



COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY



@COUNSELLORCRONAN



Welcome!

VALUES:

Passion for working in mental health and helping individuals

Honest and vulnerable about my own personal mental health experiences

VISION:

To see mental health statistics reduced through education, self care, self belief and prevention strategies.

MISSION:

To up skill individuals so that they can gain education and confidence to take charge of their own mental health.

To make top quality mental health coping strategies, tools and education accessible to everyone so that you no longer have to wait to start your journey to recovery.



MY STORY:

As a young 14 year old girl I struggled with depression, anxiety, self esteem and confidence issues. Why? That is the million dollar question. I came from a big supportive and loving family. I suffered in silence for the majority of my young adolescent years, feeling isolated, alone and hopeless. I did not seek the help I needed because I didn't know what was happening to me, I didn't understand it and to some extent I learnt to live with it, accepting that living with those feelings was just apart of my life journey. I never fully felt happy and was never without those uncomfortable thoughts or feelings that anxiety has to offer. Yet, I continued on, until my life started spiralling into a direction that I could not have predicted. I never had any self confidence and never believed that I was capable of much in my life, manly because my anxiety did not allow me to think about much else, it continued to overwhelm me and consume the majority of my thoughts on a daily basis.

One afternoon I found myself reading a magazine about a young happy, successful lady and I thought that I wished I was like her, happy, because to me thats what success in life looks like. In the same magazine a quote that I read jumped out and grabbed my attention, "At any moment, recreate your life the way you wish it to be."

I wrote it on a post it note and stuck it up on my mirror as a reminder to create my life.

The next day I enrolled at in the bachelor of psychology at University. When I started my uni course, I was initially seeking some understanding and answers into my own life, but over time my passion grew into something a lot bigger and I knew that I had to share my story and more importantly I wanted to help others. This was the start of my true journey.

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Whether it's now or another time later on in your life, at school, work, dinner table, or party, we are all eventually faced with an uncomfortable situation in which we need to discuss something uncomfortable with someone else. Yes, you can avoid that conversation, like many people do because they don't like confrontation, or you can face it head-on and hopefully bring about positive change and save the friendship or relationship.

WHAT ARE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS?



Difficult conversations are anything we find hard to talk about with another person, there are usually strong differences of opinion between two people, and it has the potential to become emotional. It can be a planned discussion about an uncomfortable topic or a negative experience where the goal is to share different perspectives, build mutual understanding, and develop respect (not to persuade or win"). While it may be easier to avoid these conversations, doing so could lead to further escalated conflict that becomes harder to resolve.

HAVING A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO

- Shed light on how to resolve a problem
- Embrace constructive change
- Gain a deeper understanding
- Build, trust, and repair relationships

“

BAD COMMUNICATION ENDS A LOT OF
GOOD THINGS.

GOOD COMMUNICATION ENDS A LOT OF
BAD THINGS.

”

“
THE BIGGEST COMMUNICATION PROBLEM IS WE
DO NOT LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND. WE LISTEN TO
REPLY.”

STEPHEN COVEY

”



“I” STATEMENTS

"I" statements are a great way to help solve conflict. When someone feels blamed for something, it is easy to get defensive and emotional; the "I" statement formula effectively communicates your feelings and needs.

1 "I FEEL....

What are my feelings?

2 WHEN....

Gently describe the other persons actions

3 BECAUSE...

The effect of the behavior on you

4 I NEED."

What would you like the other person to do instead?

EXAMPLE

"I" STATEMENTS

1 "I FEEL....

What are my feelings?

