

# Difficult Conversations

A Behaviorally Intelligent Approach

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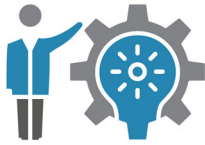
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## What is *Behavioral Intelligence*?

The application of skills and abilities to accurately **explain** existing behavior, **predict** future behavior, **influence** other people's behavior, and **control** one's own behavior.



Explain



Predict



Influence



Control

## The Cost of Conflict

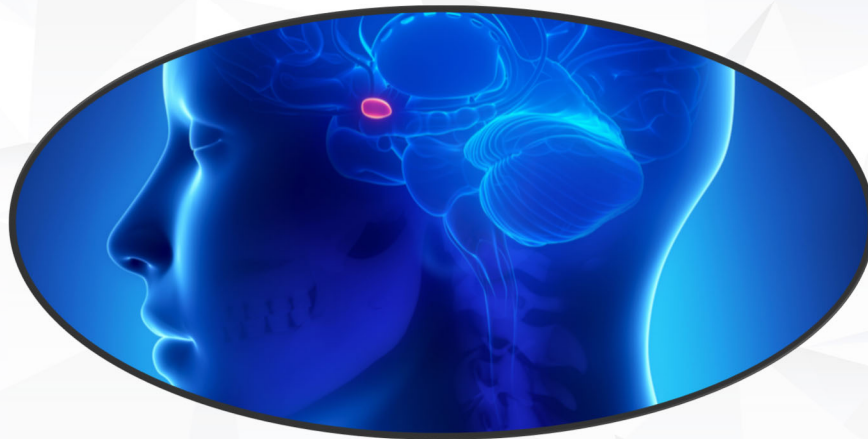
### A CPP Inc. study of workplace conflict reveals:

- Employees in the U.S. spend roughly 2.8 hours per week dealing with conflict.
- 33% of employees report conflict led to personal injury and attacks.
- 22% report that it led to illness and absence from work.
- 10% report that project failure was a direct result of conflict.

## Behavioral Intelligence: Why do we avoid?

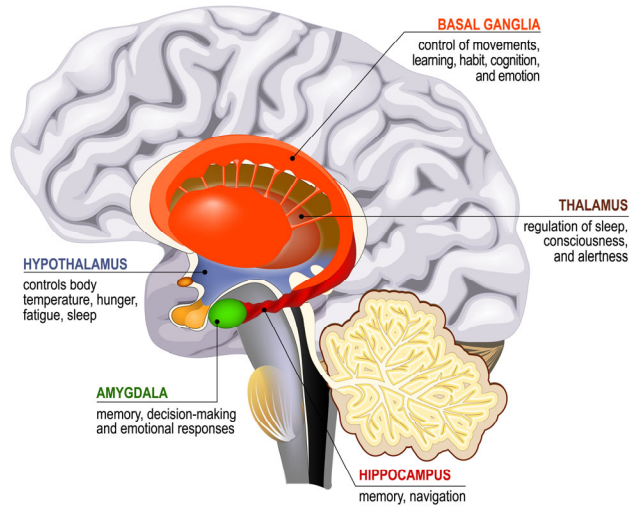


## What happens when we get anxious?



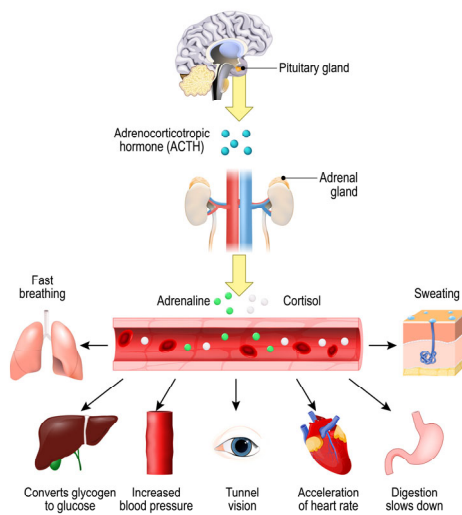
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# Limbic System – Survival



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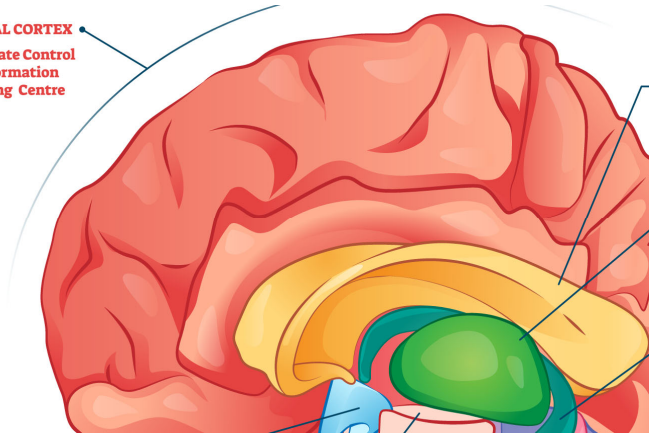
# Stress Response



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## The Cerebral Cortex – Executive Center

**CEREBRAL CORTEX**  
The Ultimate Control  
and Information  
Processing Centre



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## Communication Styles

Explain

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# Behavior is the core of all success and failure...

