Quantum Connections™
Connecting Beyond Difference

Safe Conversations® Dialogue Workshop

Participant Guide

Welcome

Welcome to the *Safe Conversations Dialogue Workshop*!
We are so happy you decided to join us today to learn our cutting-edge, powerful methodology.

You're about to learn a new set of connection tools that will completely transform your relationships and elevate your ability to connect with others. The Safe Conversations Methodology and Tools were designed based on four decades of clinical expertise and real-world experience by world-renowned relationship experts and best-selling authors Harville Hendrix, Ph.D. and Helen LaKelly Hunt, Ph.D.

We encourage you to practice our tools daily and consistently to experience the following benefits:

- Elevated communication
- Improved listening and the capacity to accurately understand messages and retain details
- Relationships where everyone feels seen and heard
- The ability to manage frustrations, concerns, and challenges in psychologically safe, productive ways that foster connection instead of rupture
- The capacity to connect with others, even when they have different opinions, perspectives, backgrounds, beliefs, etc.

All the above items will ultimately empower you to build stronger, happier, and healthier connections with others and create environments where relationships thrive.

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The Challenge

Isolation, loneliness, and disconnection are increasing worldwide. Building relationships and maintaining connections are difficult due to several key factors that work against us.

- **Reactive Brains:** The human brain is one of the most complex organs on the planet. In this course, we will simplify its functions into two basic components: the upper and lower brain.

  The lower (crocodile) brain controls basic survival and automatic body functions, such as circulation, breathing, digestion, and more. One of its functions is to respond to incoming signals and direct them to the appropriate areas for complete processing.

  Upper Brain
  Reflective: thinking, creating, evaluating, deciding, deliberate

  Lower Brain
  Reactive: involuntary, instantaneous, instinctive, rapid

  The upper (owl) brain is responsible for reflection, conscious thought, reasoning, and analysis. Engaging the upper brain helps us think in a more balanced and complete way.

  The lower brain works like a "staircase" that allows thought processes to proceed to the upper brain for consideration—but only if certain preconditions are in place. Namely, the lower brain must not sense significant threats like panic, fear, or danger, whether real or perceived. When we find ourselves in situations that feel physically, mentally, or emotionally threatening, the lower brain takes over and works to protect us in the presence of anxiety, fear, and perceived danger. That response—powered by the Fight/Flight/Freeze/Fawn reflex—can force a person to lash out and preemptively attack with words and feelings that are less tolerant, accepting, or fair.
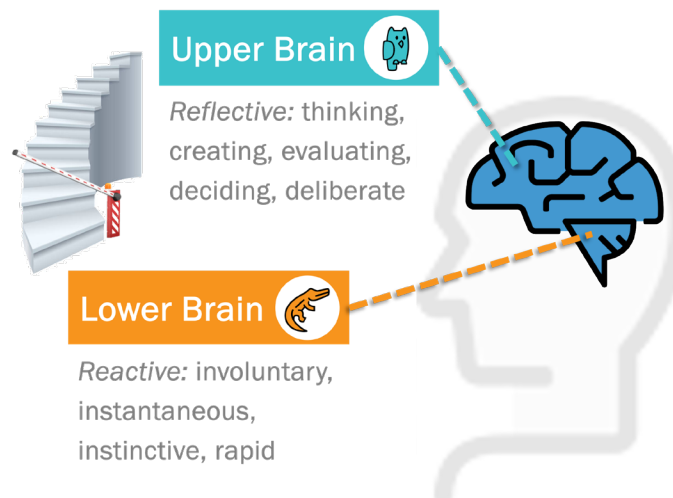
- **Egos:** Our egos have been conditioned to center us in our worlds, prioritizing our own image, status, well-being, and reputation.

- **Monologues:** Monologues have dominated our interactions and behaviors for thousands of years. Monologue is our earliest form of communication, where one person talks **AT** listeners in a one-way stream of information and emotion. Kings, pharaohs, and other elites have traditionally used this hierarchical communication style to address their subjects in a vertical, directive manner, issuing one-way proclamations and decrees.

  Although monologue still prevails in human communication today, it has evolved into parallel monologues, where two people talk **AT** each other instead of **WITH** one another. We often prioritize our own agendas, perspectives, and opinions over striving to understand another person.

- **Negativity Bias:** Humans are born with an instinctive negativity bias resulting from our earliest ancestors' needs. In the early days of humanity, those best able to recognize the unusual sound in the rustling grass or spot the predator's shifting shadow in time were the people best equipped to survive and live to see another day. That evolutionary history has left us with brains that continuously scan for differences and point out anything negative or at odds with our expectations because, historically, the negative things proved to be the most dangerous. Today, this negativity bias creates anxiety for us by always being on the lookout for the next chance to react and protect us.

- **Objection to Difference:** Unfortunately, our brains have evolved to interpret differences as negative and threatening. Therefore, we naturally tend to react negatively to and object to differences. This objection to differences creates anxiety and limits our capacity to fully listen, be curious, and be open to new ideas and perspectives. Instead of leading to connection, growth, innovation, and other positive outcomes, difference frequently results in conflict, polarization, and other harmful consequences.

