

# EASY Framework for Navigating Difficult Conversations

## Engage to LEARN, not to “win”

- Be CURIOUS - Ask open-ended questions
- Listen to understand, not just to respond
- It's okay not to have known!
- “Try on” new ideas and new ways of thinking

## Acknowledge emotions and respond

- When you or they are flooded with emotion, acknowledge the emotion, take a breath and/or break
- “I recognize I'm getting upset [or “something I've said seems to have upset you”], why don't we take a breath and then come back to this?”

## Separate the person from the problem

- It's okay to critique ideas, not people
- Avoid making generalizations (especially about others' character)
- Do not attack, shame, or blame others or yourself

## Your impact may not be what you intended

- Everyone sees the world through their own lens based on their lived experience. Sometimes, when you communicate “X”, based on their life experience, they hear “Y”.
- Immediately address and clarify -> “When I said X, my intention was not to upset you. Can you help me understand why you were upset?”

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What do you do if they keep re-stating their position or attack you?

### **DON'T**

- Criticize them or their character;
- Defend your position;
- Don't counterattack;
- Don't keep making statements expecting to "win" the discussion;
- Don't overgeneralize.

### **DO**

- **Allow them to work through their emotion;**
- **Be curious:**
  - Ask open-ended questions;
- **Actively listen:**
  - Look the part, repeat: "what I hear you say is X".
- **Realign their focus to the joint problem.**