For better results, we need to improve our Behavioral Intelligence.

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## 4-Drive Framework

Acquire



Learn



Protect



Bond

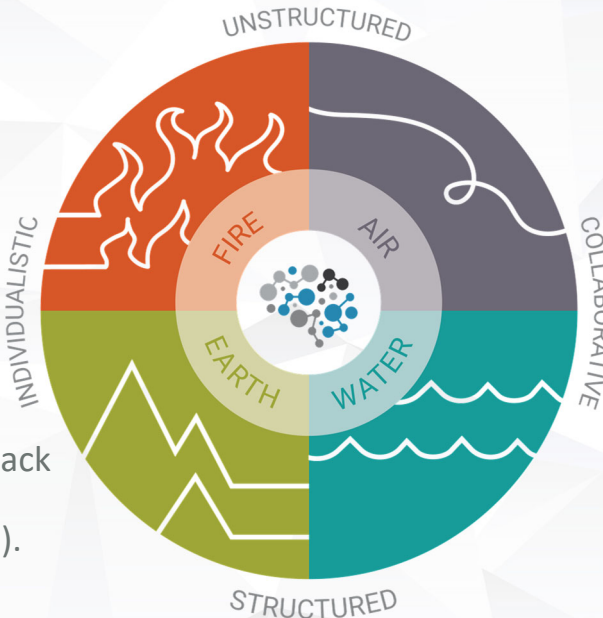


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## Conflict

**Fire** – Direct, Aggressive, Quick and Decisive Action, Punishment (Win-Lose).

**Earth** – Process Focused, Strict, Black and White, Rule Based, Rigid (Split).



**Air** – Solution Focused, Creative Responses, Outside the Box Approach, Overly Optimistic, (Win-Win).

**Water** – Consensus Focused, Diplomatic, Accommodating (Lose-Win).

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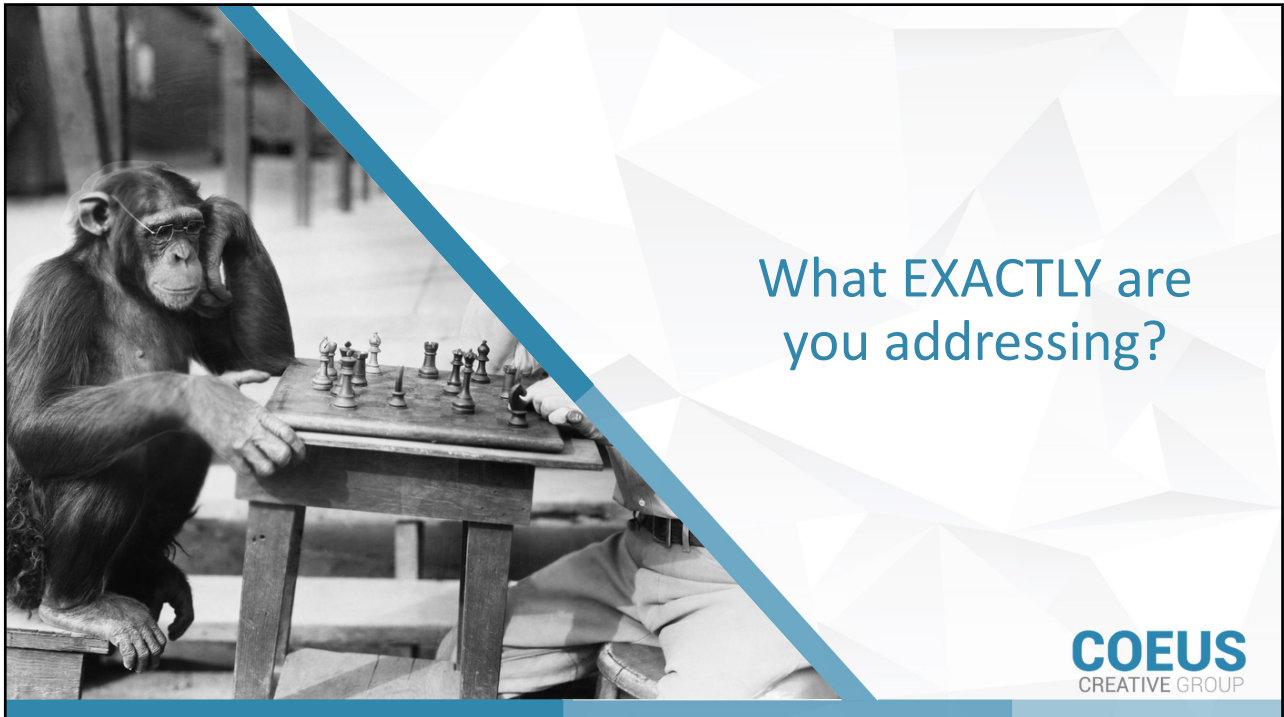
## Creating a Process for Difficult Conversations