All the above factors have contributed to unprecedented levels of social disconnection and disengagement. The U.S. Surgeon General's 2023 Advisory Report on Loneliness and Isolation stated that social disconnection in the United States has reached epidemic levels. The Surgeon General further reports that the health risks related to this disconnection are comparable to those associated with physical inactivity and obesity—and according to the U.S. Surgeon General, it is equivalent to smoking up to 15 cigarettes daily![1]

1. *Our epidemic of loneliness and isolation.* https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf

A Journey

The skills and tools provided in this course are designed to help you tackle the challenges mentioned earlier. By regularly practicing the skills and tools demonstrated in this workshop, you will embark on a personal development journey that will transform your relationships into deeper, healthier connections. With consistent practice, you'll increase your Relational Competency over time, enabling you to interact with others without polarizing and to connect with them beyond differences.
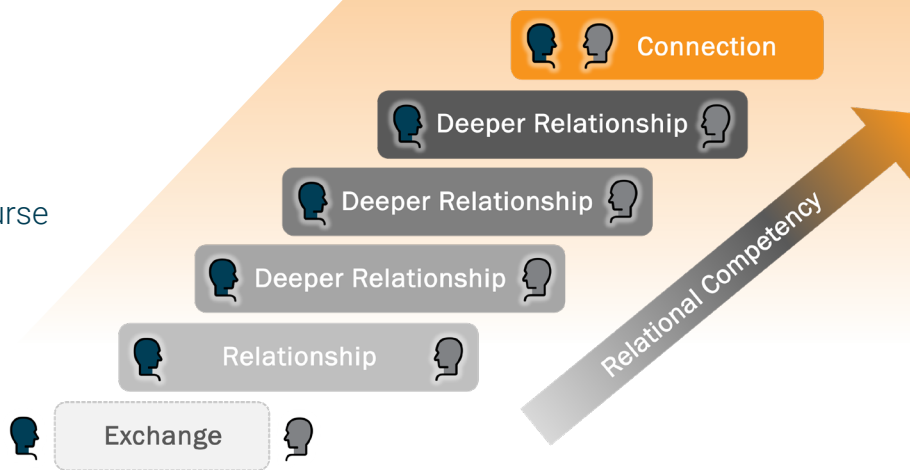
To strengthen your relationships, build connections, and develop Relational Competency, you'll need to:

- **Identify Psychological Safety:** The Harvard Business Review defines psychological safety as a shared belief among a group of people that it is 'OK' to be themselves, express their thoughts and ideas, speak up with questions and concerns, take risks, make and admit mistakes, learn from mistakes, and freely forgive one another.[2] In this workshop, you will learn how to recognize and establish psychological safety with those you interact with.

- **Use the Safe Conversations Tools:** This workshop will teach you four tools you can use to create psychologically safe spaces between you and anyone you interact with. These tools include Affirmations, Zero Negativity, Awareness, and Structured Dialogue.

AFFIRMATIONS   **ZERO NEGATIVITY**   **AWARENESS**   **STRUCTURED DIALOGUE**

- **Go Deep & Wide:** The Safe Conversations Tools consists of universal skills that can be tailored to various scenarios, from light, friendly exchanges to critical discussions aimed at resolving conflicts and frustrations. We will demonstrate how to apply your new skills to some common situations.

2.   Gallo, A. (2023, February 15). What is psychological safety? Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2023/02/what-is psychological-safety
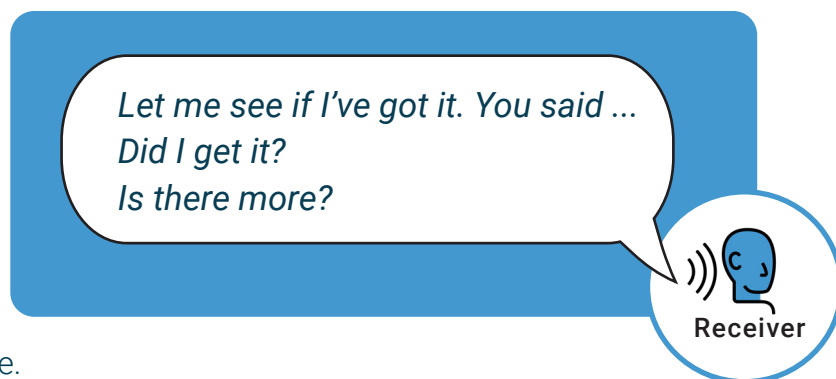
Mirroring

Mirroring is a fundamental skill used in the Safe Conversations Methodology. It is the second step in Structured Dialogue, but it can also be applied à la carte in everyday, casual conversations.

