

Critical Conversations

*How to Have Conversations with Colleagues, Family and Friends
to Decrease Defensiveness and Ensure Dialog so that
Relationships Remain Strong and Meaningful.*

Danielle Fagan, MSW, LICSW
Lifespan Clinical Performance Solutions Partner

Donna Schneider, RN, MBA, CPHQ, CPC-P, CHC, CPCO, CHPC
Lifespan Vice President, Corporate Compliance and Internal Audit



1

Scenario

“Suspicious Anonymous Complaint and Vendor Gifts”

You have been asked to do a Compliance Investigation regarding an anonymous complaint that a Senior Leader in your organization has been suspected of accepting gifts from vendors which are personal in nature. You have mentioned this to your boss, who said we need to “look the other way” since the Senior Leader is world renowned for what they do in their field. You decided to speak with this Senior Leader yourself anyway, and found out that this leader is NOT accepting gifts, yet named your boss who has been accepting gifts from vendors.

2

Objectives

By the end of today's session you will be able to:

- Recognize the components of a critical conversation
- Learn and practice strategies for a successful conversation in the realm of compliance or your personal life
- Build your confidence and self-awareness in planning for and having critical conversations



3

Everyday Conflict

We face conflict each day, in many situations...

- **At work-** with a peer, employee or supervisor
- **At home-** family, friends,
- **In the community-** neighbors, around a purchase, experience at a restaurant

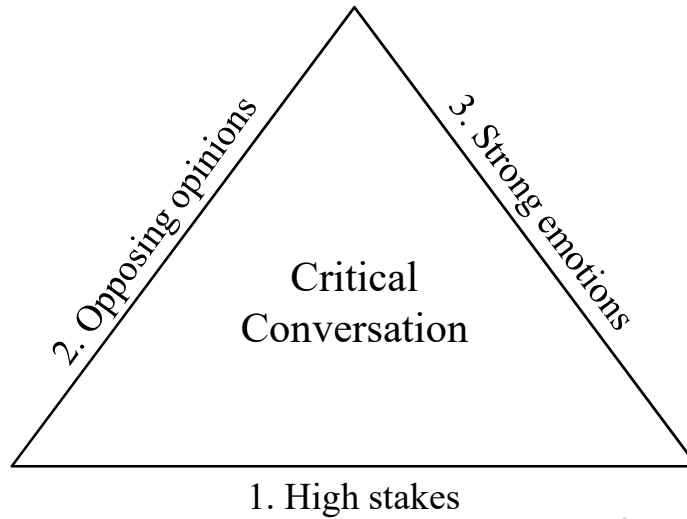
Think about your own response/reaction

- Are you the **avoider**
- Are you the **minimizer**
- Are you **passive-aggressive**
- Are you **aggressive**



4

Critical Conversations



5

Avoidance

Have you ever avoided a confrontation by convincing yourself that:

- “You can’t afford to lose them”
- “It will eventually get better”
- “Things might get worse?”
- “His performance results outweigh his attitude problems”
- “She is three years from retirement anyways”



6

Silence Kills

- More than 50% of healthcare workers have experienced/witnessed:

Mistakes	Lack of support
Incompetence	Poor teamwork
Disrespect	Micromanagement
Broken rules	Dangerous short cuts

- 50% report the problem has persisted for more than 1 year
- About 10% of people represent the offender category
- Only 10% report they had an important critical conversation with their coworker

Silence kills study – AORN & Vital Smarts



7

Impact of Silence



- Patient safety
- Turnover
- Employee satisfaction
- Productivity



8

Reasons for Silence

Imprints of your past	Self Defense
Vulnerability	Easier Not To
Lack of Time	Fear



9

You Are Not Alone

When the concern is:	% non-supervisory willing to confront	% supervisors willing to confront
Competence of nurse or other allied health provider	3%	16%
Competence of a physician	<1%	<1%
Poor teamwork	5%	9%
Disrespect or abuse	2%	5%

Silence kills study – AORN & Vital Smarts



10

Adopt the Right Mindset

- Accept that it is difficult
- Accept the challenge of doing it well
- Recognize you are disciplining the behavior, not the person
- Recognize difference between helping the employee and building a case for termination
- What is the End Game?

