

## REFLECT AND PREPARE

It is important to reflect and prepare when deciding if, when, and how to discuss something difficult. Use the following reflection prompts to consider how best to approach a conversation. *Give yourself the gift* of being truly honest about your own fears, excuses, and hesitations while thinking through some of the possible dynamics.

### SETTING INTENTION

#### Why should I bring this up?



- What do I want? What am I hoping will change? Why does this matter to me?
- What about discussing this causes me fear or anxiety?
- What are the **risks** of not engaging in a conversation? If I avoid dealing with it, how might it get worse?
- What are the **benefits** of engaging in this conversation? What might the most positive outcome be?

#### Can I let it go?



- Is this conversation “worth” it to me? If not, what am I prepared to do to move forward? If I decide not to talk to the person about this, can I truly let it go?
- Will this situation influence how I interact with or speak about this person in the future?
- Is there a way for me to shift my perspective that resolves this problem? What do I still need to discuss or request of someone else?

#### What if I’m not skilled enough?



- How can I gain those [skills](#)?
- What conflict skills do I already have?
- What would “good enough” skills look like right now?
- Am I confusing skills with comfort? (It is normal for conflict to feel uncomfortable)
- Am I confusing skills with courage or confidence? (It is normal to be nervous addressing conflict)

# CONSIDER YOUR DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

## What is within my control?



- How can I bring in my good heart and my good feelings into this conversation even when it may involve things that are uncomfortable for me?
- What parts of this can I take responsibility for my own good? How can I be compassionate with myself as I realize which parts of this might be my responsibility?
- When is the right time for me to engage in this process? How can I move forward in my life and work while I work towards a resolution?

## What support might be needed?



- Is there support one or both of us needs to engage in a safe-enough way? What can we do on our own?
- Who else have I talked to about this situation? Have those conversations moved me towards resolution? Have those conversations made this conflict feel easier or harder to navigate? What am I learning about who I turn to in conflict?

## CONSIDERING PERSPECTIVES

### How could my or their identity and history be impacting this conflict?



- How might power (mine or theirs) be impacting this situation? Does this make me reconsider what support one or both of us might need?
- How do my identity and lived experience influence my perspective of this situation?
- How might personality differences be involved in this situation?
- How might cultural differences be impacting this situation?
- How might my understanding or use of language be impacting this situation?
- What other conflicts have I had in my life that might be shaping my preferences in this moment?
- What have I already tried when it comes to conflict with this person? What was the outcome of those attempts?
- What have I already learned about conflict that I can apply to this situation?

# CONSIDER YOUR DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

## What other ways could I look at this situation?

- How might my perspective about this be incomplete? Is there something I might not know about what is going on? What might I be wrong about in this?
- How much of what is going on could be considered healthy disagreement (different ideas or approaches that can be held with respect)?
- What else is happening at work or on the team that is impacting us right now (work environment, team dynamics, workload)?
- How can I think about the problem in terms of something that is outside of this person's individual character? Am I trying to change the other person? Am I thinking of them as wrong, stupid, evil, immoral?
- What might be going on for the other person? What don't I know about their life and perspective? Where am I making assumptions?
- What could change if I assumed the other person has good intentions? What is the most generous interpretation I can think of to explain how they are behaving?



## SETTING UP A GOOD PROCESS

The other person will probably not know what you want to talk about and will likely not have prepared or thought through the risks/benefits in the same way. Be sensitive to your differing levels of readiness as you plan when and where to ask them for a meeting time to talk, and for their need to prepare. You may want to share that you are using the conflict navigator to guide your process.

Some tips:

- Approach the other person in private
- Ask when it's convenient to them
- Negotiate a neutral location
- Explicitly state the purpose for requesting the meeting
- Prepare to give them time to reflect before responding to you in the moment