

Raising a conflict: Prepare before you speak

Adaptive module

~20 min

Many people avoid addressing tension, and those who dare often act in the heat of the moment, on a judgment rather than a fact, so the exchange does more harm than good. This module's approach is to do it all beforehand: isolate the fact, prepare a solution that depends on no one else, use two questions to check the other person is ready, and set the time, place, and length.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 01 Distinguish fact from judgment and name the real problem before approaching the other person.
- 02 Acknowledge your emotion, calm down, and imagine the other person's version in good faith.
- 03 Prepare at least three options, with an independent solution to use even if the other person won't talk.
- 04 Use two questions to check the other person is ready, then plan the meeting: time, place, length.

WHO IT'S FOR

Anyone who wants to raise a disagreement well prepared, with solutions up their sleeve and at the right moment.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

- 1 **Self-assessment:** on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
- 2 **Expert video:** 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
- 3 **Practice scenarios:** the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
- 4 **Dated commitment:** one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
- 5 **Memo to download:** key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

A SAMPLE PRACTICE SCENARIO

Your colleague takes his calls on speakerphone. Three afternoons this week, you couldn't make progress on the report due on Friday. You don't know why he doesn't use a headset. A quiet room is only available two afternoons a week. What do you prepare to talk to him about it tomorrow?

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- Distinction between facts and judgments – based on Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication.
- Separating the people from the problem – Harvard method, Fisher & Ury (Getting to Yes, 1981).
- Independent fallback solution – close to BATNA (Fisher & Ury).
- Preparing and organizing the meeting – Afthonios method.

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, Sheila Heen – "Difficult Conversations" (Harvard Negotiation Project, 1999), the three-conversations framework
- Roger Fisher & William Ury – Harvard Negotiation Project, the BATNA principle (best alternative to a negotiated agreement)
- Marshall Rosenberg – Nonviolent Communication (NVC), the distinction between facts and judgments
- James Gross (1998) – emotion regulation processes