

Key Conversations – Difficult Conversations

These slides were designed to be used alongside the Key Conversations – Difficult Conversations Facilitator Guide

Please note: This resource was developed in January 2024 by the NDS Quality and Safeguards Sector Readiness Project. The resource is general in nature and is provided as a guide only. NDS believes that the information contained in this publication is correct at the time of publishing, however, NDS reserves the right to vary any of this publication without further notice. The information provided in this publication should not be relied upon instead of other legal, medical, financial, or professional advice. Please always refer to online documents for the latest versions including the NDIS Practice Standards and advice to providers on the Code of Conduct.

What are our responsibilities in having conversations?

NDIS Practice Standards

- **Rights and Responsibilities**
 - Person – centred supports
 - Support Planning
 - Independence and informed choice
- **Governance and Operational Management**
 - Complaints
 - Continuity of supports
- **Provision of Supports**

NDIS Code of Conduct

- **Act with respect for individual rights**
- **Support people to make decisions**
- **Enables people to understand information and make their will and preference known** by using the most appropriate form, language and manner to communicate
- **Takes into account people's expressed values and beliefs**

Empathy

Before we begin, let's take a couple of minutes on **Empathy**:

[RSA and Brene Brown](#)

The four skills of empathy

- **Perspective taking**
- **Staying out of judgement**
- **Recognising emotions in other people**
- **Talking about / acknowledging those emotions.**

[Empathy accross Cultures - NDS](#)

Conflict



In a difficult conversation, what might....

Aggressive communication look like?

- Getting angry, raising their voice
- Interrupting and talk over someone.
- Blaming or being critical of others.
- Insulting the other person
- Refusing to back down or listen to the other person

Passive communication look like?

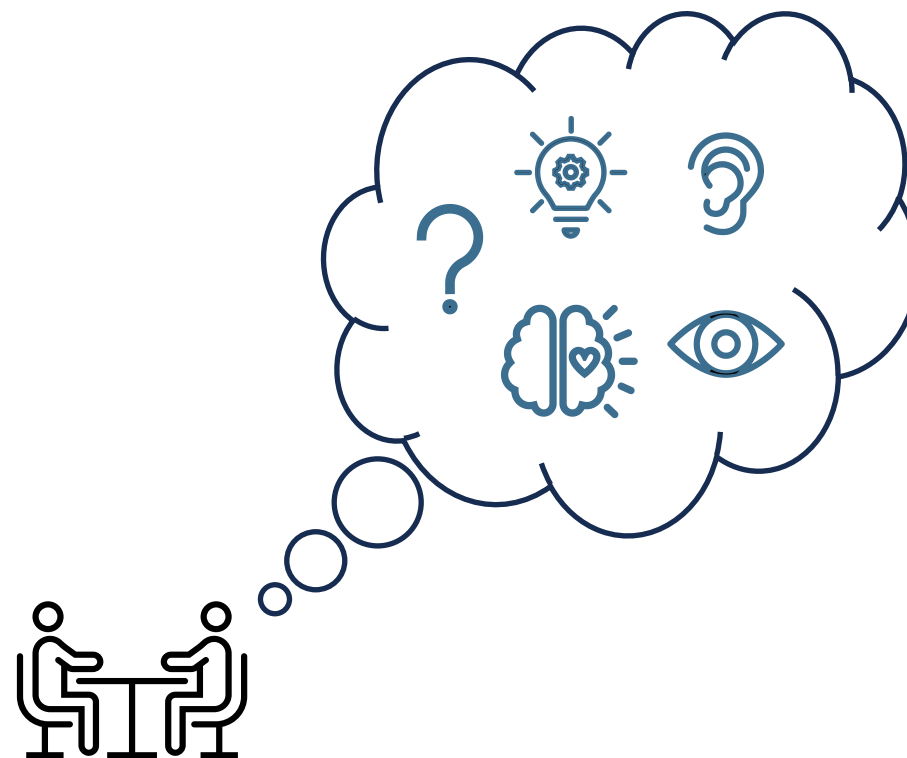
- Being quiet all of the time
- Apologising when you haven't done anything
- Agreeing to everything you're asked – even if it's unreasonable.
- Not expressing your point of view.

Passive aggressive communication look like?

- Making a backhanded compliment, for example: "I like your report, it's almost as good as John's"
- Pretending not to know about a previously agreed action
- Verbally agreeing, but communicating with body language that they don't agree
- Not showing up to the conversation at all!

Assertive Communication

- Practicing active listening.
- Acknowledging the other's emotions.
- Maintaining open body language.
- Using "I" statements.
- Keeping tone calm, patient and composed.
- Respecting personal boundaries.
- Seeking mutual understanding.
- Focusing on the issue, not the person.
- Offering constructive feedback.



Planning a difficult conversation



There is a big
difference between
planning and scripting

Get the facts right

- What are the facts and what are your assumptions
- Feelings and intentions

Think about objectives

- What is the problem
- What do you want to achieve
- How will you uphold the person's rights

Check any policies or guidelines which might apply

Prepare for the conversation

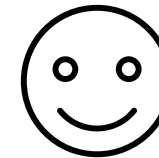
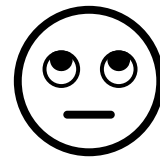
- How, where, when?
- What will I say?
- How will I listen?

Having a difficult conversation

Step 0

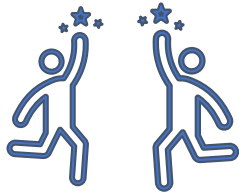
Stop and check in: Are you calm enough to have this conversation?

- What are your early warning signs?
- How can we excuse ourselves from a conversation?



Having a difficult conversation

Step 1



Establish a shared goal for this conversation.

- Reframe it from 'me vs you' to 'us vs the problem'.
- What is the problem we both want to fix?

Step 2



Get curious, ask questions

- Open, non-judgemental questions.
- Active listening.
- Learn what they want and why.
- Summarise it back to them.

Step 3



Communicate our position

- Get consent first.
- Outline the non-negotiables.
- Develop creative solutions together.

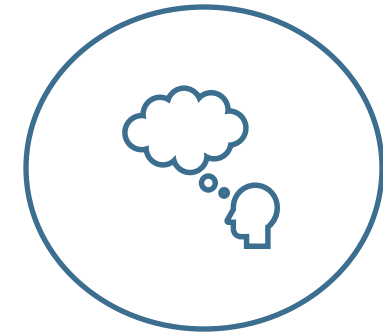
After a difficult conversation



Debrief



**Your rights
and safety**



Reflect

These resources were developed as part of the NDS Sector Readiness project in January 2024.

For more information on the project and access to more free resources, visit our website at

<https://www.nds.org.au/resources/all-resources/wa-ndis-quality-and-safeguards-sector-readiness-project>



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**

All these resources are free to access as a result of the continued support from Department of Communities.