

DPR Plan – Step 1: Constructive Conversation



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Assisted Dialogue (Step 2) Process Overview

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1. Preparatory Meeting with Each Party	The Facilitator holds a short orientation meeting (30 min) with each party in private to prepare for the Assisted Dialogue.
2. Assisted Dialogue Meeting including:	A joint meeting occurs with the two parties, supported by a neutral facilitator. (60-75 mins).
AD Part 1: Narration and Dialogue	Each person explains the events which led to the problem or conflictual situation, in turn.
AD Part 2: Exploring Needs and Interests	Parties each express the underlying needs and interests they have which caused the concern. The facilitator draws out each person's human, social or economic needs that centre in the conflict.
AD Part 3: Brainstorming Solutions	Parties brainstorm solutions, once they have an understanding of the problem, seeking options to obtain a win-win resolution.
AD Part 4: Agreement and Follow-up	Once a win-win scenario is reached, the neutral third party facilitator records the solutions agreed upon by the parties in written form for the parties to retain for future reference.

10 Tips for Effective Communication to Resolve Disputes (Tool A)

1. Make sure this is a good time and place to have a conversation. When one or the other is feeling emotional, this may not be the right time to have the conversation.
2. Agree together to end the conversation (for now) if one or both become too emotional to have a productive conversation.
3. Describe the concrete behaviour (eg. "I missed my lunch when you didn't come to relieve me.")
4. Use "I" statements rather than "You" statements (eg. "I'm feeling angry" rather than "You upset me.")
5. Describe the impact of the behaviour (eg. "I need a break at lunch and when you arrive late, I feel disrespected.").
6. Avoid words such as "always" and "never" (eg. "You're always doing this").
7. Avoid presenting the behaviour as a personal characteristic (eg. "You're selfish").
8. Hear the other person's perspective and listen attentively. Let the other person know that you have heard them by telling them what you heard.
9. Engage with the other person for ways to move forward (eg. "What are your ideas for how we can work together as a team?").
10. Try to build a win-win solution together that meets your needs and the other person's which will allow goodwill to continue.



Step 1 of WQSB DPR Plan asks for employees to attempt to speak with the other individual(s) involved when experiencing a dispute or a conflict.

In that context and for some people, having to voice concerns, participate in a dialogue and work on solutions can be challenging. The COGHO tool has been developed to support individuals in having these discussions with confidence.

The creation of this tool is inspired by concepts developed by Terrell (2011).

Principles

The four principles of a COGHO conversation are:

- Speak Courageously
- Receive opinions and criticisms Gracefully
- Be Humble
- Be Open to Learn

Speak Courageously

Many people avoid or ignore disputes and conflicts, usually out of fear - not feeling enough trust and safety in the relationship to speak up.

Avoidance of conflict can lead to the eradication of mutual trust and lead to more disputes and conflicts further down the road.

Speaking the truth (even when it is difficult) allows for trust to be maintained or rebuilt. Therefore, it is important that employees speak courageously. Open communication when a conflict occurs is key to a safe and healthy work environment.

Thence, you must speak whenever possible, especially in situations of conflict.

Receive opinions and criticisms **G**racefully

When receiving diverging opinions or criticisms, one must accept it **gracefully**, e.g., not firing back a reaction rooted in emotion.

If you are able to process the emotion you feel when hearing what you perceive as negative comments, that will give you a mental space and time to think about the situation, welcome the other person's perspective and allow for self-criticism.

It's also about being able to express being frustrated or angry (or other types of strong emotions) by what you are receiving without yelling, stomping one's feet or reacting with incivility.

Be **H**umble

One must deal with diverging opinions or criticisms with **humility**. In most disputes or conflicts, the individuals involved hold some form of responsibility for the mishandling or escalation. Thus, it is important to be open to look into oneself and assess in good faith what you might need to change.

This is so much more important because there is a common understanding in our society that one is not always right and that nobody can do everything perfectly. Thence, in responding to criticism, an individual is expected to make a judgment about his/her own behavior, about the mistakes he/she might have made, with the objective of improving. If this does not occur, it will make it more difficult to solve the dispute or the conflict, and will erode trust even further.

