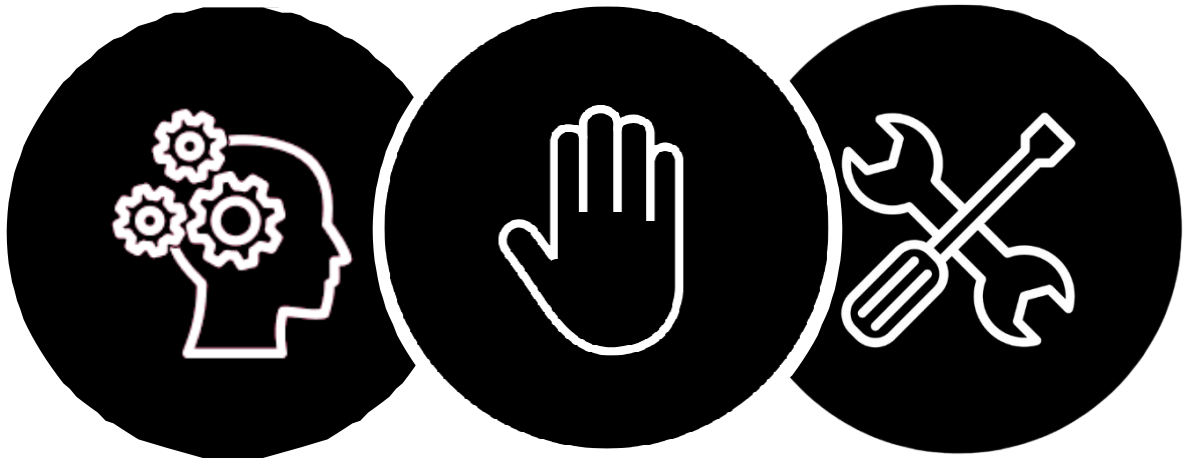




COMPASSIONATE DIALOGUE



USING THE RIR PROTOCOL®

Session Workbook

COMPASSIONATE DIALOGUE

Dialogue within ourselves or with others, rooted in self-care, which empowers us to address conflict, deepen relationships, and build coalitions.

