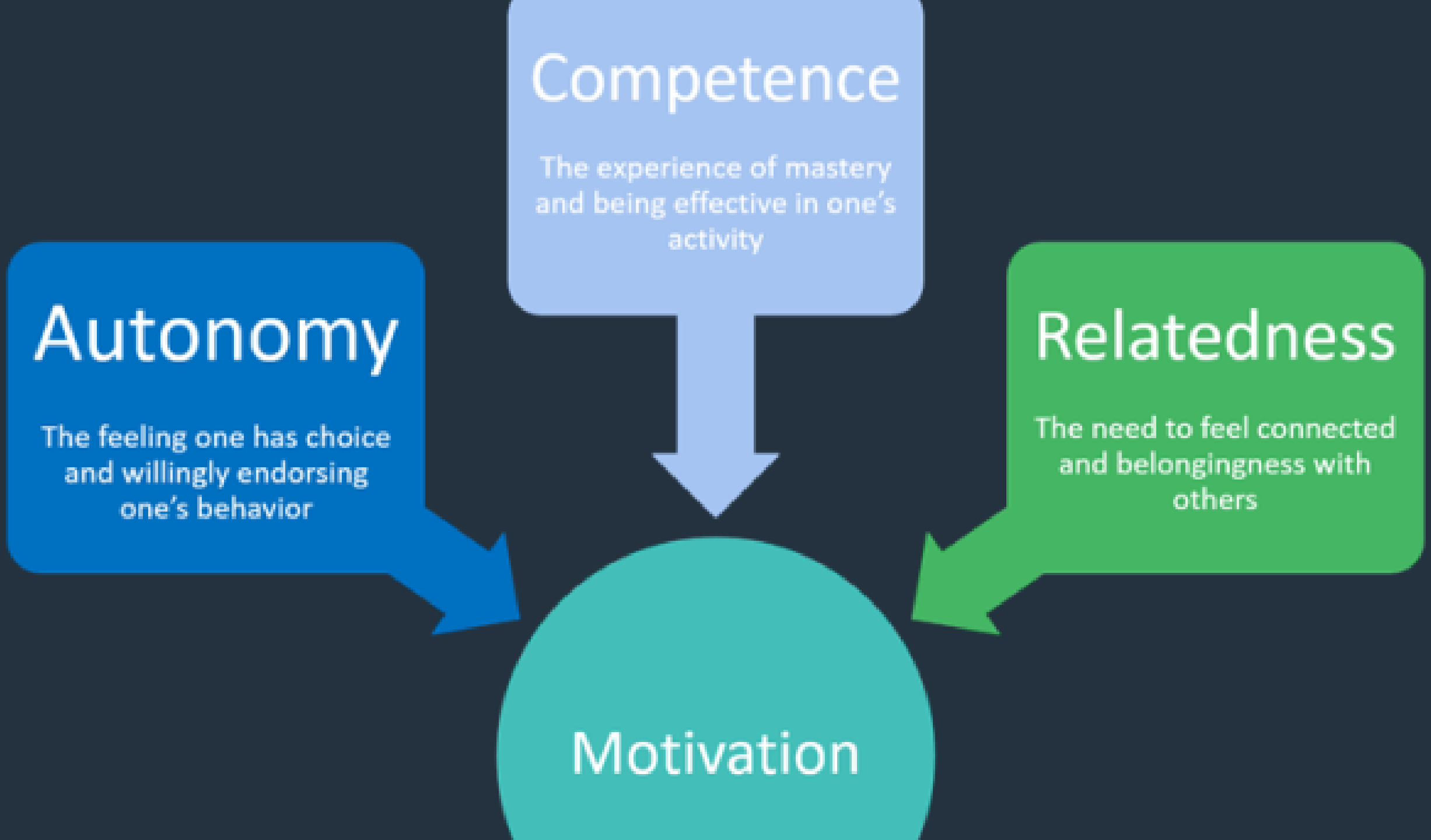
Autonomy

The feeling one has choice and willingly endorsing one's behavior

Relatedness

The need to feel connected and belongingness with others

Motivation



Consider



- How can I demonstrate to the other person that I value them?
- How can I clarify where they stand and what will happen?
- How can I provide others with some degree of choice?
- How can I build some connections and relatedness with the other person?
- How can I reflect on the perceived fairness of this situation?
- How can I support them to build competence?