> *Let me see if I've got it. You said ...*
> *Did I get it?*
> *Is there more?*
>
> **Receiver**

To practice this skill, first give the sender your full attention as you listen to their message. After they finish speaking, reflect their message back to them. Then, confirm your understanding and ensure you've captured all key details by asking, *"Did I get it?"* Next, invite them to continue sharing by asking, *"Is there more?"* This step encourages the sender to elaborate while adding greater depth and detail to their message. The more they share, the better you'll understand their unique perspective, experiences, feelings, and more.

Use the mirroring skill whenever you participate in a conversation that requires precise understanding, clarity, and attention to detail. By mirroring someone, you give them your full, undivided attention, and when they hear you repeat their message, they feel seen and heard. Therefore, mirroring is crucial during high-stakes conversations where emotions run high, such as when addressing frustrations, concerns, or other sensitive topics.

Mirroring Instructions

1. Listen to the sender's message with undivided attention.

2. Mirror the message.

   - When the speaker finishes sharing, repeat their words back to them by using the following sentence stem: ***"Let me see if I've got it. You said…"***

   - You can either repeat their message word-for-word or paraphrase it.

   Mirroring Tips:

   - Try not to change the language or meaning. Avoid filtering, modifying, or criticizing the message.

   - Avoid asking too many clarifying questions early in the conversation. You want to give the sender the space to share their message without interruptions.

   - Maintain total focus on the person talking and receive the information as completely as

possible. Make eye contact and avoid multitasking.

- Receive the message without judgment, negation, or rebuttal; this helps the speaker feel more psychologically safe.

3. Check for Accuracy

- After Mirroring the speaker's message, check for accuracy by asking: *"Did I get it?"*

- This step gives the sender the opportunity to bring up any details that were missed or clarify any misunderstandings.

4. Show Curiosity

- Before inserting your own thoughts, opinions, or advice, give the speaker the opportunity to elaborate with more details by asking: *"Is there more about that?"*

- This sentence stem shows them that you're trying to truly listen to them and understand their perspective.

5. Continue Mirroring As Needed

- Once the speaker is done sharing any *"more,"* continue to mirror (*"Let me see if I got that. You said…"*) and check for accuracy (*"Did I get it?"*) until the speaker confirms there is nothing *"more"* to share.

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Activity 1: Mirroring
Mirror Role Play
Interactive skill-building during class session

1 For this role play, decide who will be the **Sender** and who will be the **Receiver**.

2 Follow the prompts below:

Sender

(Give your partner an appreciation about a trait or behavior you've observed.)

Receiver

Mirrors: *Let me see if I've got it. You said ___.*
Checks for Accuracy: *Did I get it?*

Sender

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.
- or -
The part you got was ____, and I also said ____.

Receiver: Continue mirroring the sender until the sender confirms that you captured the entire message and *"got it."*

Receiver

Show Curiosity: *Is there more about that?*

Sender: Feel free to add as much depth as you want. Once you are done sharing everything on your mind, let the receiver know they *"got everything."*

Receiver: Continue mirroring the sender until they confirm you *"got everything."*

3 Switch roles and repeat the prompts in step 2.
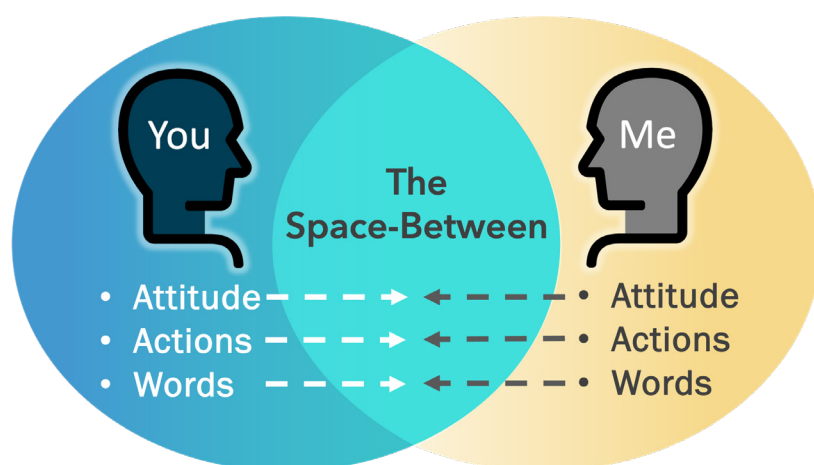
Identify Psychological Safety

Many natural human tendencies can undermine our efforts to build psychologically safe relationships. Our reactive brains, negativity biases, and objections to differences make connection challenging. The good news is that various strategies can help us overcome these obstacles and promote psychological safety in our relationships.

You can enhance psychological safety by doing the following:

Raise Self-Awareness

One of the most crucial behaviors for enhancing psychological safety is to regularly assess your own level of self-awareness. Self-aware individuals are said to understand both their internal and external interactions. Internally, self-awareness involves recognizing and managing your moods, needs, and understanding who you truly are. For example, if you're having an 'off day,' do you know why? Externally, self-awareness is about recognizing the signals and clues related to the people, relationships, and social situations around you and managing them productively. For example, when you enter an office or space, can you quickly and accurately 'read the room?'

