



Difficult Conversations Worksheet

next

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1. Grounding (I am calm)

Grounding is a deliberate choice not to react from raw emotion. It is stepping back, taking time, relieving pressure, getting rid of anger. It is applying whatever tactics will help: breathing, music, walking, seeking feedback from a trusted third party. It is checking in with yourself and acknowledging your contribution to what's happened. It is time out.

2. Preparing (I am organized and ready)

Preparing is a choice to come to the conversation ready. It is gathering your facts, verifying what happened, reviewing the chronology, building your case. It is assessing possible outcomes and getting clear about the consequences. It is scripting the approach, as well as choosing time and place. It is moving from the gut to the head, thinking it through.

3. Presenting (I have spoken with you honestly)

Presenting is sharing your story and making your case. It is being clear, concise, and direct about the issue and effect of the issue. It is maximizing the golden opportunity to be heard. It is resisting blame and assumption. It is "I" statements of feeling, moving from head to heart, sharing the truth. When you ..., I feel ..., because ...

4. Understanding (I have listened to you carefully)

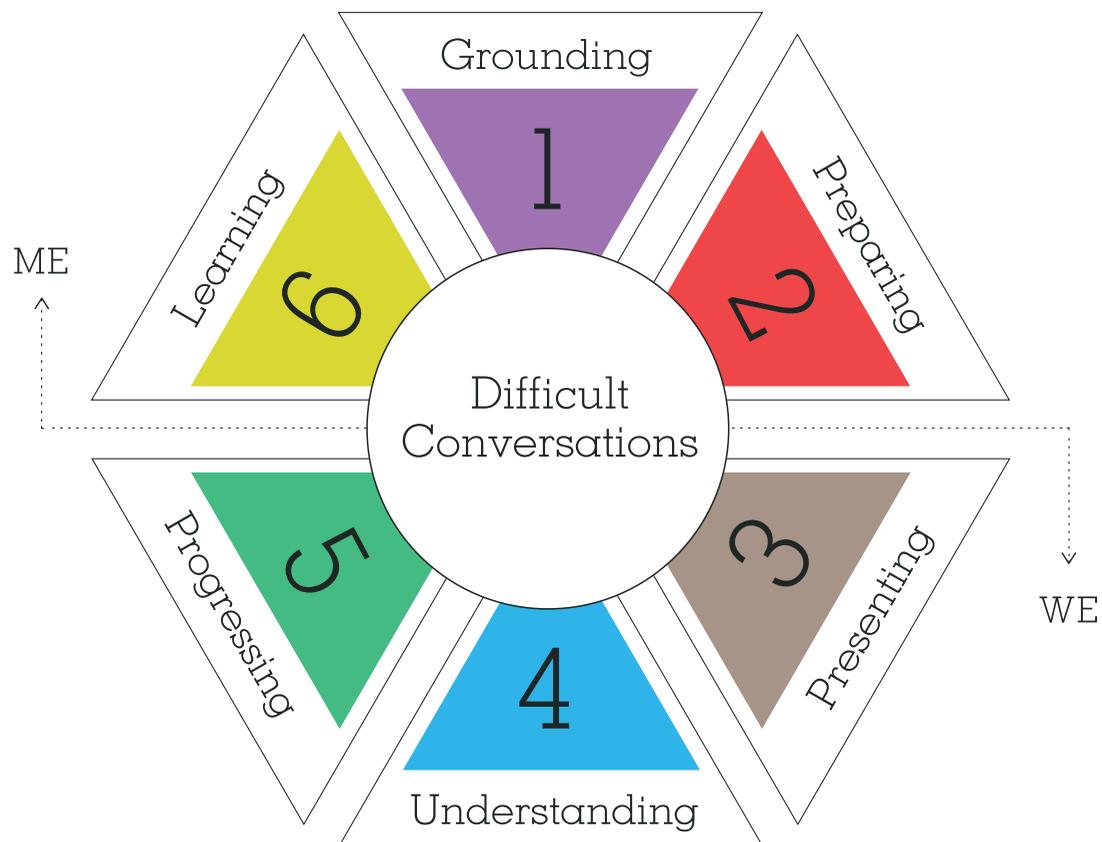
Understanding is seeking the other's view, being curious about the other's experience. It is asking what and why, clarifying, checking assumptions. It is suspending judgment and staying focused, opening the mind and keeping the ego in check. It is active listening – taking notes, paraphrasing for clarity, staying present.

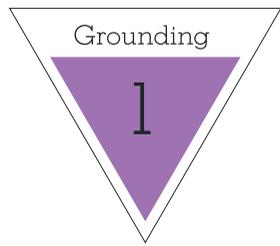
5. Progressing (We have agreed on next steps)

Progressing is moving forward together. It is negotiation, action planning, and commitment. It is deciding what's next in the event of an impasse. It is owning one's part, making the apology if that's called for, and accepting amends offered. It is choosing not to carry the resentment forward – by letting go and moving on.

6. Learning (I will apply this experience)

Learning is recognizing and assimilating what happened. It is bringing experience forward through reflective practice. It is scanning for patterns, noting familiar elements in the situation, and acting to avert repetition. It is defining the "do differently" for next time. It is the continuous development of self-mastery.





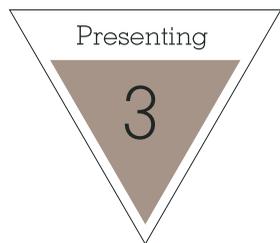
What will I do to get grounded?

(music, breathing, relaxation, walking).



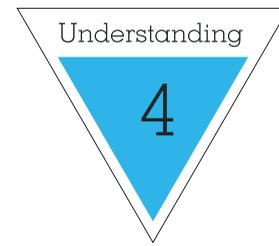
What do I need to clarify?

(Documentation, legal, reality check with others, consequences)



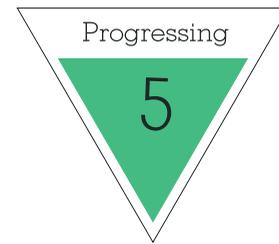
How do I plan to present my case?

(When you..., I feel..., Because...)



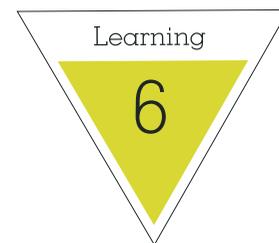
How can I suspend self and listen, whether or not I agree?

(Be careful not to "buy it back").



What do we agree is going to happen next?

(Behavior change, agree to disagree, consequences, timing)



What went well, what was tricky, what would I do differently?

What did I learn about me, the other person, and my patterns?

Should I proceed?

How invested am I in the relationship?
(score 1 – 5)

How important is the issue to me?
(score 1 – 5)

How prepared am I for the consequences of proceeding?
(score 1 – 5)

How serious are the consequences of not proceeding?
(score 1 – 5)

How willing am I to commit my energy?
(score 1 – 5)