Perspective Taking









“We all know that our opinion is just one opinion in a sea of opinions, but we still assume that our opinion is as common as the stars in the night sky”.



Know Your Boundaries

- What are things you will not tolerate in your professional relationships?
- What values are most important to you?
- How much personal space do you need?
- How do you know when you are overextending yourself?
- What behaviors negatively impact your well-being?



Boundaries



Ineffective Boundary Statement

"Stop shouting at me."

"You can't come over without calling first."

"I don't like it when you interrupt me!"

"You have to respect my time!"

Effective Boundary Statement

"I will not continue this conversation if shouting continues."

"I need you to call before you come over; otherwise, I won't be able to see you."

"I will finish my thoughts before I listen to your response."

"I will not be able to help if you contact me outside of work hours."



Consider Your Intentions

I want to fix you!

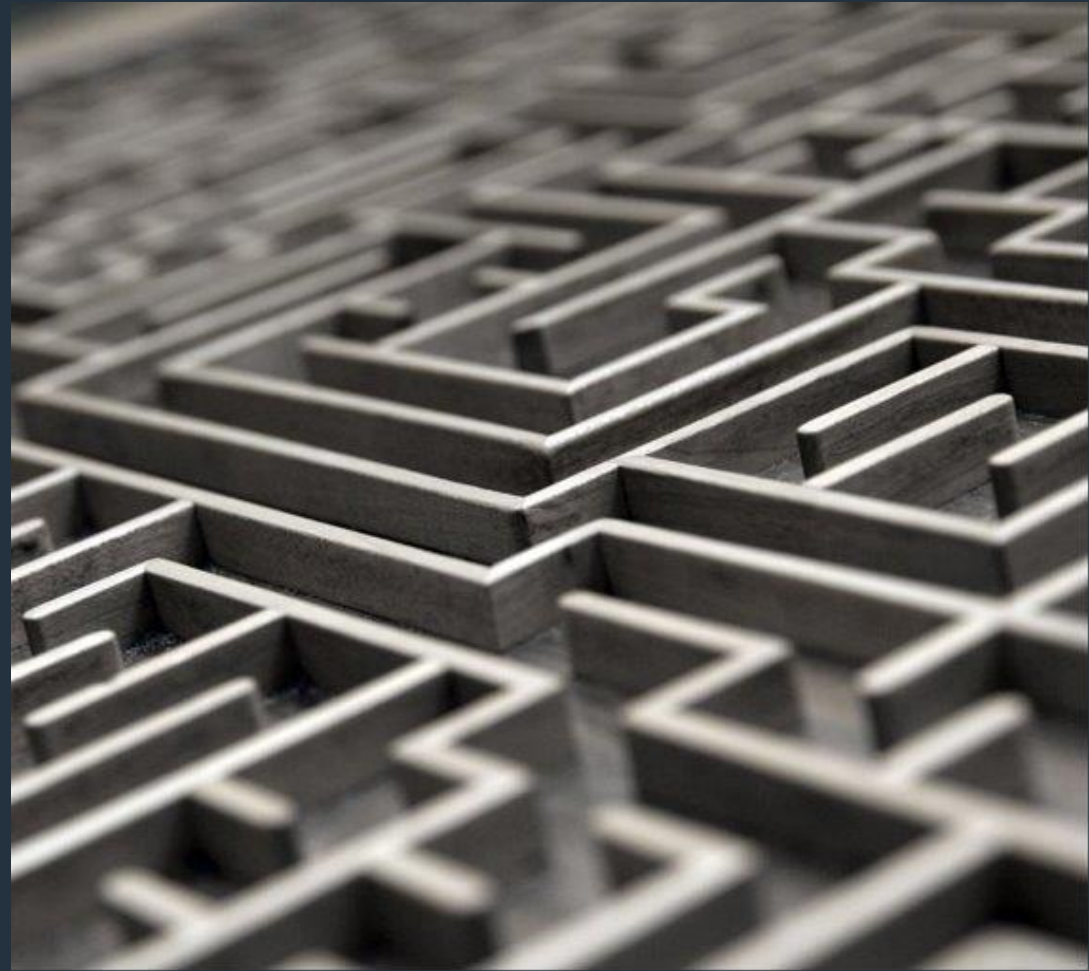
I want to get this off my chest!

