

THE COLLECTIVE

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Welcome to Our Awkward Kitchen: Learning to Embrace Difficult Conversations

Convenor(s):

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Brief Description of Program:

If you dread difficult conversations, avoid conflict, or tiptoe around sensitive issues, sit down at our metaphorical kitchen table and practice honest-to-goodness horrible conversations! When these conversations ambush us they drain our ability to try ideas that grow librarianship, so come practice constructive strategies with optimistic and empathetic Collective participants.

Tags: [Active Listening](#), [Conversation](#), [Dialogue](#), [Difficult Conversations](#), [Influence](#), [Listening to make change](#), [storytelling](#)

Estimated Session Attendance: 92

NOTES FROM SESSION: Strategies for difficult conversations

Why do conversations fail? Lack of training, defensiveness...

Activity: Embrace the awful conversation. Role play. Each partner gets a different profile.

Five reasons conversations fail

1. We think we are more right than the other person. (But we're not)
2. Feelings are hard and we can't stop having them. (Expressing feelings more is helpful)
3. Our identity is under attack. (We're not defined by one conversation)
4. Humans are terrible at mind-reading

5. We try to solve the problem before we understand the problem.

(Learn to hit pause in problem-solving)

Learning conversations:

Every difficult conversation is really three conversations.

What happened

Who said/did what

What they meant

Who's at fault

Feelings:

Spoken or unspoken

Right under the surface or buried deep down

Identity

What I think about myself

How I want to be perceived.

Strategies: Examples offered aloud from the audience.

1. Learn their story-we bring different perceptions, good intentions.

a. Can you tell me more about...?Be curious

b. Can you help me understand...?Look for their intentions

c. I think you're saying...Do I have that right?Check your understanding

2. Acknowledge your contribution

a.I think I was trying to...(make intentions specific)

b. I'm trying to think about what I did/said to contribute to this situation, and I think what happened is...(acknowledging the impact of my actions)

c. I've noticed in situations like...it can be difficult for me to...(place the experience in context)

3. Express your views and feelings

a. What is important for me is...(explaining priorities)

b. I feel...when I...(using me-me language)

c. When that happened I felt...(articulating my reaction)

Activity: Role playing again