Be **O**pen to Learn

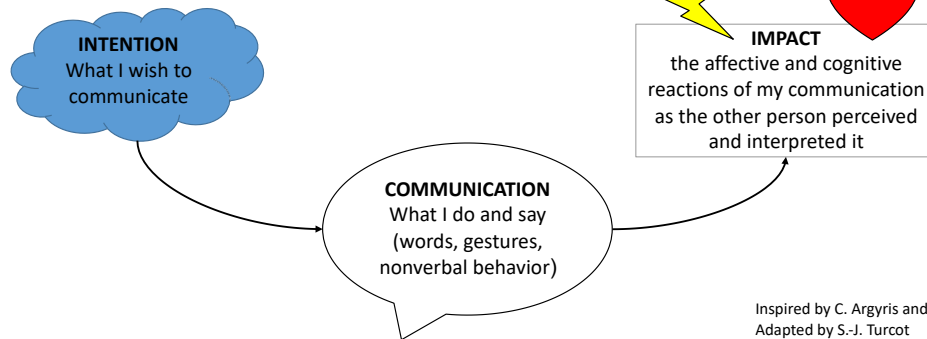
It is important to show **openness** to learn. Be curious and ask questions about what you might have said, or do, that in the perspective of the other individual contributed to the situation.

This is an essential part of a constructive communication between individuals faced with a dispute or a conflict.

Once both individuals can communicate effectively about the problems at the root of a dispute or a conflict, if they both are willing to learn about why it occurred in the first place and they are engaged in finding solutions to address them, they will not only have solved the dispute or conflict at hand, but also prevented potential related disputes or conflicts from happening in the future.

I.C.I. – TOOL C

We are often mistaken about the intentions of others ALTHOUGH even a good intention does not excuse a detrimental impact BUT it often helps contextualize the situation and contributes to de-escalate the conflict



One important factor leading to disputes or conflicts is the difficulty of many of us to separate the intention from what a person has said or what it did provoke as negative impacts or effects. In these circumstances, we tend to be led by our feelings and by the sentiment of being unjustly treated. This results in believing that the other person had bad intentions or willfully intended to hurt you and create negative impacts.

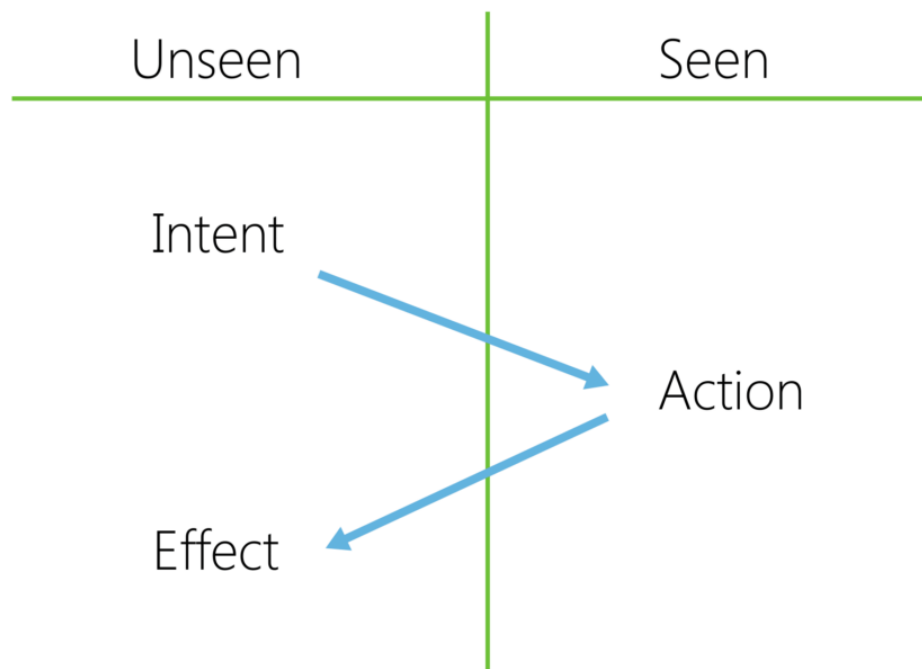
Definitions

- **Intent:** Our intentions influence our outward behaviors. It's the meaning or purpose behind our communication.
- **Communication:** Carrying out our intentions through what we say and do.
- **Impact:** How the other person interprets our communication and what was the impact of it (positive/negative). It's all about how it landed with them, based on their own personal experience and existing relationship with the person.

