

How to Lead Difficult Conversations

Holding People Accountable Without Escalation, Avoidance, or Damage

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This workshop is about: “How To Effectively Hold Difficult Conversations With Difficult People On Difficult Issues Under Difficult Circumstances!”

Difficult conversations are unavoidable. Avoided or mishandled conversations, however, can be costly.

How to Lead Difficult Conversations is a practical, skill-based workshop that equips managers and supervisors to address performance gaps, problematic behaviors, and sensitive issues **clearly, calmly, and effectively**, even under high pressure and emotionally charged circumstances.

This program prepares leaders to conduct **crucial conversations and confrontations** in a way that protects relationships, reduces risk, and drives measurable improvements in performance and accountability.

Why Organizations Invest in This Program

Most managers fail at difficult conversations for one of two reasons:

- They **avoid** the conversation until the issue escalates, or
- They **handle it poorly**, triggering defensiveness, conflict, or disengagement

This workshop provides managers with a **repeatable, three-part process** that enables them to:

- Regulate their own emotions first
- Plan strategically before engaging
- Conduct the conversation in a way that leads to clarity, commitment, and follow-through

The result is **fewer escalations, stronger accountability, and improved performance**.

What Managers Learn

A Proven 3-Part Framework for Difficult Conversations

Participants learn how to:

1. Manage Their Own Emotions Before the Conversation

- Understand how unmanaged emotions sabotage difficult discussions
- Learn how to regulate anxiety, frustration, and avoidance
- Enter conversations grounded, focused, and in control

2. Prepare Strategically for High-Risk Conversations

- Clearly define what makes a conversation “difficult”
- Identify and crystallize the exact behaviors, performance gaps, or issues to be addressed
- Learn the #1 step most managers skip when preparing for a crucial conversation and why missing it causes conversations to fail
- Plan language and structure that reduces defensiveness and increases receptivity

3. Conduct the Conversation and Drive Action

- Confront performance and behavior issues safely and professionally
- Address resistance without escalation
- Move employees from awareness to accountability
- Secure clear commitments that support performance and productivity

Key Learning Outcomes

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Prepare for and conduct difficult conversations under difficult circumstances
- Address sensitive issues without avoidance, aggression, or emotional shutdown
- Clearly articulate performance expectations and behavioral standards
- Reduce conflict while increasing clarity and accountability

- Move from conversation to concrete next steps, follow-through, and compliance
 - Protect relationships while maintaining leadership authority
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Learning Design

This is not a lecture-based program.

The workshop is **highly interactive and experiential**, incorporating:

- Real-world case studies
- Group discussion and problem-solving
- Structured exercises
- Behavioral rehearsal, allowing participants to practice critical conversations in a safe environment

Participants leave having **practiced the skill**, not just learned the theory.

Ideal For

- Managers and supervisors
 - HR and people leaders
 - Team leaders responsible for performance management
 - Leaders operating in high-stress or high-accountability environments
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Organizational Impact

After this program, managers are better equipped to:

- Address issues early, before they escalate
- Reduce workplace conflict and grievances
- Increase consistency in performance management
- Strengthen trust, clarity, and accountability across teams

This is a **core leadership capability**, not a “soft skill.”

