Strategies for
potentially difficult conversations

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Overview of the workshop

- Identify what makes some types of conversations potentially difficult
- Consider the resources /experience we bring to those conversations from other areas of our (working) lives
- Test out ways to approach potentially difficult conversations with learners

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Difficult conversations?

- What kinds of conversations do you find most difficult?
  - What makes them seem difficult?

- Think about the ways in which you (and other skillful clinicians) 'break bad news'
  - What are your best practice guidelines?
  - What do you do to 'look after' yourself in these situations?

Workplace conflict (Rogers et al 2011)

Task-related	Relationship-related
• principally cognitive in nature • a perception of disagreement about content of decisions • differences may be in viewpoints, ideas and opinions	• Emotional in nature • a perception of inter-personal incompatibility • typically includes tension, annoyance and animosity
'thought to improve group performance in specific situations, such as in the evaluation of potential problems in non-routine tasks'	*'has profoundly negative effects on both team performance and team member satisfaction'*

Managing conflict

• Managing self
• Managing relationships
• Managing conversations

https://twitter.com/StanfordMedX/status/777539791072088064

Ladder of inference
After Argyris and Schon

Avoiding the leap

Capturing your story's headlines!

- She's so irresponsible!
- He is just lazy!
- It's like talking to a brick wall!
- They just don't care!
- I was never like that!
- He's making me look like a fool!
- There's no point trying?
- They are not suitable to be a (insert profession here)
- In my day, this would never have been allowed!
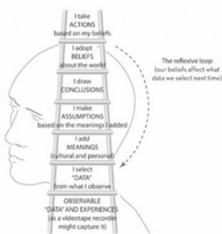
Ref: Grimsley (2010) Vital Conversations

Climb back down your ladder!

From criticism to critique?

- Criticism

- Critical

- Critique

One sentence definitions

Criticism [noun]: *the expression of disapproval of someone or something based on perceived faults or mistakes*

Critical [adjective]: *expressing adverse or disapproving comments or judgments*

Critique [verb]: *a detailed analysis and assessment of something*

Managing conversations
Grimsley (2010)

90 second start

Explore both stories

Identify individual and shared interests

Generate options

Agree on specific next steps

90 second start

- Define your issue and purpose for having the conversation
- Express what you believe to be at stake and any consequences
- If appropriate, reveal how you feel about the issues /conversation
- Express your motivation to find a positive way forward
- Create a collaborative role by inviting them to respond to what you have just said

I not YOU

90 second starts

- Work in groups of 3 or 4
- Choose an authentic conversation
- Write your 90 second starter
- Practice with a partner, get feedback and refine

Managing relationships

- Think about the ways in which you (and other skillful clinicians) 'break bad news'
  - What are your best practice guidelines?
  - What do you do to 'look after' yourself in these situations?

- What can you take from this area of practice to help you better prepare and manage those potentially difficult conversations?

Next steps

- Think about what we have covered today
- Identify one or more changes to your current practice you are likely to test out

Thank you

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