

Having Difficult Conversations

Initiating, Redirecting and Engaging

Hosted by



Valid for 1.5CEs towards PATH Intl.
Continuing Education Requirements

Who is in the room?

- Aviva: PhD, LMSW, Director of Program Quality, Fieldstone Farm TRC, Chagrin Falls, OH
- Maggee: Adaptive Horsemanship Program Director/ Center rep, Eagle Mount, Bozeman, MT
- Kim: Program/ Education Director, Cheff Therapeutic Riding Center, Augusta, MI
- Sara: Chief Operating Officer, Ride On Therapeutic Horsemanship, Los Angeles, CA
- Meghan: LCSW, LAC, PATH Intl. CTRI with Miracles Therapeutic Riding Center, Lafayette, CO
- Bret: Director of Credentialing, PATH Intl.

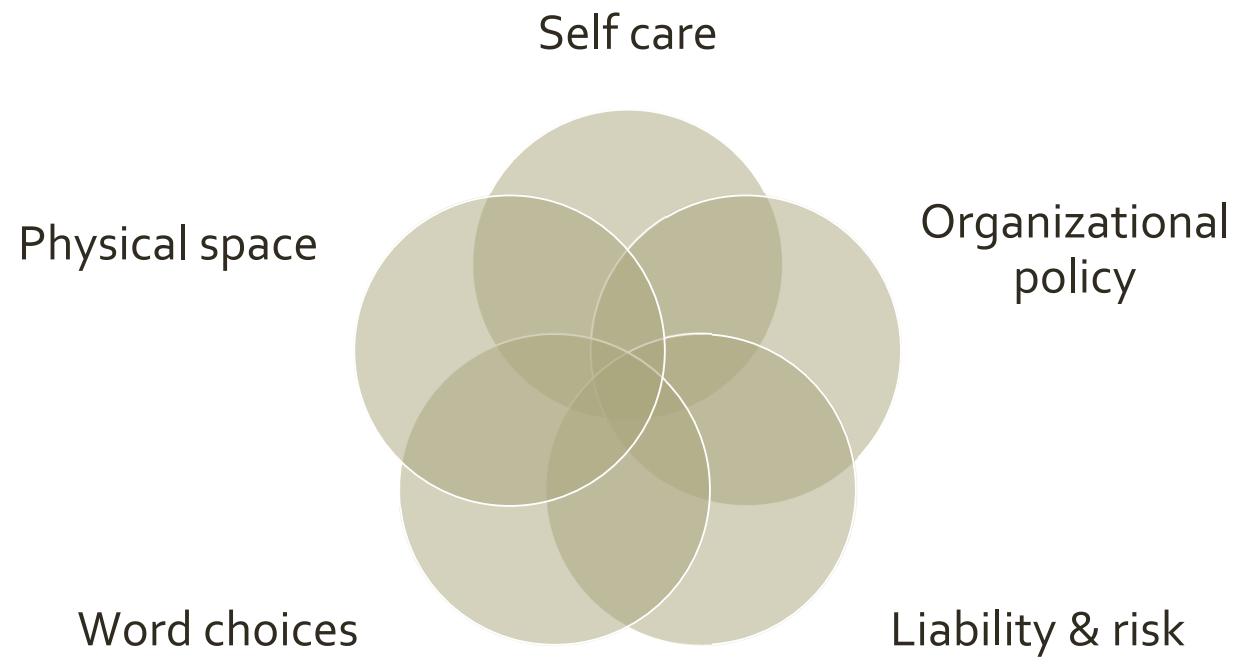
Consistency



With whom are you talking?

- Staff
 - Program staff
- Volunteers
 - Core team
 - At-risk
 - Non-believers
- Participants
 - Those who are back
 - Those who can come back
 - Those who are not ready to come back
 - Those who the center does not feel ready to support
 - Caretakers of participants
- Donors/Community partners
- Board members
- Major donors and board members who have clients in the program

Factors of Conversations



Initiating Conversations

- Expectations
- Procedures
- Plan A-Z

- Breathe
- If you do not have the time, do not open the door to a conversation
- Listen, reflect, ask
- Ask open ended questions
 - “What I hear you say is...”
 - “Can you say more about...”
 - “I want to make sure I understand what you are saying...”
 - “I may not be understanding, can you say that again in a different way...”
 - “That is an interesting perspective...”



Redirecting Conversations

- Stay on message
- Stay grounded in the facts
- Maintain neutral opinion (even if you're not)
- Don't take "it" personal



Engaging in Conversations

- Conversation starters
- Have talking points
- Don't wait for the conversation - start it
- Stay neutral
- Find the positive

The best defense in a difficult conversation is to be able to say the same thing to all parties (staff, volunteers, riders and donors). Set a policy that is true to your organization and say it (loudly) to all. Inconsistency causes problems.