An important concept that merges both internal and external self-awareness is a unique phenomenon known as the Space-Between. The Space-Between refers to the physical space between two individuals who are poised to connect with one another—and it's in this space that their self-awareness is actively employed. This same space is filled with the attitudes, actions, words—and especially the energies—that both people contribute to this space. The Space-Between can be either positive or negative, significantly influencing the degree to which individuals are drawn toward connection or pushed away from each other. By focusing more on your own level of self-awareness and the energies you bring into the Space-Between, you will improve your ability to attune yourself and communicate more effectively with the people who matter most to you.

Create Growth Zones

Another behavior that helps promote the establishment of the right kind of psychological safety is to continually create growth zones in your personal spaces. Growth zones are special areas between two people where there is a balanced mix of psychological safety and accountability. If your only focus is on creating a safe environment to be completely honest with others, you might cultivate a comfortable space for yourself to express what's on your mind. However, safe spaces are not meant to give anyone the green light to say or do hurtful things to others under the guise of honesty. What feels like a comfortable space for you could potentially be very uncomfortable for someone else. Conversely, if you concentrate solely on holding others accountable for their words and feelings, you risk creating a toxic atmosphere filled with blame and attribution, known as the Stress Zone. The solution is to incorporate a balance of both psychological safety and accountability within the same space shared by two people. By doing so, individuals feel free to express themselves honestly while still taking ownership of their words, fostering responsible and constructive dialogue between both parties.

Comfort Zone — HONESTY ONLY

Growth Zone — BALANCE of HONESTY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Stress Zone — ACCOUNTABILITY ONLY
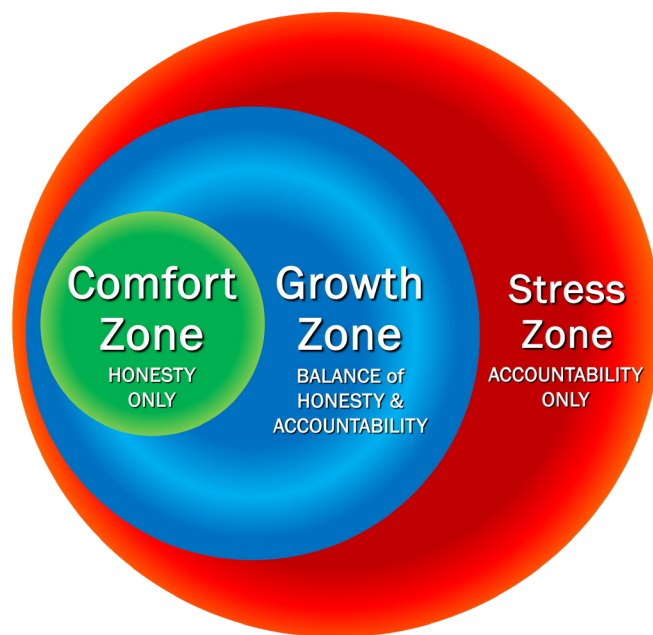
Stay Curious

Earlier, we mentioned that our reactive brains naturally fear, resist, and object to differences. The good news is that we can overcome this instinct by training our brains to respond to differences with curiosity instead of judgment and fear.

Whenever you encounter someone who thinks or behaves differently from you, strive to "wonder" about them rather than judge them. Ask questions and actively listen to learn more about the difference and its origins.

Your goal is not to adopt someone else's differences for yourself or to convert others to your views— but simply to remain curious, become more aware, and accept that difference moving forward—not as better or worse, but as something that makes us wonderfully—and powerfully—'different.'

The skill of mirroring and the Structured Dialogue Tool are your best resources for practicing curiosity in your daily interactions.

The Safe Conversations Tools

Affirmations

Affirmations are behaviors that celebrate the uniqueness of each individual, acknowledge the strength that our differences provide, and emphasize the value of connections among people.

When affirmations are shared with others, toxic negativity is diffused, and connections can be created and restored.

Zero Negativity

The practice of Zero Negativity involves a commitment to avoid shame, blame, or criticism toward others in your daily routines.

Zero Negativity does NOT mean pretending to be happy all the time or avoiding difficult conversations. Instead, it focuses on strategies for constructively addressing concerns while providing solutions and for repairing relationships when negativity inevitably creeps into interactions.

Awareness

The practice of Awareness involves always being mindful of the following fact: Past challenges create lingering frustrations and unmet needs that impact present behaviors.

Developing well-tuned awareness allows us to remain curious towards each other—even when we're faced with some pretty challenging behaviors from other people.

Structured Dialogue

Structured Dialogue is a conversational template of six simple steps designed to encourage two-way, interactive speaking and listening.

It offers a repeatable process to solicit and exchange the thoughts and ideas of each person in the conversation.

The core template can be used in a wide variety of scenarios and the individual steps can be used on their own in everyday, casual conversations.

