

Bruce Mayhew Consulting

Communication Training

imagine...

Managing Difficult Conversations

Increase Satisfaction / Decrease Stress



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Why Do We Avoid Difficult Conversations?

- We don't want to make matters worse
- We fear we'll be attacked back
- We don't want to be mean

Or... What Do We Do?

1. We're Too Bold:

- *"Your incompetence failed the team."*

2. Ignore The Conversation / Conflict:

- *"It's just the way Bob is."*

3. Passive Aggressive:

- *"Sure, I'd be Happy To." (you know the answer is no)*

4. Assume Responsibility:

- *"Send me the file - I'll finish it for you."*

5. Guilt:

- *"I'll cancel my concert tickets to help you."*

Types Of Difficult Conversations

- Something Difficult To Share
- The Answer Is "NO"
- We Disagree
- Someone Is Frustrated

Difficult Conversations Are Everywhere

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1. Saying “No” to the 10th Girl Guide cookie seller
2. Your child wants to stay up late
3. Your partner doesn’t want to visit your parents
4. A less than satisfactory performance review
5. A missed deadline
6. A customer returning damaged goods
7. Someone wearing too much perfume / cologne

Are Difficult Conversations Conflict Situations?

Difficult Conversations Are Everywhere



Difficult Conversations Are Everywhere



Dealing With Difficult Conversations

90% Us

10% Them

Be Real

- Let them know this is difficult for you:
 - Show emotion
 - Don't be emotional

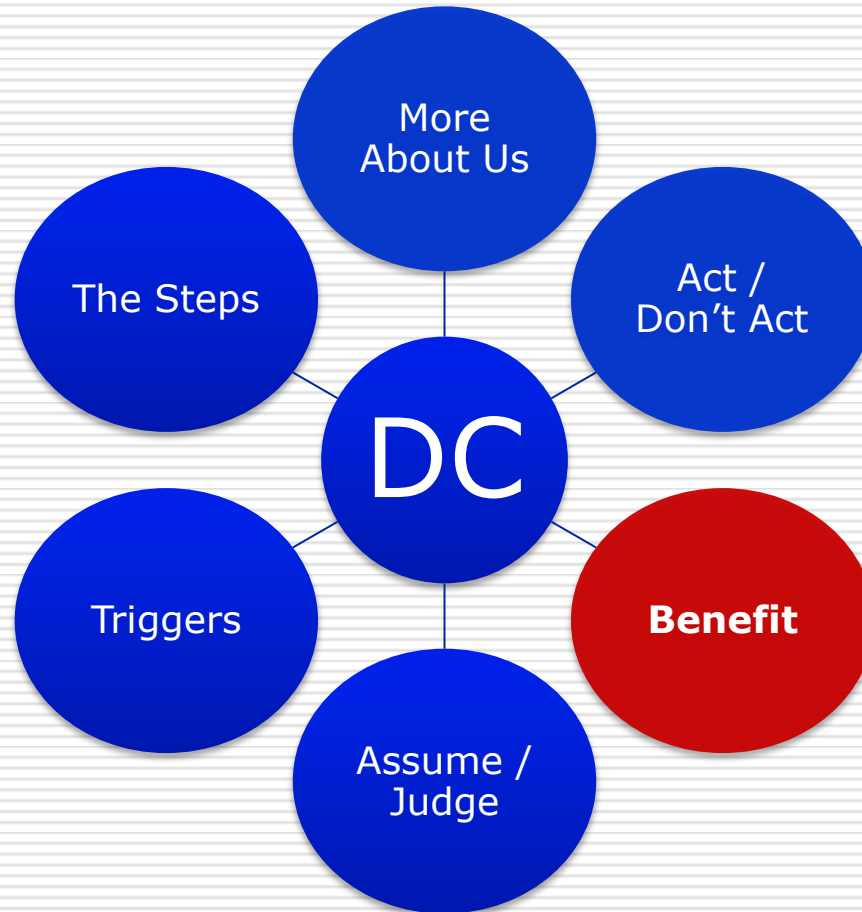
Emotions

1. Talk About Emotions:
 - I'm feeling a bit anxious...
2. Don't Be Emotional:
 - I'm so disappointed that you...

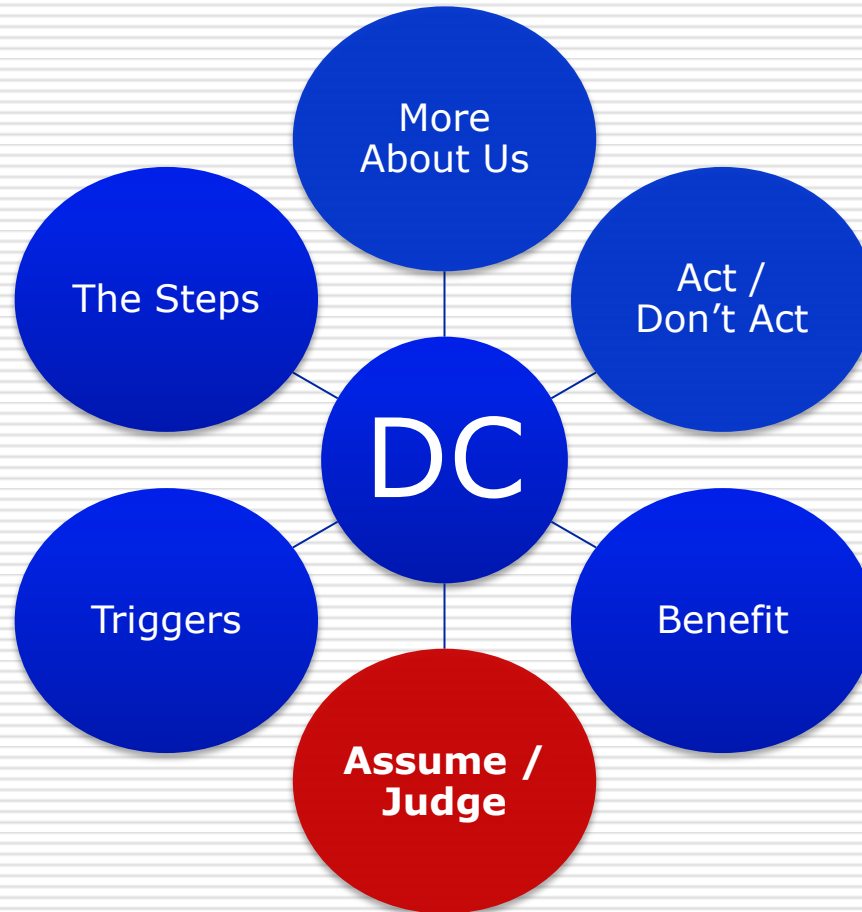
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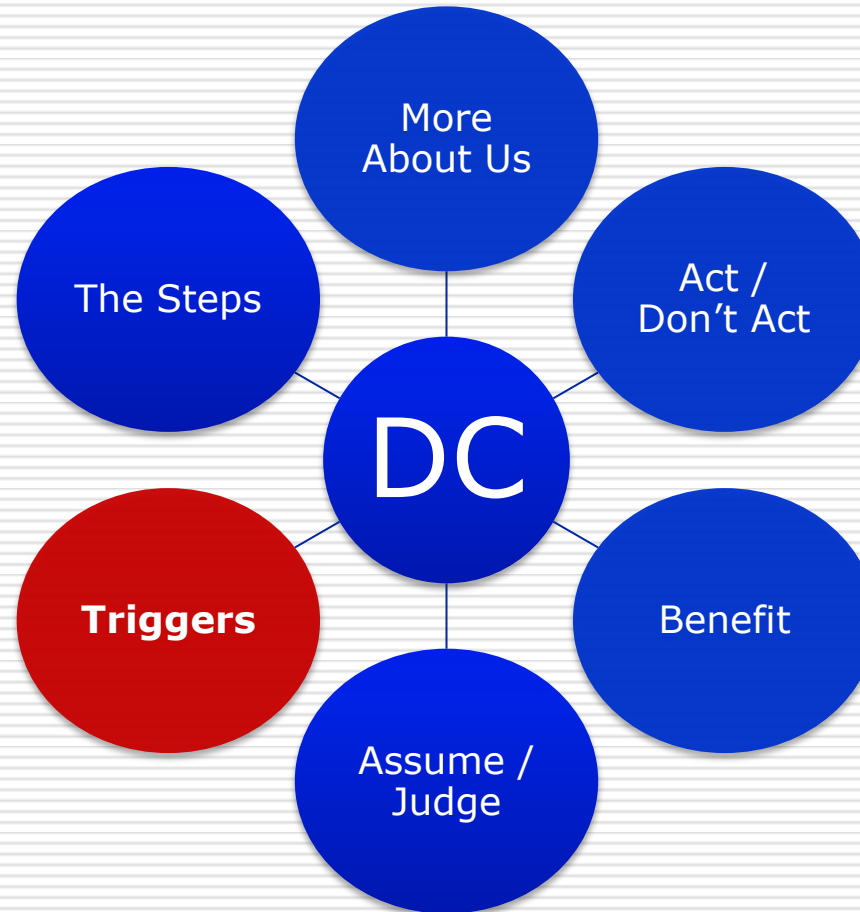
Impact May Not Be Intention

