



# Welcome

Minnesota WIC Program  
Participant-Centered Webinar Series

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## Guidelines

- ▲ Phones on mute
- ▲ Raise hands
- ▲ Chat box



## The Plan

- ▲ Topic area: Having Difficult Conversations
- ▲ The Challenges
- ▲ Strategies / Techniques
  - PSC Strategies
  - Crucial Conversations

## The Challenge - Difficult Conversations



## Examples of Difficult Conversations

- Time management issues
- Team dynamics
- Work style
- Performance issues
- Disagreements with policy/vision
- Appearance / image issues
- Refusal to attend to advice



## Difficult Conversations – Why Do We Avoid Them?



## Consequences of Avoidance

- Nothing changes or it gets worse and [it is] more difficult to have the conversation in the future.
- Situations grow out of hand when not addressed. Staff may not know they are doing something wrong, have no opportunity to improve. Resentment builds up among staff and leadership - this can go both directions.
- Staff morale decreases, poor customer service.
- Mistakes keep happening and other staff needs to deal with the mistakes.



## Strategy: Have a Goal



- Maintain focus
- Examine your motives
- Ask questions



## Suggestions for Difficult Conversations

- Making sure the conversation is private and not held during a busy time of day or at the end of the day when a staff person may be tired. Use a PCS approach. State what you or other staff have noticed or has been reported in a factual way and ask for their input. State that you are there to help.
- Have the conversation early - don't wait too long, do it in private, plan ahead for your objective/outcome for conversation, think about the characteristics of the person that you need to consider.
- [Have a] direct and open conversation with ideas for moving forward
- Be non-judgmental, gather info about the situation, and focus on fixing the problem

## Making it Safe



## Suggestions for Making it Safe

- Recognizing the person's strengths; asking their perspective on the situation; welcoming their input.
- Open with the purpose so they know what to expect, seek their side and clarify, have empathy.
- Listen as well as talk, calm and even, plan talking points.
- Maybe send a "reminders" email to all staff, so one person is not called out. Or discuss as a group in a staff meeting as a group.



## Crucial Conversations

- Share your facts
- Tell your story
- Ask for other's paths
- Talk tentatively
- Encourage testing



## Poll Question



**Introduction:  
Making It Safe**



## Reading the Signs



- Silence
- Sarcasm
- Anger
- Blame
- Labelling



## Addressing Resistance

- Address their concerns
- Clarify your purpose



## What are Your Signs?



## PCS Strategies for Difficult Conversations

- Listening
- Asking
- Reflecting
- Asking for input
- Goal setting



## Listening



## Asking

- Open-ended questions
- Invite different view points
  - Please let me know if you see it differently
  - I really want to hear your thoughts



## Reflecting



- Understanding their position
- Encouraging discussion
- Reflecting does not equate to agreement
- Potential for finding an area of agreement
- Agree and build



## Poll Question



### Offering a Reflection



## Goal Setting

- Asking for input, ideas
- How you will decide?
- Be specific
  - By when
  - How
  - Method of follow-up



## An Ounce of Prevention

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE.

- Benjamin Franklin

- Hiring strategies
- Set expectations early
- Approach situations timely



## What Expectations to Set?

### Expectations about communication

- That communication both ways will be open and up front.
- Staff know how WIC staff are expected to work together as a team and tell them to communicate any problems to supervisor
- Work as a team in a positive manner, be responsible to talk for own self, request meetings to share concerns and perspectives.
- Continuous coaching and feedback.
- Open-mindedness, plan to continue to learn new things.



## What Expectations to Set?

- **Expectations about job performance**
- Make sure staff know what is expected of them regarding conduct, break and lunch times.
- WIC takes a while to learn and figure out.
- What exactly the staff person will be reviewed on and how.
- This program is team-oriented, we learn from each other, and when mistakes are made, it is a good learning experience. We do chart audits and observations which can be helpful for everyone to learn from.



## What Expectations to Set?

- **Expectations about PCS**
- That you will encounter rude/ungrateful people. Most are very polite and appreciative, but be ready for the few bad eggs.
- Stress the PCS mind set of meet the client where they are at and always be respectful of what they know.
- Not every participant wants to change or sees things as a problem - things are handled differently in different cultures too.
- Encourage the need to be aware and mindful of different diversity on the level of learning, beliefs, culture and expectations.



## Setting Expectations

- Setting shared expectations
- Involving everyone
- Asking for input / creating buy-in



## Time to Share



- Questions
- Strategies
- Tips for difficult conversations

