Navigating Conflict & Difficult Conversations

Today’s Plan:

10:00-10:10	Introductions
10:10-10:20	Why difficult conversations are difficult
10:20-10:35	Understanding conflict patterns
10:35-10:55	Diagnose before you dialogue
10:55-11:05	Break
11:05-11:20	CLEAR’ing the difficult conversation
11:20-11:35	Keeping cool while feeling heated
11:35-11:50	Application
11:50-12:00	Closing

Why are difficult conversations so difficult?

Think of a difficult conversations you've had recently …or that you've been putting off. What makes the conversation difficult?

Take 60 seconds to focus and capture your thoughts, and then add them to

https://app.wooclap.com/THITLPJ?from=status_-bar

Conflict Response Styles

Rahim Conflict Inventories (ROCI)
Johnson, 1981

Image: CNN, 2023



Diagnose before Dialogue

Facts:	What happened
Story:	What am I telling myself about it?
Impact:	What’s the impact?
Need:	What needs to happen next?

CLEAR: The difficult dialogue framework

Duggan, T. (2026). *Clear intention: How to get better at conflict*. Allen & Unwin.

C - clarify the issue

L - lead with observable facts

E - explore their perspective

A - align on expectations

R - resolve with next steps

Staying cool while feeling heated

Verbal:

- Recognize
  - Acknowledge
  - Endorse

Nonverbal:

- Vocalics
- Eye contact
- Proxemics

Application

Breakout Room 1:
A high performing employee consistently delivers results but has become rude and condescending towards colleagues, several of whom have complained. You've avoided addressing it because the employee is critical to your team.

Breakout Room 2:
An employee has missed multiple deadlines in the past month. Each time, there's a different explanation. You've given verbal feedback about the need to submit reports on time, but haven't gone beyond informal feedback.

Breakout Room 3:

Two members of your team have stopped communicating, except for occasional bickering. Each blames the other, and the conflict is now threatening project delivery.

Take Aways & Conclusions

Resources

- Duggan, T. (2026). *Clear intention: How to get better at conflict* Allen & Unwin
- Mirivel, J. (2014). *The art of positive communication.* Peter Lang

& Mirivel, J. (2023). *The art of positive communication for leaders.* Rowman & Littlefield.
    - https://youtu.be/KmmlA19WLgs?si=12B7opSH0oXJQYUK
- Fisher, Ury, & Patton (2011). *Getting to yes* Penguin Books
- The Gottman Institute: https://www.gottman.com/
- The Program on Negotiation (PON) at Harvard: https://www.pon.harvard.edu/