THE RIR PROTOCOL ®



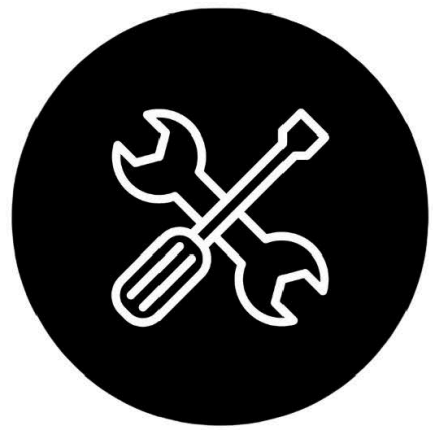
Recognize

**Self-Reflection
Self-Compassion
Self-Regulation**



Interrupt

**Empathy
Curiosity
Clarity**

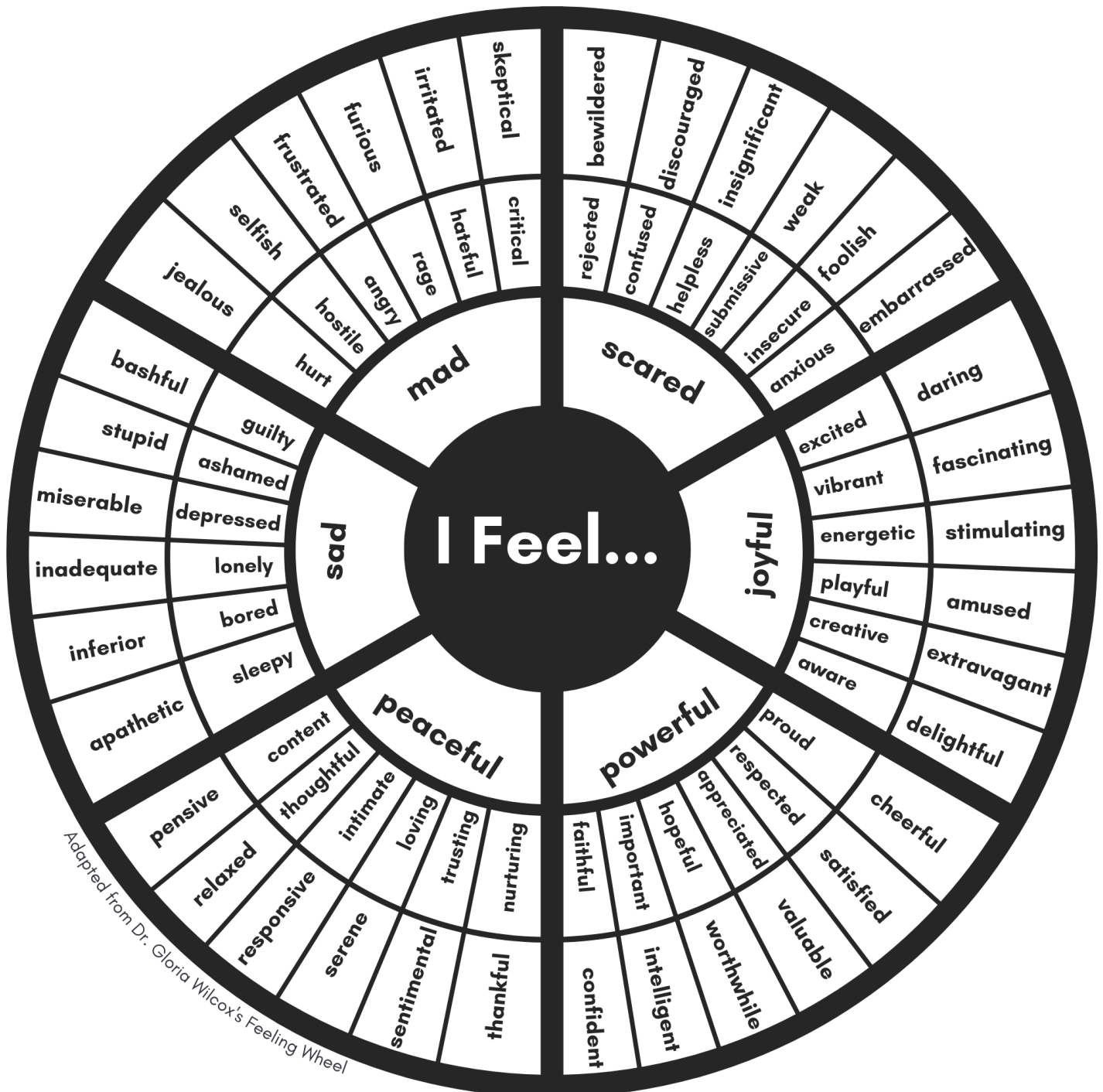


Repair

**Collaboration
Consistency
Accountability**

Compassionate Dialogue is the practice, RIR is the tool.

Use the emotion wheel to Recognize the emotions underneath your reactions. This will help you acknowledge what you're feeling and self-regulate so you can respond clearly and thoughtfully.

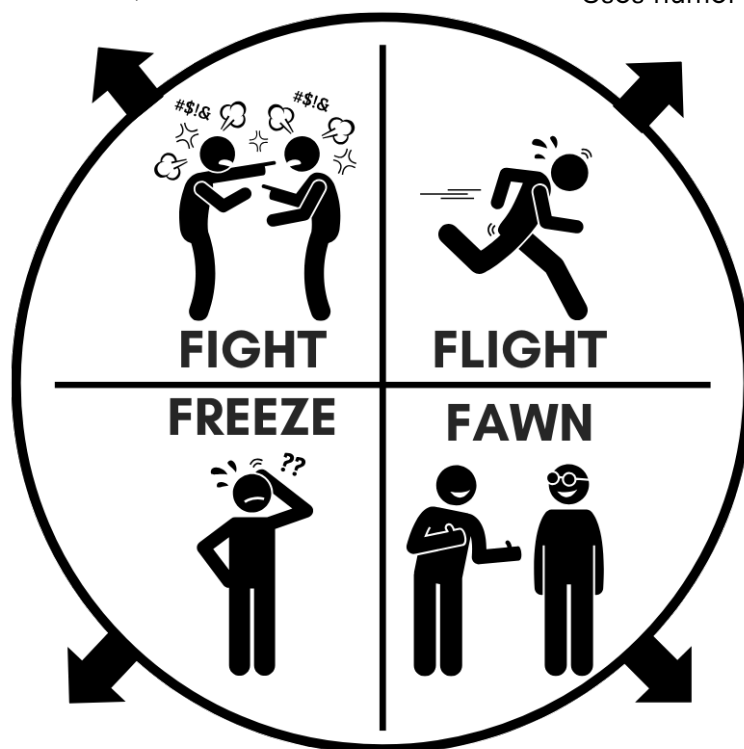


Adapted from Dr. Gloria Wilcox's Feeling Wheel

Along with understanding our emotions, recognizing when we are defaulting to our common stress/conflict reactions can signal us to use our self-regulation skills before engaging. What are your common reactions?

