MODULE 2

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

MODULE WORKBOOK

CALA CONSTRUCTION
ACADEMY OF EXCELLENCE

keystone

INSTRUCTIONS

This workbook is for your own personal use: you will not be required to submit this or any other coursework following this module.

With regards to your role and the environment you work in, what do you think can make a conversation difficult?

1. QUICK EXERCISE

2. FIRST SCENE

3. THE 'WHY NOT'S'

What may be blocking you from confidently dealing with a difficult conversation?

4. E & R = O
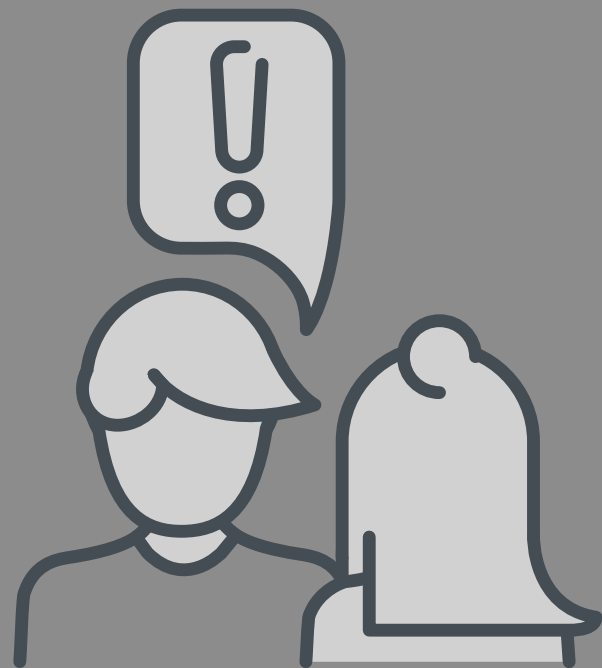
E + R = O

5. TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

P

A

C

6. KILMAN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

7. SELF REFLECTIONS – CONFLICT

Reflect on a past difficult or conflict situation and consider the following questions.

What was the situation?

What was the outcome?

What did you want it to be?

What position did you adopt, and would you change it next time?
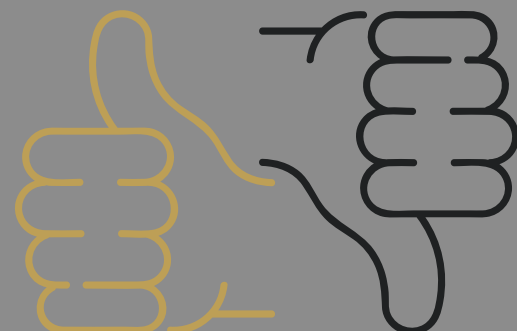
8. FEEDBACK

A

I

D

ACTION:
What are the facts?
What did the person really do?

IMPACT:
What is the impact on themselves / colleagues / customers / the work / project?
Focus on feelings

DESIRED OUTCOME:
What kind of change in the behaviour is expected?
Future focus

9. SELF REFLECTION LOG

WHAT HAVE I LEARNERED?	HOW WILL THIS HELP ME?	WHAT ACTION WILL I TAKE?

MY REINFORCEMENT OBJECTIVES

10. ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR

PASSIVE	PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE	AGGRESIVE	ASSERTIVE
Emotionally Dishonest, Indirect, Inhibited, Self-denying, Blaming, Apologetic	Emotionally Dishonest, Indirect, Inhibited, Self-enhancing at expense of others	Inappropriate, Direct, Overly Honest, Attacking, Blaming, Controlling, One up mentality	Appropriate, Controlled, Honest, Empathetic, Self-enhancing, Self-confident

Every person has a unique communication style, a way in which they interact and exchange information with others. There are four basic communication styles: passive, passive-aggressive, aggressive and assertive.

It's important to understand each communication style, and why individuals use them. For example, the assertive communication style has been found to be most effective, because it incorporates the best aspects of all the other styles.

To be truly assertive the person needs to communicate in a way which "calls out bad behaviour" if needed, "gets his/her point across", but remains collaborative and "leaves the door open" for the relationship to continue.

We call this technique STEEL and SILK. Steel is the direct, assertive part while Silk is the collaborative statement which goes with the Steel. Each is essential to success.

For example: A person raises their voice at you and is deliberately provocative and threatening in a verbal way designed to make you passive and do what they want.
It would be easy to say: "How dare you speak to me like this! I won't speak to you when you're being like this!"

However, using Steel and Silk, a person could say:

"When you raise your voice at me and behave like this it is upsetting and not very useful (STEEL), but I do recognise you are upset about this issue so what can WE do to resolve it? (SILK)."

11. CONFLICT

The Thomas-Kilmann conflict resolution model (1974) is a way of boiling down a complex theory of conflict styles into a format that can easily understood and implemented by everyone. It rests on the assumption that although most people will 'default' to one particular conflict-handling style, this is not always the best approach. Depending on the situation – how important the outcome is and how much energy a person has to invest – they can choose from a wider range of styles to resolve the conflict.

1. **Competing** is assertive and uncooperative—an individual pursues his/her own concerns at the other person's expense. This is a power-oriented mode in which you use whatever power seems appropriate to win your own position—your ability to argue, your rank, or economic sanctions. Competing means "standing up for your rights," defending a position which you believe is correct, or simply trying to win.

2. **Accommodating** is unassertive and cooperative—the complete opposite of competing. When accommodating, the individual neglects his own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other person; there is an element of self-sacrifice in this mode. Accommodating might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's order when you would prefer not to, or yielding to another's point of view.

3. **Avoiding** is unassertive and uncooperative—the person neither pursues his/her own concerns nor those of the other individual. Thus he/she does not deal with the conflict. Avoiding might take the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, postponing an issue until a better time, or simply withdrawing from a threatening situation.

4. **Collaborating** is both assertive and cooperative—the complete opposite of avoiding. Collaborating involves an attempt to work with others to find some solution that fully satisfies their concerns. It means digging into an issue to pinpoint the underlying needs and wants of the two individuals. Collaborating between two persons might take the form of exploring a disagreement to learn from each other's insights or trying to find a creative solution to an interpersonal problem.

5. **Compromising** is moderate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. The objective is to find some expedient, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties. It falls intermediate between competing and accommodating. Compromising gives up more than competing but less than accommodating. Likewise, it addresses an issue more directly than avoiding, but does not explore it in as much depth as collaborating. In some situations, compromising might mean splitting the difference between the two positions, exchanging concessions, or seeking a quick middle-ground solution.