© 2011 HRDQ



11



12

Your Frame of Reference

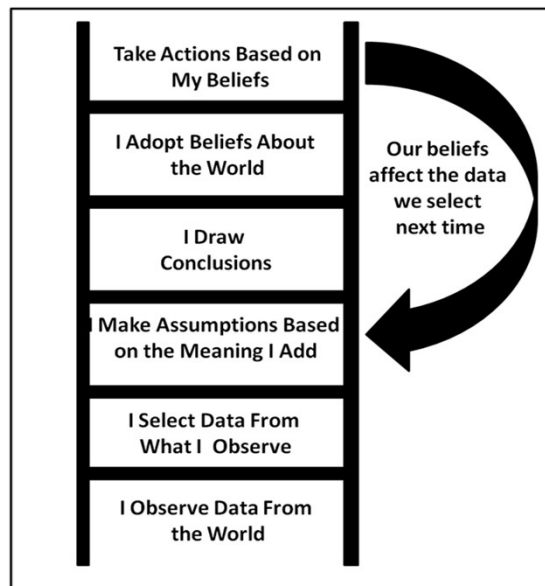
Beliefs	Advice
Assumption	Mood
Values	Thoughts
Emotions	Biases
Judgments	Stress level

Frame of reference is so personal and so deeply embedded, it is very difficult to practice suspending it on a regular basis



13

Ladder of Inference

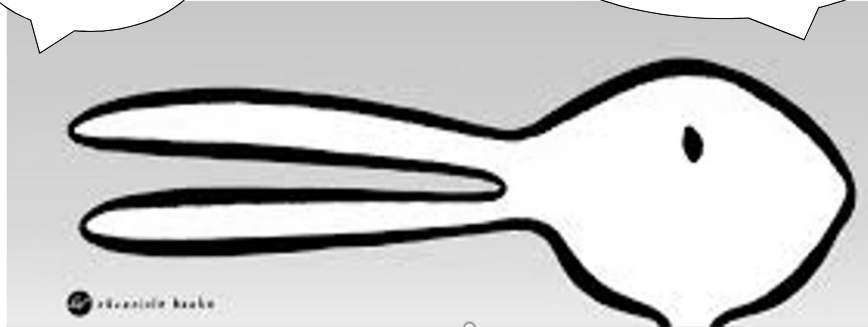


14

Your Frame of Reference

Hey Look,
a duck!

That's not a duck!
That's a rabbit!



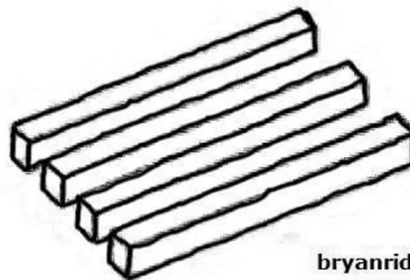
Lifespan
Delivering health with care

15

Reality can be so complex that equally valid observations
from differing perspectives can appear to be contradictory.

Four

No
Three



bryanridgley.com



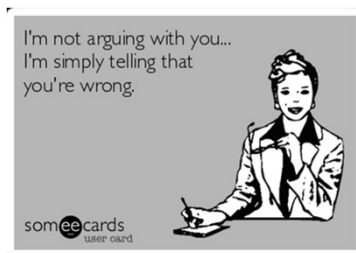
Lifespan
Delivering health with care

16



17

Scraping Yourself Off the Ceiling



- Start with the 3rd story! The one the observer would tell with no stake in either side
- Helps identify the story (*what I convinced myself was true*) from the facts (*What I actually know*)
- Validates both perspectives, removes judgement, but rather describe the difference between the stories



