

Participant Guide

Mastering Difficult Conversations



**To Promote
Collaboration**

Facilitated by: Michelle Ross
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How did you get your way as a child?



Reflection:

When do I notice myself going into silence or violence? Am I avoiding a difficult conversation?

Collaboration Barriers

- Our stories take over
- We get sucked into the 'Drama Triangle'
- When conversations get heated, we say things in exactly the wrong way
- Safety is compromised

**Mastering
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Conversations**

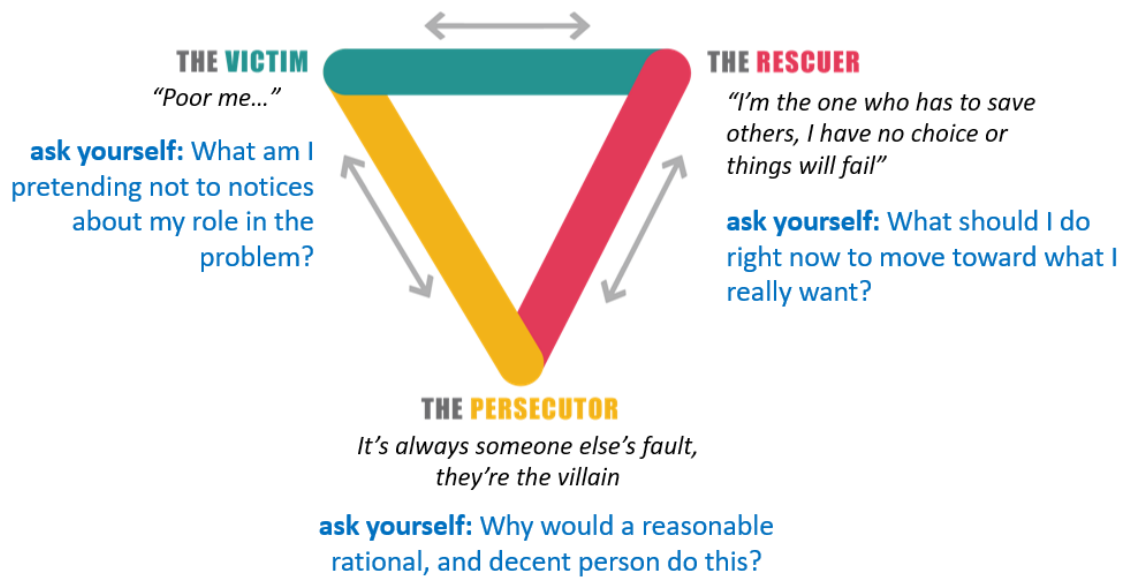
Path to Action



What is the difference between a Fact vs. Story?

FACT	STORY

The Drama Triangle



The Conversation Framework

Share your facts

--

Tell your story as a story

--

Ask for other's paths

--

Case Study

A person you work with always get out of the boring and repetitive tasks. You're supported to rotate who inputs data into the tracking spreadsheet, running weekly reports, and answering emails in the departmental inbox. Since nobody likes these jobs, you decided as a team to take turns. But this coworker always seems to have something else to do. They've already missed five rotations. At first, their excuses seemed legitimate, but now you're almost certain they're missing rotations on purpose.

Fact	
Story	
Ask	

Mastering Difficult Conversations

Addressing Safety:

People rarely become defensive about what you're saying (**content**) people become defensive because of why they think you're saying it (**intent**).

How do you know when someone no longer feels safe in the conversation?

Skills to Restore Safety

Skill 1: Apologize when appropriate

What to include in an apology:

Skill 2: Contrast to address misunderstandings

Start by addressing how others mistake your purpose

My intention is not to.....

Complete your statement by clarifying your intention and real motivation

What I do want is....

Deliberate practice: 'The Thief'- Initiator

You're beginning to suspect that the respondent (a peer you like and admire) is stealing from the company. At first you heard rumours that they were taking supplies home. One day you noticed what looked like a company tablet in their hand as they left work. You didn't have enough evidence to take action, just enough to start telling a story. However, you just walked by the respondent's work area and noticed an external hard drive that belongs to your company in the respondent's backpack. The hard drive is never to leave the office. This matters to you because you have been recently tasked to complete a supply inventory for the office in an effort to help reduce budget expenses on office supplies. You've decided to talk to your colleague about the problem.

Before you speak:

Master your story: What are the facts of this situation and what are your stories? (hint: rumours aren't facts)

As you speak:

You've decided to talk about the memory drive in the respondent's backpack and share your perspective that it looks like the respondent is taking something home.

TIPS

FACT, STORY, ASK: use the framework to describe the facts and your perspective.

LOOK: watch to see if the respondent shows signs that they are feeling unsafe or acts defensive because they have misinterpreted your intent.

MAKE IT SAFE: to help establish safety, step out of the issue, use contrasting to clarify your intent then step back into the issue.

Deliberate practice: 'The Thief'- Respondent

A peer, the initiator, thinks you're taking things from the company home. You are, but everyone does it. You and others use the equipment and material to do office work at home. You just put a hard drive in your backpack to take home to test a new software program. The initiator saw it and is about to say something to you.

What to do:

If the initiator uses the Fact, Story, Ask framework well, ask why you're being singled out when everyone takes things home.

If the initiator then uses contrasting well, admit that you've taken office supplies home. You don't see it as a problem because you use them to work at home, but you'll comply if the policy applies to everyone.

If the initiator does not use the Fact, Story, Ask framework well or fails you use contrasting when you become defensive, explain that what you do with the memory drive is your own business.

Mastering Difficult Conversations

Conversation Planner

Use the following worksheet to plan how to address your next difficult conversation

Where are you stuck? What needs to be addressed?

Master your story

What stories are you telling yourself about the situation or the person (victim, persecutor, rescuer)?

Tell the rest of the story

What am I pretending not to notice about my role in the problem?	
Why would a reasonable, rational, and decent person do this?	
What should I do right now to move toward what I really want?	

Conversation Framework

THE FACTS	MY STORY	THE QUESTION I'LL ASK

Make is Safe

What's the worst possible response you could get? What safety skills would you use to address it?

If the other person misunderstands your intent, what contrasting statement could you use?