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## Step 1: Define the Topic.



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What **EXACTLY** are  
you addressing?

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A bad behavior?

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Delivering bad news?

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A disagreement?

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Telling someone no?

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Providing feedback?

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Apologizing?

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## Step 2: Identify ideal outcomes



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Now we have purpose  
and direction.

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Make sure your  
purpose is clear, you  
will return to it often.

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### Step 3: Define why **THIS** conversation *seems* difficult...

- We convince ourselves that talking about the problem will make the problem worse rather than resolving it.
- The cure may be worse than the disease.
- We do not want to feel bad.
- We do not want the other person to feel bad.
- We may hear things in the conversation about ourselves that we do not want to hear.
- We and/or the other person may get emotional.
- We are not sure where the conversation will end.
- We fear the consequences, retribution.

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Create a pro/con list  
for having the  
conversation.

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Why must this  
conversation occur?


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What pain will persist without a conversation?

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Step 4: The when/where/how



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# Before, During, or After

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# Public vs Private

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Face-to-Face,  
Electronic, Phone

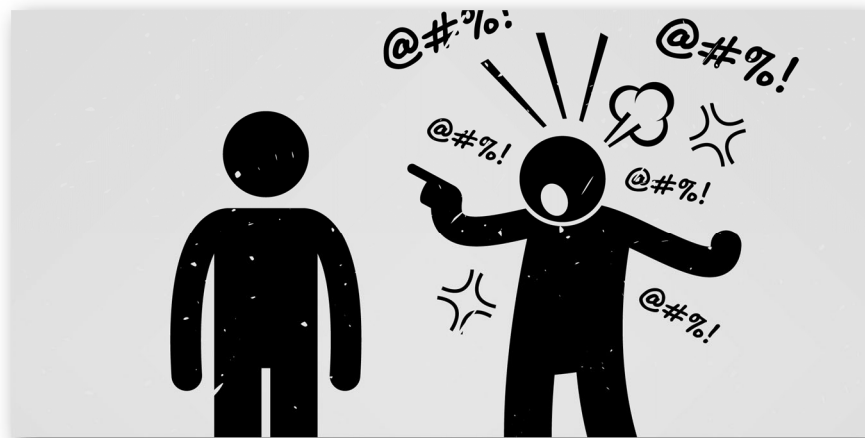
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Diplomacy in  
Difficult Conversations

Best Practices

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Ask yourself, what assumptions am I making?



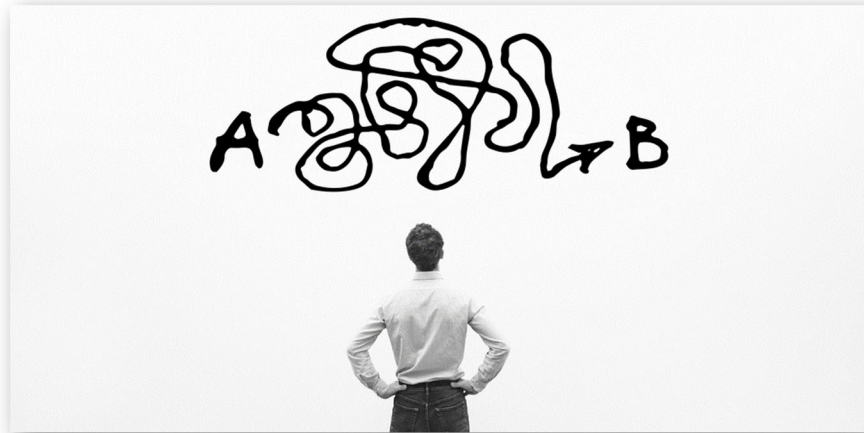
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Do not oversimplify the problem.



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Start with a direct approach.