Common Stress/Conflict Reactions

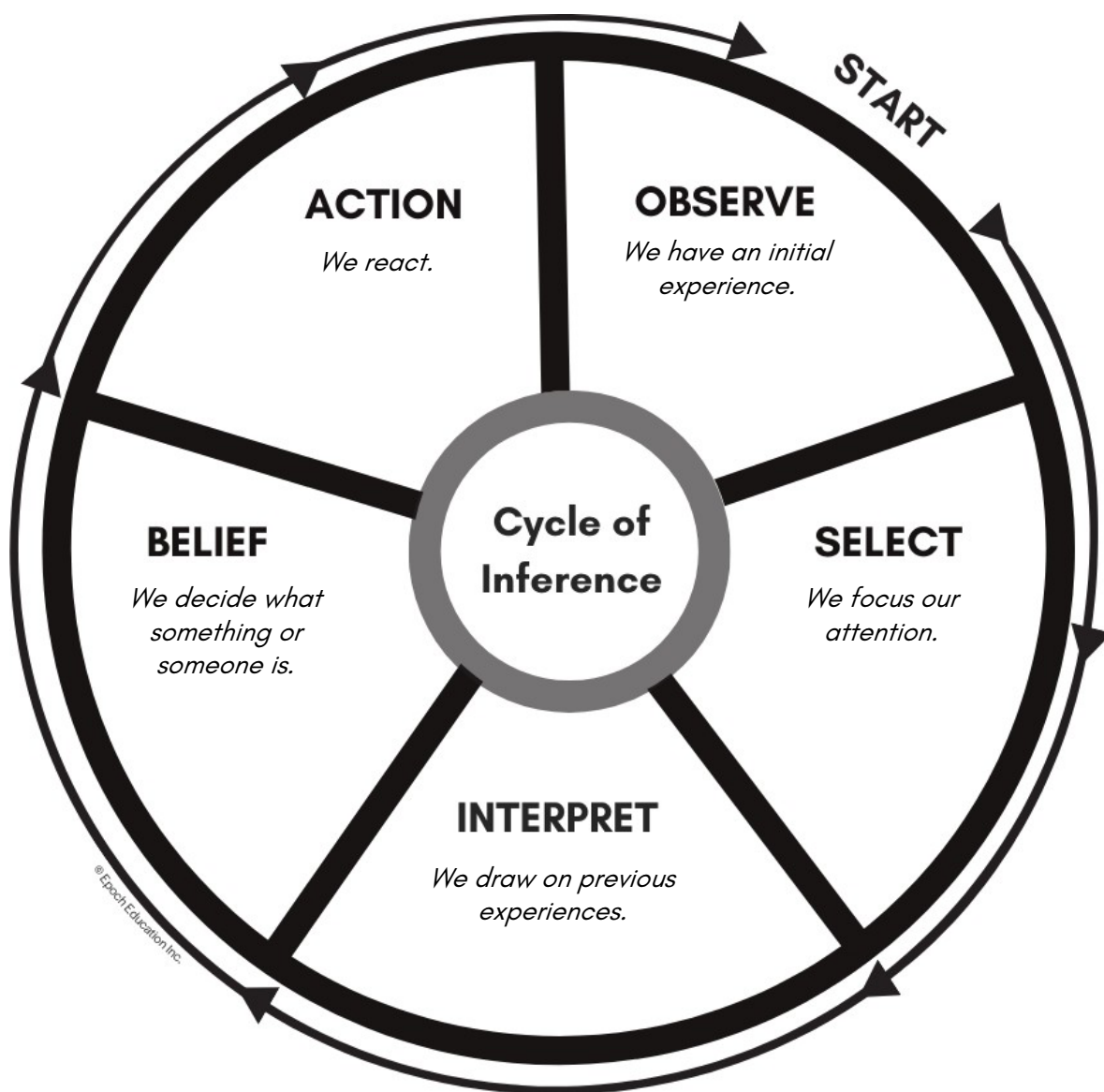
- Aggressively argue and debate
- Get defensive or competitive
- Dismiss, minimize, or criticize
- Raises voice, yell
- Interrupt or try to silence
- Use sarcasm
- Controlling behavior
- Embarrass, humiliate, or shame
- Bullying
- Shut down
- Disengage or withdraw
- Ignore or avoid issues
- Change the subject
- Use crying to distract/disengage
- Become overly guarded
- Uses humor to deflect



- Zone out – forget what was being said
- Unresponsive or immobilized
- Stream of consciousness, blabbering
- Off topic tangents
- Indecision or contradictory comments/examples
- Anxious
- Try to smooth things over
- Pretend to agree to avoid conflict
- Placating to keep things under control
- Deference to another perspective
- Flattery
- Surface peacekeeping
- Make people laugh