I want to show how wrong they are, i.e., how right I am!

Be in-service of the Other Person!

Tips for Handling Difficult Conversations

- Be clear about **issues** and **goals**
- Acknowledge the **perspectives** of others
- Manage your **emotions**
- Master **active listening**
- Get comfortable asking **questions**
- Find the **give & take**
- Consider the **location**



In the Moment Strategies

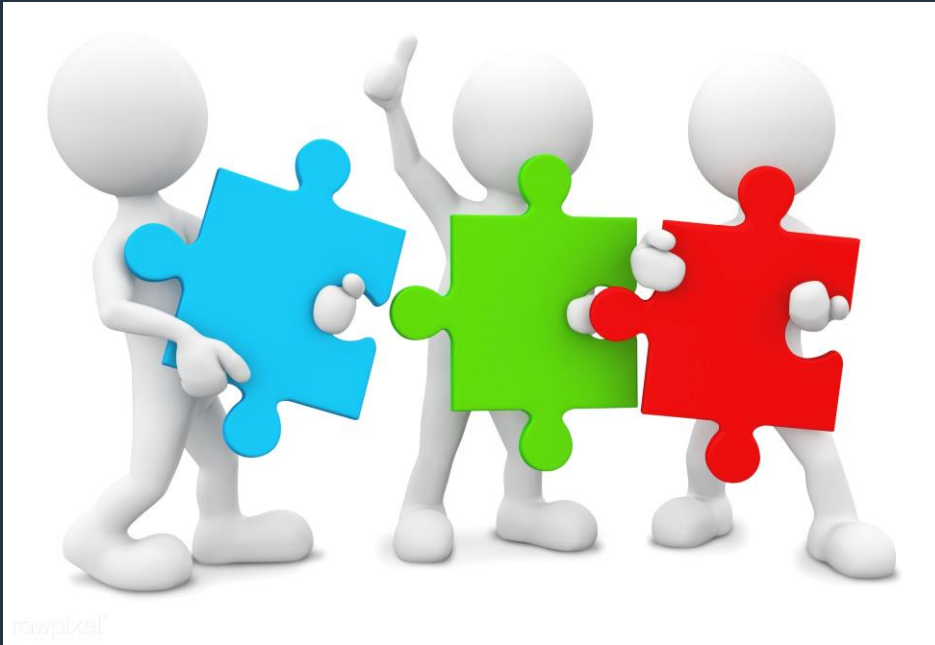


- Take deep breaths
- Ground yourself
- Notice what is around
- Do mental math
- Lower your voice



Conversation Reassessment

Reassess your previous conversation that was challenging. Now consider it from a broader perspective.



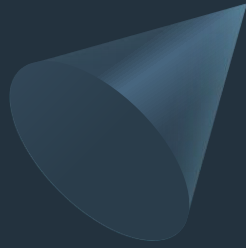
- How might SCARF/ARC have impacted the situation for you? For the other person?
- What would you continue to do or change in this situation considering content shared?
- Other thoughts?

Thought Questions



- What is an important takeaway, for you, from the presentation?
- What will be most challenging for you?
- What is one thing you can commit to working on in the next 30 days to enhance your skillset for having difficult conversations?





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