"I feel disrespected

2 WHEN....

Gently describe the other persons actions

when you don't have time for me, especially when you sit on your phone all night,

3 BECAUSE...

The effect of the behavior on you

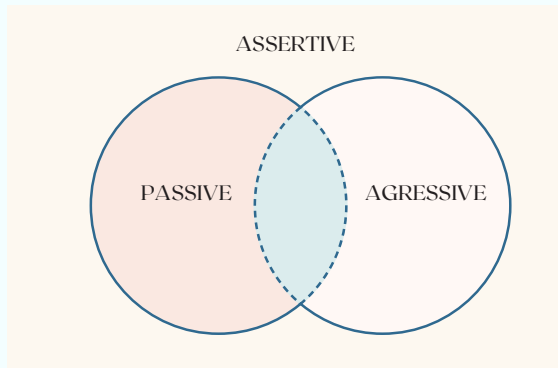
I see you talking and texting on your phone all night and I wonder why you don't make the time to even talk to me.

4 I NEED."

What would you like the other person to do instead?

I need to you ask me questions such as, " how was your day?, what are your plans tomorrow? How can I help you?". Because that makes me feel important and respected.

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION



Using assertive communication means you can express your feelings clearly, directly, and respectfully. When assertive, you express your thoughts and feelings and stand up for yourself without being aggressive or putting anyone down. Communicating assertively can help you minimize conflict and resolve issues more effectively while empowering yourself.

Three communication styles have been identified, and all of them can resemble different animals because of their particular characteristics and traits.

Let's have a look!

- **PASSIVE**
 - Hides and shys away
 - Self-protection to avoid getting hurt
 - Lacks confidence
 - Keeps your feelings tucked inside
 - Plays it safe
 - Pleasing others more than accepting self

ASSERTIVE

- Wise, calm, and observant
- Respectful and mature to self and others
- Doesn't overreact and expresses feelings tactfully
- Feels secure, confident, and loved
- Uses "I statements"

AGGRESSIVE

- Is rude, bossy, and controlling
- Disrespectful and can make people feel uncomfortable
- Can yell and scream
- Acts like they are better than everyone else
- Intimidating

“ COMMUNICATION MUST BE HOT. THAT’S
HONEST, OPEN AND TWO-WAY.

DAN OSWALD

”



ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION CHECKLIST

- Make eye contact
- Stand up tall
- Be calm and in control
- Use 'I' statements to express your needs, wants, and feelings
- Speak firmly without yelling
- Describe facts without blaming
- Stand up for yourself
- Listen to other people without interrupting
- Be composed
- Be respectful
- Say "No" if you need to
- Be empathetic to all those that are involved

THINK

BEFORE YOU SPEAK, WRITE OR TEXT.

IS IT	TRUE?
IS IT	HELPFUL?
IS IT	INSPIRING?
IS IT	NECESSARY?
IS IT	KIND?

HOW TO PREPARE FOR DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS.

BEFORE GOING INTO THE CONVERSATION, ASK YOURSELF
SOME QUESTIONS:

What is your purpose for having the conversation?

What do you hope to accomplish?

What would be an ideal outcome?

What assumptions are you making about this person's intentions?

What "buttons" of yours are being pushed? Are you more emotional than the situation warrants?

HOW TO PREPARE FOR DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS.

How is your attitude toward the conversation influencing your perception of it?

Who is the opponent? What might they be thinking about this situation? Are they aware of the problem?

What are your needs and fears?

How have you contributed to the problem?

NOTES:

STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME

1

INQUIRY

Go into the conversation with an attitude of discovery and curiosity. Try to forget everything you think you already know about the other person, or at least pretend that you don't know anything about them or their point of view. Try and let go of all your previous assumptions and judgments and act like it is the first time you have met them. Instead, ask yourself these simple questions. What does this person want? What are they not saying?

Let the other person talk until they're finished. Don't interrupt except if you are acknowledging them. Leave your emotions at the door, and don't take the conversation personally. Try to learn as much as you can in the conversation about what the other person is trying to say and what they need or want. You'll get your turn to talk but don't rush things.

2

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Don't go into a difficult conversation with a *my-way-or-the-highway* attitude. Acknowledgment means showing that you've heard and understood.