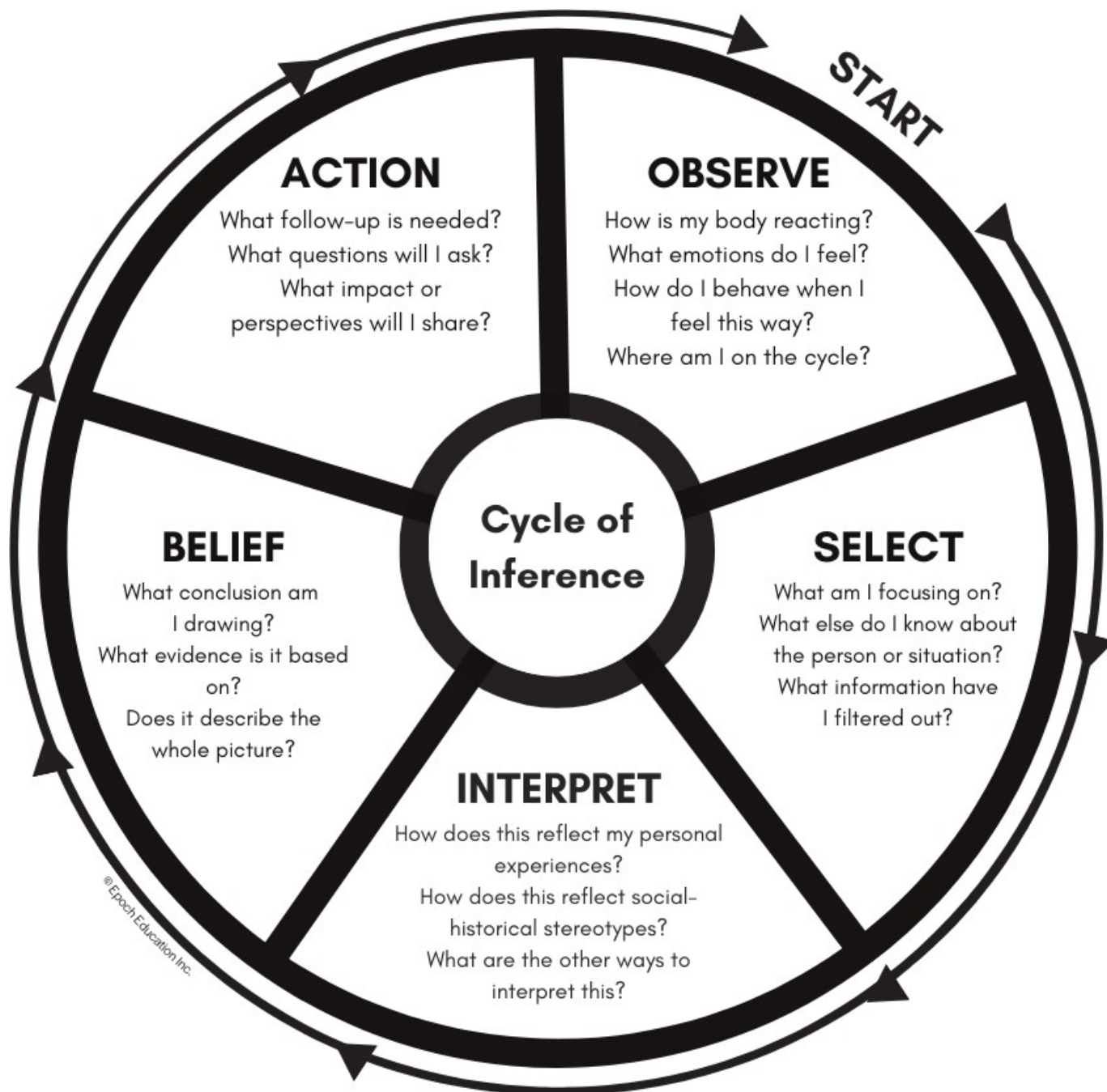
Our reactions to people and situations can *feel objective*; however, they are often based on our own *subjective experiences*. The Cycle of Inference shows us how our own dysregulated cognitive processes can lead to biases and assumptions that impact our decisions and actions.

Here are the steps we take in the dysregulated Cycle of Inference:



Adapted from Chris Argyris' Ladder of Inference

To help us debias our decision making, challenge assumptions, or cultivate a growth mindset, we can use the regulated Cycle of Inference questions.



Whether we realize it or not, we often engage with each other with an agenda or outcome in mind. When we acknowledge our dysregulated intentions without judgment, we can empower ourselves to actively replace them regulated intentions that support Compassionate Dialogue.

