



behavioral
fitness

A Difficult Conversation is determined by how much you have personally invested in the conversation. The two components are:

- 1) How will they respond to what I am about to say?
- 2) How will they perceive me?

Both of these two questions are truly out of our control. We do not have control over how someone responds to us or how they perceive us.

"The communication skills that I learned from Behavioral Fitness have changed my life. Yes, it has made me a much better nurse leader but an even greater reward is observing how my children now apply these techniques in daily life. My heart is full. Communication skills are key!"

EXECUTIVE NURSE LEADER

Quality Of Life is reliant on efficient and effective communication skills. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recommends that formal Communication skills development be a part of life, career, and family.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH , 2019



95% of employers seek employees with excellent communication techniques. Stated as the number one leadership skill of the next decade.

FORBES, 2022

WHAT CAN WE DO?

We can control how we engage in a Difficult Conversation and thankfully there is an Evidence Based Communication Framework that sets us up for success. This framework is inspired by the Harvard Business Review's Book; Difficult Conversations and curated with techniques from the behavioral sciences and Addiction Medicine.

SET YOUR FOUNDATION

What attributes do you like about yourself (i.e., kind, patient, giving, understanding) and what attributes do you want for yourself?

KNOW THE DISRUPTERS (PEOPLE, PLACES & THINGS)

It is important to me to be [attribute], and when [situation] occurs, I have a difficult time being the best version of myself.

START WITH THE OTHER PERSON

Ask them how they make sense of this situation you have described.

5 STEPS TO A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

1. SENSE MAKING:

Seek first to understand how the other person is making sense of this situation.

Example: *"I'm curious to deepen my understanding of how you are making sense of this situation."*

2. VALIDATION:

Engage in empathetic and attuned listening skills here. Validate what this person is voicing as their sense of the situation. This is not a time to agree or disagree, rather to validate and seek to include another perspective into this conversation. Humans seek to be validated before they are adequately prepared to engage in shared decision making.

Example: *"It makes sense how disappointed you are, you have a lot of competing priorities right now."*

3. PERMISSION:

Once they confirm that they feel validated and understood by you, then ask permission to share your perspective or ideas. State a shared vision or desire as a way to anchor the conversation in something shared and to come back to with ease.

Example: *"It sounds like what we know for sure is that we both have a goal of working better together."*

4. ASSESS:

Assess the impact your comments have had from Step 3. Evaluate change from the person's original sense making.

Example: *"I just shared a couple of ways that I think we could work better together, I am curious to hear how this fits into your thinking."*

5. AFFIRM:

Close the loop of the conversation by affirming what has transpired.

Example: *"We just talked through one way that we can work better together, I am impressed with how we stayed connected to hearing one another and letting each other know that both of our perspectives matter."*