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Affirmations

The Affirmations Tool includes a collection of behaviors that affirm the "being" and "doing" of another person. There are several different activities or ways you can affirm and add value to another person. Below is a list of the four (4) tools you can use to affirm someone:

1. Share Appreciations: *"I really appreciate…"*

Share something about someone that you admire or respect.
It could be a value, trait, or habit you've observed and wish to recognize.
Example: *"I really appreciate how detail-oriented you are."*
"I really appreciate how good you are at managing our retirement plan."

2. Offer Support: *"I'd be happy to help…"*

Do something kind or helpful for someone they didn't ask for or expect. This is a spontaneous way to make them feel supported, like bringing them a cup of coffee, folding laundry, or cleaning up the kitchen.

3. Invite Connection: *"I would love to find some time to spend with you…"*

Invite someone to meet with you for some dedicated time to catch up and learn more about them. For example, you could organize a surprise lunch, coffee, snack, or dinner.

4. Create Fun: *"Let's get together for a little fun…"*

Affirm the variety of different interests in others by creating fun experiences. For example, you could organize a day hike, mini-golf evening, or museum outing.

Activity 2: Affirmations
Invitation Round Robin
Interactive skill-building during class session

Let's take a moment to practice the Affirmations Tool. You can affirm someone using any of the following options: Share Appreciations, Offer Support, Invite Connection, and Create Fun. This exercise will focus on two of those options: Invite Connection and Create Fun.

Instructions:

1. Pair up if you haven't done so already.
2. Choose the first sender and the first receiver.
3. Sender: Choose one of the options below:

   - Option A: Invite Connection

     Invite your partner to meet with you one day this week for some dedicated time to catch up and learn more about each other.

     Example: *"Would you like to get together for _____ (coffee/ lunch/ dinner/ happy hour) and catch up?"*

   - Option B: Create Fun

     Invite your partner to join you for a fun activity one day this week.

     Example: Organize a day hike, mini-golf evening, birthday celebration, or museum outing.

4. Sender: Share your idea with the receiver. Feel free to add as much depth as you want.
5. Sender and receiver: Pick a day and time this week to enjoy the above activity.
6. Switch roles and repeat steps 3-5.

Alternative Option

Think of someone you would like to meet with this week for some dedicated catch-up time or a fun activity. This person could be a family member, friend, significant other, coworker, or anyone else you regularly interact with. Share the details of your plans with your partner.

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Zero Negativity

Zero Negativity is adopting a new mindset and making a conscious decision to avoid comments and behaviors that could be experienced as a put-down, slight, or insult by another person.

We pursue Zero Negativity by making a daily conscious decision to:

1. **AVOID** put-downs (shame, blame, and criticism)
2. **REPLACE** negativity with affirmations or positivity
3. **REFRAME** frustrations into wishes or solutions
4. **REPAIR** when negativity occurs

1. Avoid *put-downs (shame, blame, and criticism)*

Heavy-duty negatives such as shame, blame, and criticism are especially harmful in relationships. They add toxic, negative energy to the Space-Between, which severely ruptures connection and creates anxiety, defensiveness, and hostile conflict.

| SHAME	BLAME	CRITICISM
"Wow! I thought you had enough common sense to avoid that."	*"Thanks to you, we lost that client."*	*"I couldn't believe you in that meeting! You're a terrible communicator…"*
Shame is any form of insult that minimizes, demeans, or belittles another person. These hurtful comments can be private or public, direct or nuanced, or accidental or intentional.	Blame is often alleged on others when accountability is not properly taken. Misplaced blame discourages initiative and rarely helps constructively address corrective next steps towards a solution.	Criticism focuses on faults and mistakes and discourages grace and forgiveness.

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2. REPLACE *negativity with affirmations or positivity*

Sometimes, people habitually exhibit negativity as a way to keep themselves occupied or engaged. Simply telling them to avoid negativity is often less effective than suggesting a positive alternative. As we discussed, the health of the Space-Between affects the quality of relationships. To maintain healthy relationships, we must ensure the Space-Between is safe.

For various reasons, affirmations act as a powerful tool for nurturing the Space-Between: they counter negativity and effectively shift the energy of interactions from hostile and stressful to safe. It's hard to be negative while giving or receiving affirmations. By emphasizing affirmative and constructive aspects, we fill the Space-Between with positive energy.
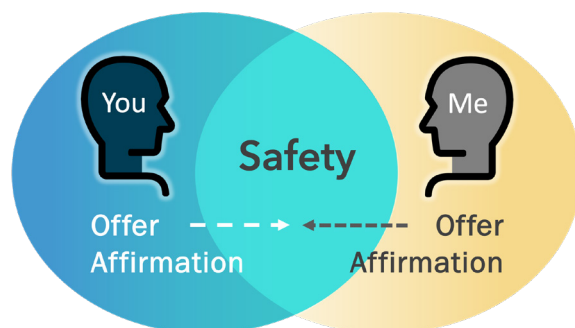
3. REFRAME *frustrations into wishes or solutions.*

Zero Negativity is NOT about avoiding difficult conversations, putting on a smile, and pretending like everything is happy and perfect all the time. The opposite is true. Zero Negativity is about creating a psychologically safe environment, where frustrations and other difficult topics can be discussed honestly and openly in a way that is kind and respectful. This will result in productive outcomes and solutions, instead of empty criticisms and circular arguments that drain energies and accomplish little to nothing.