Dysregulated Intentions:

- Win the argument
- Get even; get back at someone
- To be right; prove the other person wrong
- Prove competence or intelligence
- Assert power and authority
- Gain status, admiration, prestige
- Be in control of current situation
- Intimidate the other person
- “Put them in their place”
- Punish the other person
- Embarrass or put down
- Make them feel your pain
- Change their views, feelings, or behaviors
- Make them learn
- Trick or “out fox” the other person
- Avoid intense emotions
- Make everyone happy
- Be seen as “the good one” or ally
- Right past wrongs
- Control something you couldn’t control in the past
- Seeking approval, to be liked, or fit in
- Avoid confrontation

Regulated Intentions:

- Create greater inclusion
- Leave people feeling whole and acknowledged
- Engage in respectful dialogue
- Do no harm
- Trust the process
- Deepen learning and growth
- Meet people where they are without judgment
- Deepen understanding
- Relate to and connect with someone
- Practice open, honest dialogue
- Model your equity beliefs: authenticity, empathy, self-reflection, respect, dignity, etc.
- Deepen understanding and connection across differences
- Identify the deeper issues influencing the moment
- Create space for safe expression of different viewpoints
- Encourage engagement
- Identify inappropriate comments or behaviors
- Model effective “recovery skills” after inappropriate comments or behaviors
- Encourage identity development and growth
- Demonstrate compassion and empathy
- Collaborate for change

THE RIR PROTOCOL – COMPASSIONATE DIALOGUE

Compassionate Dialogue is a community practice for honoring ourselves, honoring others, and taking collective responsibility for our organizational culture. **The RIR Protocol** (Recognize, Interrupt, Repair) is the common tool we can use for staying empathetically engaged with each other during proactive discussions as well as moments of conflict.



RECOGNIZE IT (Self-Regulate)

- **Pay attention to your physical body.** Our bodies will often signal we are moving into a stress/conflict reaction before we can articulate it. Sensations like shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat, tension, pain, or brain fog can be signals we are moving into dysregulation.
- **Pause and breathe.** The breath is often the first thing impacted when we are dysregulated. Taking intentional breaths helps to calm the nervous system and clear our minds.
- **Identify your emotions.** Recognizing our emotions can help us have more control over our behaviors and understand if we have patterns of emotional reaction to certain situations.
- **Use the Cycle of Inference to recognize your story.** When we have a strong emotional reaction to something, we often tell ourselves a story about what those emotions mean without getting clarification or other perspectives.



INTERRUPT IT (Dig Deeper)

Use empathy, curiosity, and clarity to interrupt the interpersonal dynamics that cause breakdowns in communication and collaboration:

- **Ask a question to understand the intent, experience, or perspective.**
- **Regulate your reactions so you can actively listen.**
- **Share impact, another experience, or different perspective.**

Ask a question to understand the intent, experience, or perspective.	Share impact, another experience, or different perspective.
• "Tell me more about that. I want to understand."	• What you said felt _____. I'd like to talk about it."
• "What does that mean to you?"	• "I need to pause for a moment."
• "What makes you think/feel that way?"	• "I've had a different experience with _____."
• "How do you think that comment would feel to someone else?"	• "That's not my understanding."
• "I heard you say _____. Is that correct?"	• "I have a different perspective on _____."
• "What's your experience with _____?"	• "I relate to that, and I have learned _____."

THE RIR PROTOCOL – COMPASSIONATE DIALOGUE

• "It sounds like you're feeling _____. Is that accurate? What's causing that feeling?"	• "Actually, that is a stereotype."
• "I don't understand. Why is that funny?"	• "I want to check our understanding. What did you hear me say?"
• "What are you trying to say/ask right now?"	• "I don't think you intended this, but I'm left feeling _____ from our interaction."
What other sentence stems would you create?	What other sentence stems would you create?



REPAIR IT (Stay Engaged)

After you have interrupted barriers to effective communication, create tangible next steps that reinforce collaboration, accountability, and consistency.

- **Collaboratively identify the root issue.**
Ex. "We agree our communication breaks down when..."
- **Set boundaries and commit to self/collective accountability.**
Ex. "Moving forward, I'll ask more questions."
"I'll talk with you directly first."
"What I need moving forward is..."
- **Create guardrails for consistency.**
Ex. "When we start going back to our old dynamic, I will..."
- **Look for and acknowledge progress.**
Ex. "I appreciated the way you..."
- **Recognize and address structural issues impacting the dynamic.**
Ex. "Can we start having one-on-one meetings?"
"I would like more structured support in this area."
"Can we develop a group process for managing our busiest time?"