Express your interest in understanding how the other person feels and take the time to process the other person's words and tone. Try and get a good understanding of their point of view and then explain it back to them so they can see that you acknowledge and understand what they are saying.

Please acknowledge whatever you can, including your defensiveness, if it comes up.

Acknowledgment could sound something like

- I'm so sorry you feel this way.
- This is what you are trying to say.
- This sounds like a tricky situation for you.
- I'm sorry that this has happened.

3

APPRECIATE

Talking about difficult things isn't easy; many find it challenging and scary. When a person raises a concern, appreciate that they have decided to speak to you and not about you. Take time to thank the person for raising the concern.

This could sound something like

- Thank you for conversing with me; I'm glad you did.
- I understand that this must have been a difficult conversation; thank you.
- Thank you for bringing this straight to me.

STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME

4

AFFIRM

Could you let the person know that you are committed to making progress together and be there to support them moving forward?

This could sound something like

- Thank you for having the conversation with me; I'm sure there is something we can do about this.
- Let's work together to find a solution moving forward.
- We can certainly do something about this; what would you suggest we do next?

5

ACT

Could you be sure to agree on the next steps and outcomes from the conversation and prioritize them? Words that lack follow through and action rarely build trust and credibility in handling difficult situations effectively. What happens after the conversation is just as significant as what happens in it.

Agree on how you both will proceed. Then, finish the conversation positively with what you and they will do.

This could sound something like

- Let's talk about what we do from here.
- What should we expect from each other after this conversation?



6

REFLECT AND LEARN

After a difficult conversation, it's worthwhile to reflect and consider what went well and what didn't. Consider why you had specific reactions and what you might have said differently.

“ COMMUNICATION IS YOUR TICKET TO SUCCESS, IF YOU PAY ATTENTION AND LEARN TO DO IT EFFECTIVELY.

”

THEO GOLD

@counsellorcronan

DO'S AND DON'TS IN A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

DO

BREATHE

Take regular breaks during the day; the more calm and centered you are, the better.

SLOW DOWN

Slow down the pace of the conversation — it helps you find the right words and express what you need.

GIVE SOMETHING BACK

Find ways to be constructive by suggesting other solutions or alternatives.



DON'T

MINDSET

Label the news you need to deliver as a “difficult conversation” in your mind.

PLAN

Don't write a script for how you want the discussion to go; jot down notes if it helps, but be open and flexible.

PERSPECTIVE

Don't ignore the other person's point of view — ask how they see the problem and then look for overlaps between your perspectives.

- Listen. Don't spend the time when the other person is talking, thinking about what you want to say next.
- Acknowledge your and your partner's emotional energy and direct it toward a useful purpose.
- If things aren't going to plan, take a break.
- Know and return to your purpose at difficult moments.
- Don't take verbal attacks personally. Instead, help your partner come back to the center.
- Don't assume your partner can see things from your point of view.
- Could you be clear about how you feel and what you want?
- Mentally practice the conversation. You can see various possibilities and imagine yourself handling them with ease.
- Embrace the silence. There may be silent moments in the conversation. Please don't rush to fill them with words.

HOW DO I BEGIN?

- I want to discuss something with you that will help us be more effective.
- I want to talk about _____ with you, but would you mind telling me your point of view?
- I would appreciate your help with what just happened. Please let me know when you have a few minutes to talk.
- I would appreciate your help with something. Can we talk about it (soon)? If the person says, “Sure, let me get back to you,” follow up.
- I think we have different perceptions about _____. I’d like to hear your view on this.
- I want to talk about _____. We may have different ideas about how to _____.
- I’d like to see if we might reach a better understanding about _____. I want to hear your feelings about this and share my perspective.
- We seem to have a recurring conversation (conflict, disagreement, problem). I want to talk about why that happens.
- I want to talk with you about some things I’ve noticed over the last little while.
- I have some observations I’d like to share with you and some of the conclusions I’m starting to draw, and then I’d be interested in hearing your perspective.

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