When discussing frustrations, challenges, or concerns…

- Describe your frustration in an objective way that avoids personal attacks.
  - Focus on describing your experience, how the situation impacts you, and your feelings. Example: *"This is my experience…; When…happens, it impacts me by…; This makes me feel…"*
  - Avoid focusing on what you dislike about someone, what they're doing wrong, why they are the problem, or how it's their fault. Example: *"You frustrate me because…; You did…because you're…; This is your fault since…"*
- Use *"I"* language. Example: *"I feel…, I'm concerned…, I wish…"*
- Avoid *"You"* language. Example: *"You did…, You never…, You are…"*
- Reframe frustrations into wishes or requests that point toward solutions.

4. REPAIR: *when negativity occurs*

Zero Negativity is a critical mindset to adopt, but let's face it - we're all human and we aren't perfect. While achieving Zero Negativity is an ambitious goal, most human beings fail to experience Zero Negativity because of our flaws and imperfections—and that's ok.

Here's some good news: Zero Negativity is NOT ABOUT PERFECTION.

It's about how quickly and routinely you can RECOVER from exposure to negativity and re-establish psychological safety.

When negativity creeps into an interaction, use our Repair Process to restore connection.

a. **CREATE** signal: Invite your family, friends, colleagues, and anyone else you interact with regularly to join you in using our Repair Process. Choose a hand signal or word to alert others that you experienced negativity because of something they said or did. Share your signal with everyone who agrees to practice this process with you and ask them about their signal.

b. **USE** signal: You and anyone practicing this process will use your signal(s) when needed.

c. **COMPLETE** a repair activity.

- Sender re-do: The person who sent the negative message (sender) can re-do the transaction in a way that avoids negativity. Example: *"I'm sorry. Let me rephrase that…"*

- Receiver model: Sometimes, the sender may not understand why their behavior made you feel put down. In this case, it's helpful to model how they might resend the message so it doesn't feel negative. Example: *"It would feel less negative to me if you said it like this…."*

- Offer connecting behavior: This could be an apology, a favorite latte, a high five, an affirmation, or other connecting activity.

- Use Structured Dialogue: We recommend offering a Structured Dialogue for more serious issues. Our *Frustration Dialogue Guide* provides step-by-step instructions. See Appendix C.

- Create your own custom activity: You can also create your own repair activity. As long as the activity restores connection and promotes safety for everyone.

Activity 3: Zero Negativity
Reversing Negativity
Interactive skill-building during class session

This activity will give you and a partner a chance to practice sharing frustrations in ways that avoid put-downs, shame, blame, and criticism. We'll use an imaginary role-play scenario to give you both a safe/neutral opportunity to practice the REFRAME tips we covered earlier.

Instructions:

1. Pair up if you haven't done so already.

2. Choose the first sender and the first receiver.

3. Sender: Think of an imaginary situation that would make you feel frustrated.
   Examples: Unpaid/late bills, being late to work, raising teenagers, forgetting important dates, etc. Pretend your practice partner did something that put you in that situation. Feel free to improvise and add as much depth as you want.

4. Sender: Share your imaginary frustration with your partner without put-downs, shame, blame, and criticism. Use the REFRAME tips covered earlier (see list below).
   - Use *"I"* language. Examples: *"I feel..., I'm concerned..., I wish..."*
   - Avoid *"You"* language. Examples: *"You did..., You never..., You are..."*
   - Describe your experience/feelings in neutral/objective ways (instead of focusing on what other people did wrong/what you dislike about them).
     Example: *"When ___ (situation) happens, it impacts me by ___ and makes me feel ___."*
     - **Wrong:** *"You never drive the kids anywhere. You just expect me to do all the driving while you sit at home."*
     - **Good**: *"Driving both kids to school, dance, soccer practice, and all social activities consumes a lot of my time during the week, making it hard to keep up with all my work responsibilities. This makes me feel really overwhelmed, exhausted, and stressed."*

5. Reframe your frustration into a wish or solution.
   - Example: *"Can we divide up the driving responsibilities? Maybe I could drive the kids to school and dance practice, and you could drive them to soccer practice and all social activities."*

