

HOW TO CONDUCT A SUCCESSFUL DIALOGUE

1. Check attitude – enter a mutual learning mode

- What am I feeling, and can I control my emotions?
- Am I willing to understand the other person's perspective (mental models)?
- Am I there to learn or to tell? Can I move from certainty to curiosity?
- Can I be honest without being disrespectful

1. Prepare

- What is my purpose – is it worth it, and does it matter?
- What is my story – the issue, its impact on me, my feelings, my mental models?
- What might the other person's story be, their mental models?
- What is my bottom line – in terms of the task at hand, the relationship, and myself?

2. Some process principles

1. State your story with humility and with positive intent (use advocacy strategies):
 - The issue as you understand it, and its impact on the task, you, or the other person.
 - Describe the data observed and the thinking that led to your view (mental model)
 - Be direct but gentle: **Follow the Situation—Behavior—Impact Approach**
 - “Here is the situation ____ the behavior I observed ____ and the impact on me (others) _____. What do you think?”
 - Hold your view as a hypothesis
2. Ask for the other person's story (use inquiry strategies):
 - Actively listen – put yourself in their shoes.
 - Probe to understand – look for their interests in the matter (their mental model)
 - Disentangle intent from impact – don't assume they mean it
3. Encourage testing of one another's understanding (balance advocacy with inquiry)
 - Develop a shared pool of understanding
 - Some defensiveness is inevitable
4. Problem solve together (balance advocacy with inquiry)
 - Offer suggestions.
 - Ask for suggestions
5. Prepare a follow-up plan

3. To an untrained eye, it appears like two people having a conversation and thinking together

- No awkwardness or rigidity
- No feeling of being “techniqued”
- Authentic