



Say What You Mean the Right Way:
Healthy Forms of Communication

Presenter

Jeannie Dougherty, LCPC



Jeannie Dougherty is an EAP counselor, facilitator, and trainer. She has a Master's Degree in Counseling from Ottawa University. Ms. Dougherty helps employees resolve their “out of balance” work/life lifestyles and improve their relationships.

She has also trained for over 10 years and is an expert in areas such as leadership, conflict management, communication, and sexual harassment. Additionally she currently facilitates a variety of support groups.

When Jeannie is not counseling, she's dancing, running 5Ks, practicing Bikram Yoga and Simplified Kundalini Yoga (SKY), and spending time with her loved ones and her Labrador, Licorice.

Learning Objectives

- Identify barriers to clear communication
- Apply tips for effective communication
- Assess effective ways for dealing with difficult conflict
- Discuss ways to maintain successful family relationships

The Importance of Communication

“Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing.”

Rollo May

Source: BrainyQuote (2018)

Communication Factors

Perceived costs and benefits

Relational history

Psychological needs for approval, inclusion, and control

Age or developmental differences

Balancing Relationships

Connectedness

Autonomy



Openness

Protectiveness



Novelty

Predictability



Survey

Which of the following barriers affects you the most?

- A. Misperceptions
- B. Unresolved conflicts
- C. One party blaming the other
- D. Inability to negotiate conflict

Barriers to Clear Communication

- Perceptual misunderstandings
- Leftover issues from previous encounters
- Using polarized language
- Refusing to take responsibility for our role
- Inability to negotiate conflict in a mutually beneficial fashion

Confirming or Disconfirming?

Confirming

- Respect the other party's opinions and feelings, even when disagreeing

Disconfirming

- Dismisses, ridicules, or attacks the other party

Dealing with Difficult Situations

- Holiday tug-of-war planning with extended family or in divorce situations
- Coping with relational dynamics during family get-togethers
- Conflicts during vacation or special outings



Survey

When do you find it to be the hardest to set boundaries?

- A. During the holidays
- B. Dealing with in-laws
- C. Dealing with friends
- D. Dealing with your partner
- E. Dealing with children

Setting Boundaries

- Be clear on what your needs are.
- Politely, but firmly, state your case.
- Avoid over explaining your decision.
- Anticipate possible objections and how you can confidently respond.
- Seek support from your partner when communicating with in-laws or with children.



Dealing with Holidays and Special Occasions

- Have a balance of autonomy and connectedness.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Anticipate family dynamics.
- Stay focused.



Saying “No”

- Most people find it hard to say “no.”
- Reasons
 - Fear of retribution or rejection
 - Societal norms
 - Fear of standing out
 - Fear of confrontation

A close-up photograph of a red sign with the word "NO" written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters. The sign is slightly tilted and appears to be part of a larger display or poster.

Different Types of “No”

The pleasant “no”

The conditional “no”

The sleep-on-it “no”

The alternative-solution “no”

The secret-weapon “no”

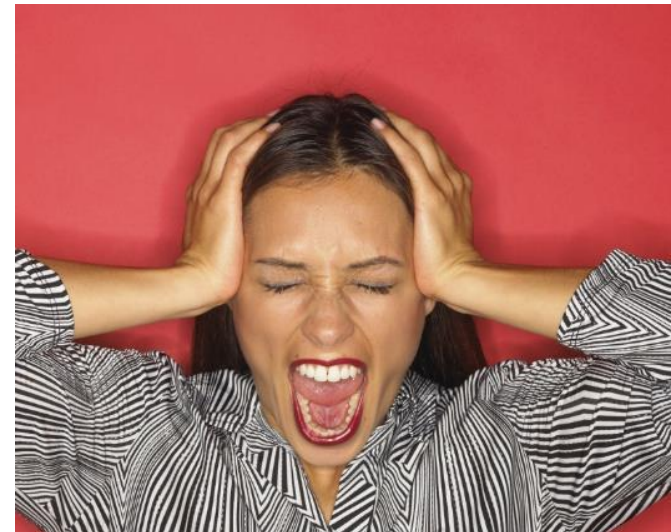
How to Say “No” Effectively

- Say “no.”
- Be brief.
- Be honest.
- Be respectful.
- Be ready to repeat.

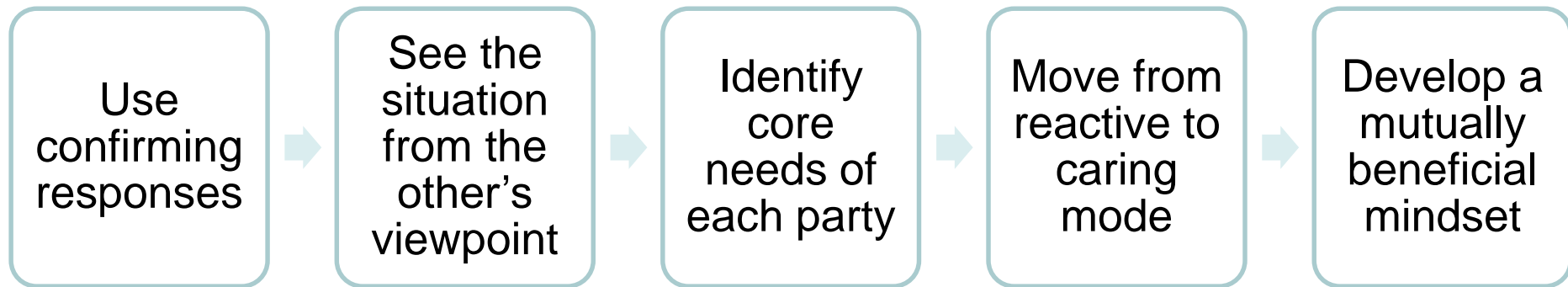


Staying Cool When It's Getting Hot

- Take a moment.
- Take a breather.
- Focus on truly understanding.
- Use collaborative language.