- We judge each other by their impact on us:
 - What we get / don't get
 - How we feel

"You helped – I feel good, you are the best."

"You didn't help – I feel bad, you don't care."

Difficult Conversations Are Everywhere



What Are Some Common Triggers?

1. Conflicting resources
2. Conflicting goals
3. Conflicting work or communication styles
4. Conflicting perceptions
5. Different personal values

Triggers

- Knowing your Triggers helps you:
 - Catch yourself
 - Manage your Triggers
- Watching for other peoples Triggers helps you:
 - Avoid / reduce conflict
 - Increase success

Difficult Conversations Are Everywhere



Steps To Have A Difficult Conversation

1. What is your purpose?
2. They are not evil (don't be aggressive)
3. Make & practice a fair, respectful opening
4. Is now a good time?
5. Tell Stories
6. Shift to problem solving (can we discuss how to...)
7. Review & check in with them after

Purpose / Prepare: Exercise

1. What if someone wants:

- Reimbursement for a show/event they missed?
- A change on a program already sent to the printer?
- An extension on a deliverable that is already late?
- Other?

1. What are your:

- Personal Needs?
- Professional Needs?
- Feelings: How do you feel?

2. What are their:

- Personal Needs?
- Professional Needs?
- Feelings: How might they feel?

What's Your Opening? Exercise

1. What if someone wants:

- Reimbursement for a show/event they missed?
- A change on a program already sent to the printer?
- An extension on a deliverable that is already late?
- Other?

1. What are your:

- Personal Needs?
- Professional Needs?
- Feelings: How do you feel?

2. What are their:

- Personal Needs?
- Professional Needs?
- Feelings: How might they feel?

Listen To Them

- Reciprocity happens: The other person will feel responsible to...
- If you listen to them, they will be more inclined to listen to you.
 - If you don't listen to them they will unlikely listen to you.
- Practice Mindful Listening

How To Reduce Stress: Take A Break

- Breath:
 - Sit up straight
 - Tongue against back of teeth
 - Breath in through your nose 4 seconds
 - Breath out through your mouth 8 seconds
- Take a walk

If Not Face To Face...

- Phone Best Practices?
- Email Best Practices?

Question...

- ***What one thing can you do that will have a long lasting impact?***
 - ***Personal***
 - ***Professional***

Questions... now or later?

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