6. Once the sender is done sharing their imaginary frustration, switch roles and repeat steps 3-5.

Awareness

Practice the Awareness Tool daily by remembering the following: Past challenges create lingering frustrations and unmet needs that impact present behaviors.
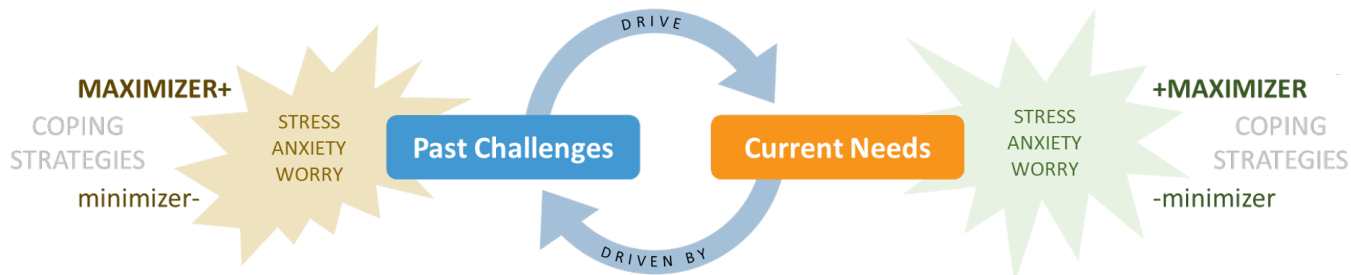
Everyone has had to endure some kind of exposure to past challenges. These challenges often begin in childhood and continue throughout adulthood. People develop various needs that are driven by these past challenges. When a person's needs go unmet, emotional reactions that produce stress, anxiety, and worry are generated. Humans have evolved two principal coping strategies to deal with those reactions: either **+MAXIMIZE** the energy they feel or **-minimize** the energy they feel. A description of each of the coping strategies is shown below.

+MAXIMIZERS (Hailstorms)	-minimizers (Turtles)
When I get upset, I tend to…	When I get upset, I tend to…
• Express myself with passion and energy	• Tighten up inside and do not verbalize my emotions to others
• Restate message and repeat myself	• Adopt an *"I'll take care of myself/ I don't need anyone else"* attitude
• Interrupt others	• Express very few, if any, needs and exclude others from my personal space
• Feel an intense need for reactions and responses from others	• Listen poorly and recede internally in an attempt to figure things out by myself
• Attach many other needs to this one	• Disconnect and remove myself from my relationships without explanation
• Focus on myself and listen poorly to others	
• Adopt a victim stance and lobby for attention	
• Focus on myself and listen poorly to others	

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These **+MAXIMIZER and -minimizer** coping mechanisms often drive behaviors that are hard for other people to understand, and they default to various judgmental thoughts such as: *"why are they being so difficult," "their behavior makes no sense to me,"* or *"they're overreacting to this situation."* Without a full understanding of the situation and background, judgement, criticism, and negativity can further trigger and amplify the *+MAXIMIZER* and *-minimizer* responses—resulting in a spiral that makes connection nearly impossible to achieve.

Practicing Awareness

When you encounter challenging behaviors from others or when people respond to you in a way that seems unreasonable, excessive, dramatic, bad, etc:

- Remember, their behavior is likely rooted in a memory of a past challenge (recent or long ago) and has little to do with you or the current situation.

- Suspend any judgments and assumptions about them and their behavior. Instead, **respond with curiosity and empathy**. This will help de-escalate the situation and break the cycle of reactive negativity.

  - Ask yourself: *What past challenges/current unmet needs might be driving this behavior?*

  - Ask them questions to understand their perspective better: *"Is there more about that? Have you encountered similar frustrations in the past? What would make this situation better for you?"*

  - Depending on the situation, you may want to offer a Structured Dialogue to better understand the past challenges and needs that are contributing to their current behaviors. Our *Unmet Need/Past Challenge Dialogue Guide (Appendix D) is a great template to walk you through sharing past challenges, current needs, coping behaviors, and then discussing how those needs can be met.*

Activity 4: Awareness
Empathy Mapping
Interactive skill-building during class session

This exercise will allow you and a partner to practice the Awareness Tool.

Instructions:

1. Pair up if you haven't done so already.

2. Choose the first sender and the first receiver.

3. Sender: Think of a frustrating relationship scenario (an annoying habit, a lack of interest in a hobby, a lack of understanding, a spending or saving problem, not helping around the house, etc.)
    *   Note: This could be a real scenario you've encountered in the past or an imaginary, made-up scenario. **However, avoid scenarios that involve your practice partner.**

4. Sender: Share your frustrating relationship scenario with the receiver.

5. Sender and receiver: Create an empathy map by answering the following questions:
    *   What might the other person think, feel, say, or do about this situation?
    *   What unmet need(s) might the other person be trying to address?
    *   What curiosity question(s) might help introduce the issue to the other person?

6. Switch roles and repeat steps 3-5.

Example:

Frustrating relationship scenario:
*   Whenever my friend Sharon vacations with our group of friends, she never wants to do anything that costs money. This frustrates my friends and me because we miss out on doing fun things due to her frugality.

What might Sharon think, feel, say, or do about this situation?
*   Maybe she worries about her finances and feels uncomfortable spending money on recreational activities. Perhaps she thinks she needs to be careful in case something bad happens (laid off from work, unexpected medical bills, unexpected home repair costs).

What unmet need might Sharon be trying to address?
*   Maybe she experienced past financial hardships that left her worried about not having enough money for food, medical care, etc. Maybe her parents used money to control her, so she holds on to her money to feel independent and in control of her own destiny.

