

Difficult Discussions Workshop

WPO EEF Chapter Chair Training
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Difficult Feedback



What are some **challenges** you have when delivering feedback or having a difficult conversation?



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Difficult Discussion Steps

1. Clearly define the issue
2. Give specific example of a situation or behavior that needs to change
3. Describe your own emotions
4. Let them know what's at stake
5. Own your contribution to the problem
6. Invite their feedback
7. Actively listen
8. Move forward with next step(s)



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Situation

Capturing your thoughts

GROUP ACTIVITY



Think of a situation where you need to have a tough conversation – confronting the elephant in the room or a performance issue.



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Summarize the Problem

Name the issue. Right time, right place.



Example:

“Joan, I want to talk to you about the effect your communication style is having on our chapter.”



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Help Them Understand

Give an example

Ensure that it illustrates the behavior or situation you want to change. Be Succinct.



Example:

“During the last meeting, you interrupted Misha three times. She was talking about her challenge, and you cut her off to tell a story. I directed the conversation back to Misha quickly and a few minutes later you interrupted her again with loud side comment to Sally. Sally gave me a look of embarrassment and tried to get us back on track and apologized to the group and you put your hand up to “shush Sally”.



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Describe Your Emotions About the Issue

Telling someone what emotion they evoke in you is intimate and disarming.



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Example:

"I am concerned about the chapter, and I am sad that we need to have this conversation."

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Clarify What is at Stake

Use the words "at stake" which have emotional impact. Speak calmly and quietly.



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Example:

"There is a great deal at stake. Several members have come to me about your lack of awareness of your impact when you talk over people."

Perhaps there's little or nothing at stake for you, Joan, you've been a member for over 10 years and Misha is new. But I'm not prepared to lose Misha or any other chapter member. This chapter has been working hard to come together as a group, and this is making people uncomfortable, so I believe the stakes are high."

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Own Your Part

Look inward.

Often the problem is in not communicating clear expectations or insuring accountability.



Example:

“I have been trying to kindly redirect when this happens, and I did not want to upset you as there is so much value you add to our group; but I should have brought this to your attention earlier. I apologize for not doing that.”



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Invite Their Feedback

This is not an attack. This has been a statement of reality from one point of view with the intent to resolve the issue. It is now time to open the discussion and hear the other perspective.



Example:

“Please help me understand if you realize that you interrupt or cut people off in almost every meeting?”

I want to understand what is happening from your perspective. Talk to me.”



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Actively Listen

Inquire and Listen:

Question for full understanding. Use paraphrasing and perception checks.



Example:

“Please say more about this. I see it quite differently, so I’d like to understand.”

And/or

“I want to make sure I understand. You feel XYZ...”



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Next Steps

Resolution: Make an agreement and determine how you will hold one another accountable.



Example:

- What have we learned?
- Where are we now?
- Has anything been left unsaid that needs saying?
- How can we move forward from here, given our understanding?

Then adding: “Great, I’m glad we had this conversation and you have agreed to work on your communication and if you interrupt someone and I give you the signal, you will apologize and stop.

I need to be clear that this can’t go on at the table Joan.”



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Helpful Hints

- ✓ Master the courage to interrogate reality
- ✓ Come out from behind yourself into the conversation and make it real
- ✓ Be here, prepared to be nowhere else
- ✓ Tackle your toughest challenge today
- ✓ Obey your instincts
- ✓ Take responsibility for your emotional wake
- ✓ Let silence do the heavy lifting



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8. Move forward with next step(s)



Your Turn – Paired Sharing

Capturing your thoughts in your own words

GROUP ACTIVITY



- Go back to your situation where you need to have a difficult discussion
- Using the worksheet provided, following each step and write down what YOU would say for each step
- Share with your partner



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Difficult Discussion Preparation Worksheet

	Steps	Preparation Space
1.	Clearly define the issue	
2.	Give specific example of a situation or behavior that needs to change	
3.	Describe your own emotions	
4.	Let them know what's at stake	
5.	Own your contribution to the problem	
6.	Invite their feedback	
7.	Actively Listen (acknowledge, restate, ask a question)	
8.	Move forward with next step(s)	



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Open Questions

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Complimentary HR or training consult offered to all attendees.
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