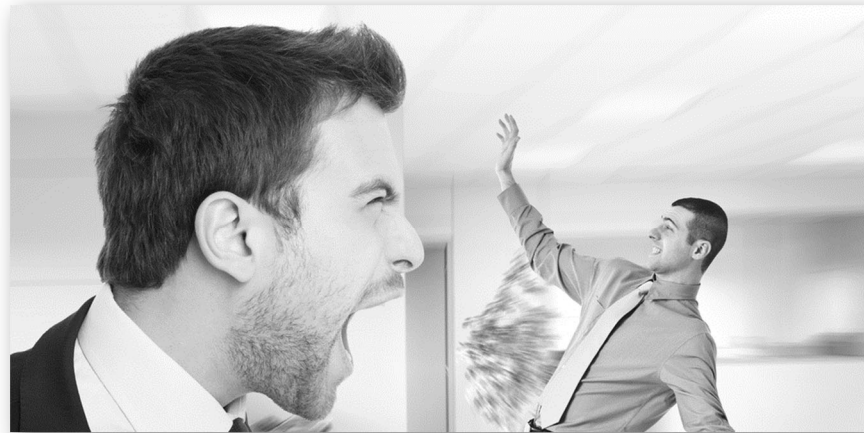
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Ask Questions



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Watch for defense mechanisms.



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Utilize Tactical Empathy: “I understand”



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## Labeling Emotions – Detect | State | Silence



- “It seems like you dislike this approach.”
- “It appears that you really love the idea of this.”
- “It sounds like you have done a lot of research on this topic.”

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## Dynamic Silence



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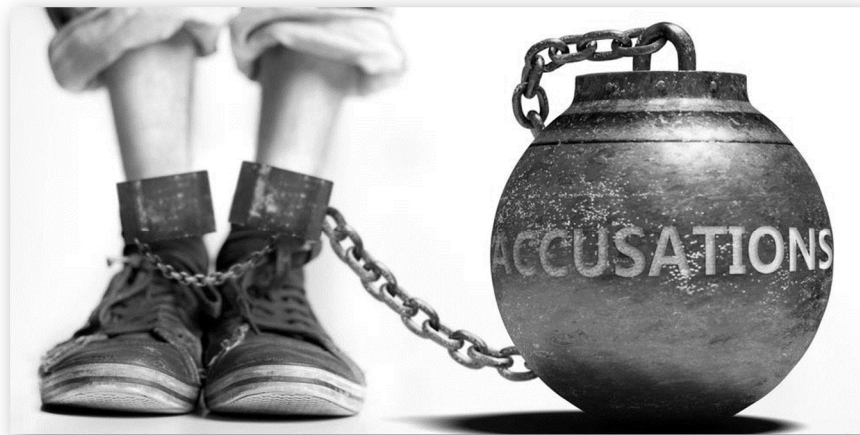
## Calibrated Questions

- What about this is important to you?
- How can I help to make this better for you?
- How would you like me to proceed?
- What about this works for you?
- How does this look to you?
- How can we look at this in a completely different light? What if we could put in an "x" instead of "y"?



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## Accusation Audit



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Use I or We, not YOU – Inclusive language is less threatening and helps reduce barriers.



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De-escalate an AGGRESSIVE response.



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Stay Calm – Neuroscience shows that what we were taught in kindergarten actually works...



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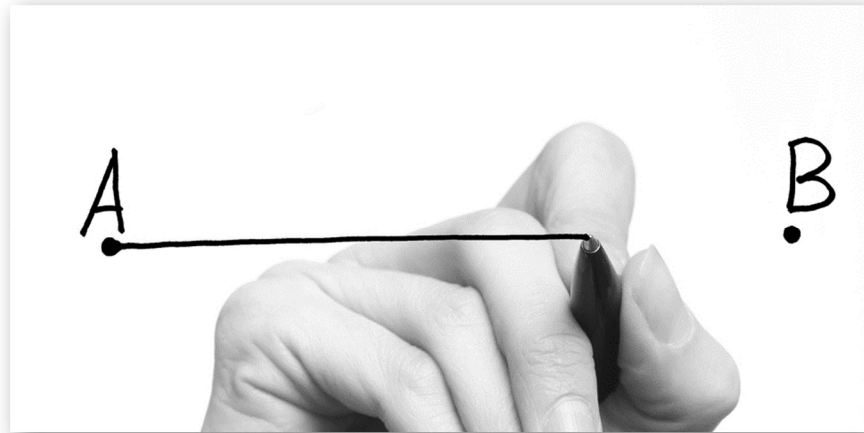
Know and return to your purpose at difficult moments.



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Don't end without clearly expressed action items.  
What is the endgame?



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Thank You!

Questions?

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