18

Critical Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> Seek First To Understand	<input type="checkbox"/> Use “I” Statements
<input type="checkbox"/> Invite them to partner	<input type="checkbox"/> Take Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/> Pick the Right Setting	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep Body Language in Check
<input type="checkbox"/> Sort out what happened	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to understand
<input type="checkbox"/> Understand your emotions	<input type="checkbox"/> Share your viewpoint
<input type="checkbox"/> Check your purpose	<input type="checkbox"/> Reframe
<input type="checkbox"/> Decide the best approach	<input type="checkbox"/> Invent options
<input type="checkbox"/> Describe the differences	<input type="checkbox"/> Look to standards
<input type="checkbox"/> Create open communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Remember what is Possible



19

Scenario

“Performance Review - Lacking Soft Skills”

You have a Compliance & Privacy superstar on your team. They have been with the organization for twenty (20) years and know the job inside and out, as well as who to call if there is an issue. However, when things get stressful they snap at their colleagues, or you, and do not take ownership of remarks when colleagues have spoken to them. The employee has been made aware of this during their weekly meeting with you as their supervisor. It is time for their performance review which has always been “exceptional”, yet this behavior is demoralizing the team, and is giving your department a “Bad reputation”. You have decided to have a conversation about this.

20

Communication

Respectful

Treat others the way you wish to be treated

Timely

Don't delay in addressing performance issues

Correct

Follow established policies and procedures

Document

Record all performance related events

Balance

Focus on both what is going well and what needs to improve



21

Communication = Prevention

- Ask, “What can I do to help you with your job?”
- Ask, “What am I doing to get in your way?”
- Praise in public...Give negative feedback in private
- Find something to like/admire in each staff person
- Make a point of speaking to each staff member often
- Emphasize the positive; what is going well?
- Give frequent, meaningful feedback for a job done well

If you can do this routinely and successfully, you reduce the tension and open lines of communication when delivering constructive feedback



22

STATE

Share your facts

Tell your story

Ask for others perspective

Talk tentatively

Encourage testing



23

STATE

Separate facts from stories

Inferences vs. Behavior



24

STATE

Tell your story

Why this is of concern

Consider saying...

- *It leads me to believe*
- *I'm beginning to think*
- *I'm wondering whether*



25

STATE

Ask for their perspective

- *How do you see it*
- *Help me understand*
- *What's your view*



26

STATE

Tentatively

Tell the story as a story

Avoid absolutes/superlatives



27

STATE

Encourage testing

Remember purpose

If your goal is to convince, compel,
control...



28

Scenario

“Privacy Nightmare”

The “employee” reports to someone else, and is the cause of a 1,000 patient reportable breach. You have done an investigation with all concerned parties including this “employee”. Your recommendation at the end of the investigation is that this was reckless behavior that caused the error and the employee should be terminated. The Manager and Director of this employee, as well as the HR Representative involved in the case, do not agree with your recommendation. You have been told the Vice President of HR agrees with the decision of Manager, Director and HR Representative. How do you have a conversation with the Vice President of HR to make your case.

29

Scenario

“Team Member Not Pulling their Weight”

You supervise a team of compliance specialists and auditors who all rotate performing New Employee Orientation on a biweekly basis. Everyone seems to take their turn except for one of your colleagues who always has an excuse for why they can’t do the New Employee Orientation on his/her assigned week. The excuses all seem legitimate but they never stop coming when it is her/her turn. When this person doesn’t do the New Employee Orientation, you have filled in on numerous occasions or gotten someone else to fill in. Everyone knows about this and talks about this in secret. It is starting to become an issue for your team. You have decided to have the conversation.

30

Debrief

Discussion:

- How did it feel?
- What did you find most challenging?
- What strategies did you find successful?
- What did you learn?
- What questions do you still have?

31

Resources:

<http://www.wisc-online.com/objects/ViewObject.aspx?ID=LDD202>

<http://www.employee->

[performance.com/webinar request SMAART goals.php](http://www.employee-performance.com/webinar_request_SMAART_goals.php)

<http://www.experiential-learning-games.com/feedbackgames.html>

Patterson, K. (2002). *Crucial conversations: Tools for talking when stakes are high*. New York: McGraw-Hill.



32