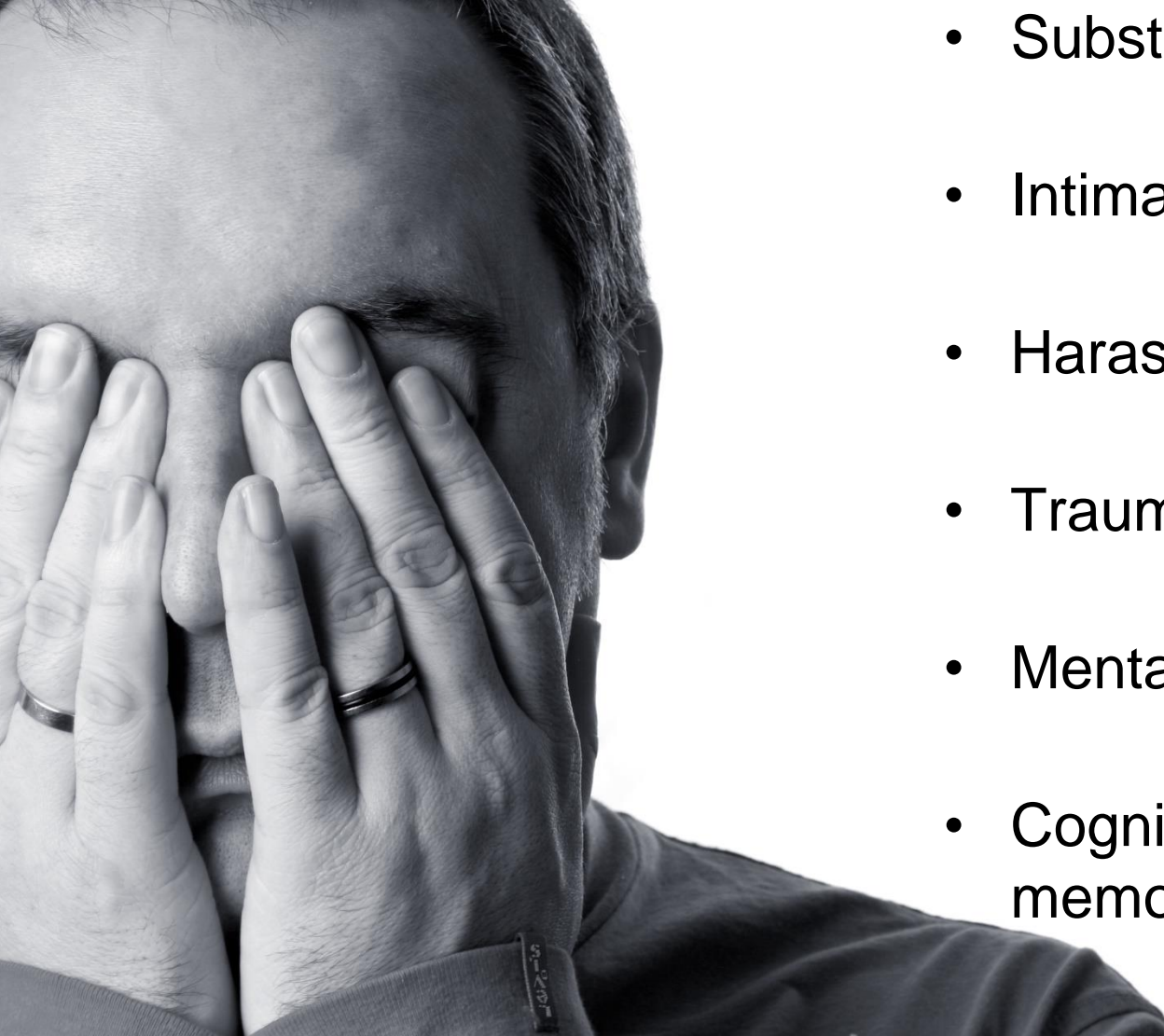
Being a Responsible Communicator



Enhancing Clarity

- Use “I” statements.
- Paraphrase to ensure understanding.
- Explain your reasoning behind a particular action when appropriate.
- Recognize any personal bias that may cloud your response.

Additional Support Needed



- Substance abuse
- Intimate partner abuse
- Harassment and/or bullying
- Trauma history
- Mental illness
- Cognitive impairment (ex: memory loss or head injury)

Maintaining and Strengthening Relationships

- Make the relationship a priority.
- Regularly schedule mutually beneficial time together.
- Develop a communication frequency that is comfortable for both parties.
- State when an event has special meaning and you want the other to attend.



Maintaining and Strengthening Relationships

- Stop keeping score.
- Don't let conflict fester.
- Focus on what brings you together.



For Further Assistance

Contact your Employee Assistance Program

Thank You

Questions?