Discussions with Staff

- Check in on stress level
- The why's for procedure
 - and the NO
- Available support
- Awareness of staff concerns/fears
- Weekly meetings (even if nothing is new)
- Procedures including the why
- Updated facts
- Changes that need to happen
- Scheduling

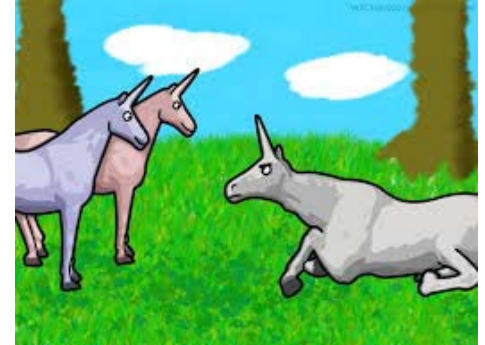


Addressing the Nonbeliever

- Breathe
- Ground yourself in what you know and believe, acknowledge your bias
- Breathe again

- Hold to current facts/laws
- Refer to CDC and local guidelines
- Be firm and consistent
 - Do NOT rely on a volunteer to manage difficult conversations
- Acknowledge where they are
- Refer to liabilities

- Breathe, stretch, take a walk

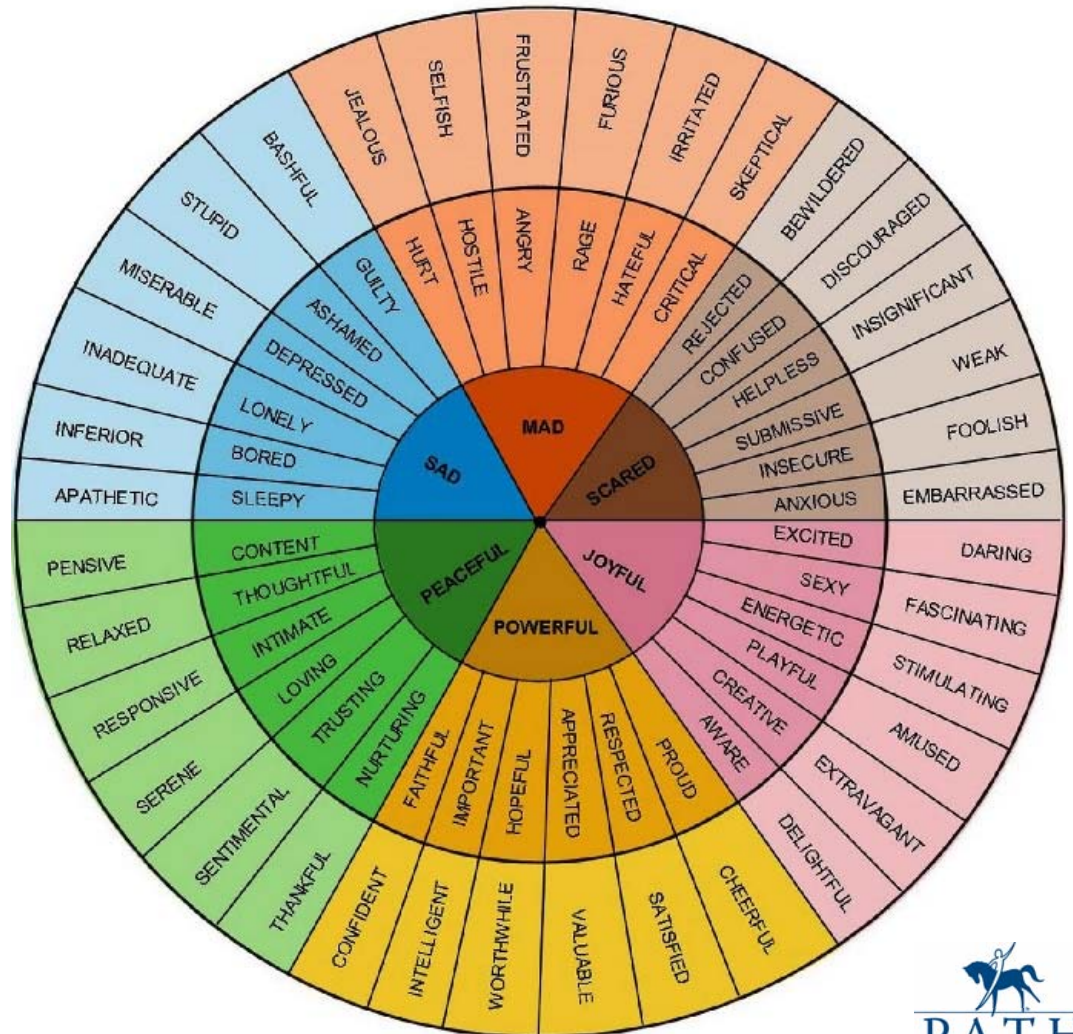


Practice Framework

- Modalities of conversation:
 - text, email, conversation in person, phone, Zoom
- Conversations best in person (face mask on)
 - or on the phone
- It is very easy to become angry and confrontational via social media or text:
 - people become very brave when not in person
- Do not be tempted to engage in arguments via social media unless you can use the opportunity to construct a positive response:
 - which might answer questions that others were afraid to ask

Feeling the Feels

- Anger
- Fear
- Frustration
- Guilt
- Avoidance
- Confusion
- Disbelief



Rapidly Changing Environment

- United States COVID-19 tracker: <https://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases>
- State mandates (e.g. masks, quarantine)
- School in person or virtual



Tools & Resources

- Imbedded support → mental health providers on hand for staff and center conversations
- Practice saying, “No.” Ready..... “No!”
- Online
 - Jessica Dolce: [COVID-19, Self-Care webinar](#)
 - Kathy Alm: Before During and After
 - Ride On/Joy Ride: Risk Benefit Form
 - PATH Intl Website: COVID reopening plans

Tools & Resources

- Check out a special recorded message from PATH Intl. CEO Kathy Alm: <https://conta.cc/3eGvm9l>
- Links to new resources and new state of the organization surveys: <https://www.pathintl.org/74-about-path-intl/1923-covid-19-bulletin>

Break Out Rooms

- Conversations