Dynamic between intent, communication, and impact

Most of the time when people are in a positive and trustful professional relationship, they tend to attribute good intent and to forgive the other when that person has miscommunicated, e.g., when what they said or did was wrong or perceived as wrong and/or generated a negative impact.

However, in situations where trust has eroded or does not exist, communication would generally already be of low quality between the individuals involved. This is when the unseen (intent + effect/impact) plays a role in escalating problems into disputes and conflicts. One or both individuals involved automatically interpret what is seen (action/communication) as being negative.



(Skelly, 2022)

Tips - constructive conversation and problem-solving

It is important to take a step back and think about the situation before having a difficult conversation with the other person. Ask yourself what positive intentions the other person might have had even although what they said or did seem to you to be negative or had a harmful effect on you.

You must remain open to the fact that you might have misinterpreted the intent of the other person or misjudge their communication, and vice-versa. Stay curious. Ask the question directly: “What was your intent?” Remember that you cannot know the other person’s intentions before they share them with you.

And always remind yourself that a good intention does not excuse a negative communication and the detrimental impacts it had on others. However, voicing intentions and ensuring they are well understood by all individuals involved does contribute to de-escalate disputes and conflicts as well as open a path towards solutions.

Appendix A – List of Needs

<p><u>WELL-BEING</u> Sustenance/Health abundance/thriving exercise food/nutrition rest/sleep sustainability support/help survival wellness</p> <p><u>SAFETY/SECURITY</u> Comfort confidence emotional safety familiarity order, structure predictability protection from harm relaxation self-esteem shelter stability trust</p> <p><u>PEACE/BEAUTY/REST</u> Acceptance appreciation, gratitude awareness balance clarity ease harmony presence recreation relaxation simplicity space tranquility wonder</p>	<p><u>EXPRESSION</u> Autonomy/Authenticity choice congruence consistency continuity dignity freedom honesty independence initiative innovation integrity power transparency, openness wholeness</p> <p><u>CREATIVITY/PLAY</u> Adventure discovery fun humor inspiration joy movement passion spontaneity</p> <p><u>COMMUNITY/BELONGING</u> Cooperation equality fellowship inclusion interdependence harmony mutuality reciprocity solidarity support trust</p>	<p><u>CONNECTION</u> Love/Caring Affection Closeness Companionship Compassion Kindness Mattering/importance Nurturing</p> <p><u>EMPATHY/UNDERSTANDING</u> Awareness clarity communication consideration hearing (hear/be heard) knowing (know/be known) presence respect seeing (see/be seen) sensitivity</p> <p><u>MEANING/CONTRIBUTION</u> Aliveness achievement productivity celebration/mourning challenge competence efficacy effectiveness feedback growth learning, clarity mystery participation purpose value</p>
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Appendix B – PROTOCOL

Protocol for Assisted Dialogue

BETWEEN: PARTY 1 NAME, [JOB TITLE]

AND: PARTY 2 NAME, [JOB TITLE]

We, the undersigned, understand that this facilitation is intended to enable us to reach an agreement and resolve a dispute or a conflict.

Pursuant to the WQSB DPR Plan, we agree to submit our dispute or conflict to a process conducted by _____ (name of neutral third party), a neutral third party acting as a volunteer.

1. ROLE OF THE NEUTRAL THIRD PARTY

By entering into this agreement, we agree to enter this process in good faith with the objective of resolving our dispute amicably. We acknowledge that the neutral third party will assist us in:

- Engaging in dialogue ;
- Clarifying our points of view;
- Identifying the sources of the problem;
- Identifying our needs and interests;
- Exploring possible solutions;
- Reaching a mutually satisfactory agreement, if necessary.

2. IMPARTIALITY

The neutral third party will, at all times, act in a neutral and impartial manner.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

We recognize that the content of our meetings is confidential and that we cannot disclose or communicate this information to anyone. The neutral third party is also subject to the same obligation.

4. NON-COMPELLABILITY

We understand that we may not call the neutral third party as a witness in any court proceeding, including testimony on the terms or scope of an agreement.