

HAVING HARD CONVERSATIONS

AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

As a result of the current state of our community, people are finding themselves in situations where they need to engage in difficult conversations. It's hard to navigate these conversations at the best of times. Right now people are experiencing things they never have before, so reactions are different.

DO SAY

"HI, I WANTED TO CALL TO CHECK IN. HOW ARE YOU?"

BE AWARE OF YOUR TONE. BE AWARE OF YOUR WORDS. BE EMPATHETIC.

IN THESE CONVERSATIONS, YOU NEED TO BE DIRECT. SAY WHAT NEEDS TO BE SAID IN A KIND AND DIRECT MANNER. PREPARE YOURSELF A SCRIPT OF WHAT TO SAY BEFORE HAND.

DON'T SAY

**"HEY HOW'S IT GOING?"
"WHAT'S NEW?"**

Listen to more than just their words. Hear that person's tone. They may be angry, frustrated or upset. They are not angry, frustrated or upset with you. Their reaction is a reflection of what that person is feeling and what they are experiencing. It has nothing to do with you even though the things they say may make it feel as though it does.

"THANK YOU FOR SHARING THAT WITH ME. I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY YOU MIGHT BE FEELING THAT WAY."

IF THE PERSON YOU ARE SPEAKING TO BECOMES EMOTIONAL OR BEGINS TO CRY, IT IS OKAY TO BE IN THAT MOMENT WITH THEM.

I HAVE UP TO DATE INFORMATION ON RESOURCES, CAN I HELP YOU?

SOMETIMES, IN AN EFFORT TO BE EMPATHETIC, WE DOWNPLAY WHAT PEOPLE WHO ARE STRUGGLING TELL US. SAYING TO SOMEONE WHO HAS JUST BEEN LAID OFF, "THAT IS HAPPENING TO A LOT OF PEOPLE RIGHT NOW" ISN'T HELPFUL. OR SAYING YOU KNOW HOW THEY FEEL, WHEN YOU ACTUALLY DON'T.

**"I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL."
"LOTS OF PEOPLE ARE GOING THROUGH THAT."**

THESE CONVERSATIONS ARE DIFFICULT FOR BOTH OF YOU. GIVE THE PERSON TIME TO SAY WHAT THEY NEED TO SAY AND TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES.

Be prepared with current resources that may be beneficial at this time – including phone numbers. See Covid-19 Infograph. Right now, people who need to access different resources are having to search to see what's available. You have the current, up to date information to share with them and the best thing you can do to help is ensure they have the information they need.

WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK YOUR ADMIN OR CARE TEAM FOR HELP.