What curiosity question(s) might help introduce the issue to Sharon?
*   *"I've noticed you seem reluctant to spend money when we go on group vacations. Can you tell me more about your concerns and feelings regarding this?"*

Structured Dialogue

Structured Dialogue is a conversational template of six simple steps designed to encourage two-way, interactive speaking and listening. Each of the six steps consists of a collection of sentence stems spoken in a set order. The core template can be used in various situations and offers a repeatable routine to exchange the thoughts and ideas of each person in the conversation.

The Structured Dialogue process can take ten to thirty minutes and works best when all participants are fully mentally present and distraction-free.

Below is an overview of the six steps of Structured Dialogue:

Structured Dialogue

01 Make Appointment
02 Share & Mirror
03 Summarize
04 Validate
05 Empathize
06 Close

1. Make Appointment

The sender asks the receiver, "Is now a good time to talk about..." This step ensures the dialogue occurs when the receiver is free of distractions, mentally prepared, and available to engage in conversation.

Sender

"Is now a good time to talk about..."
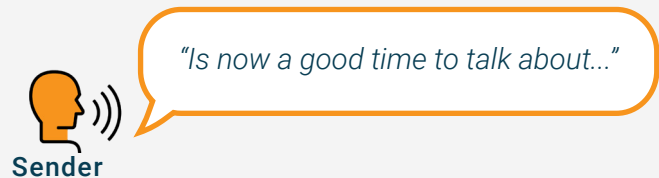
2. Share & Mirror

The sender shares their message and then adds depth to the conversation by sharing their related feelings and any relevant history or past experiences connected to their message. The receiver uses a set of mirroring sentence stems to repeat the message back to the sender, check for accurate understanding, and demonstrate curiosity by inviting the sender to elaborate.

Sender

I'd like to share...
This makes me feel...
And it reminds me of a time in the past...

Let me see if I've got it.
You said ...
Did I get it?

Receiver

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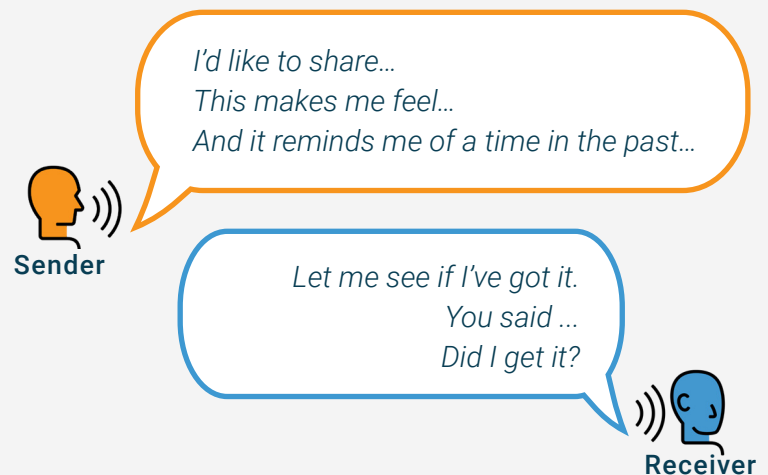
3. Summarize

The receiver reiterates all key points of the sender's message to confirm they have retained all essential details and comprehended the message correctly.

*Let me see if I've got it all.
You shared…
This makes you feel…
And it reminds you of a time in the past…
Did I get it all?*

Receiver

4. Validate

This step allows the receiver to acknowledge the sender's unique perspective. Even if the receiver does not agree with the sender, they can understand the sender's reasoning, logic, and viewpoint, recognizing that what was shared makes sense based on the sender's experience and background.

*That makes sense!
It makes sense that…*

Receiver

5. Empathize

After listening deeply and actively and viewing circumstances from the sender's perspective, the receiver can empathize with the sender. The receiver takes a moment to consider how the sender might feel and then confirms the accuracy of those feelings.

*I imagine you might feel…
Are there other feelings?*

Receiver

6. Close

The sender and receiver conclude the conversation by thanking each other and discussing any relevant next steps.

Thank you for sharing this with me.

Sender

Thank you for listening.

Receiver

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TRUE **FALSE**

☐ ☐   1. *Safe Conversations Dialogue Workshops* are designed to offer universal therapy for all those in disaffected relationships.

☐ ☐   2. People are naturally oriented to seek connections and look past the differences in each other.

☐ ☐   3. The source of all interpersonal conflict is our innate *objection to difference* that we all carry internally.

☐ ☐   4. The Share & Mirror step is considered a failure if the sender does not provide any additional information and initially responds to the question, *"Is there more?"* with *"Nope, you got it all."*

☐ ☐   5. Because most people respond to Affirmations in the same way, a best practice is to move in order from: *Appreciations* to *Offers of Support*, to *Invitations to Connect*, and finally to *Hosting Fun Events.*

☐ ☐   6. All those who fully commit to Zero Negativity will eventually create Spaces-Between their connections and relationships **WITHOUT** the presence of **ANY** negativity.

☐ ☐   7. The additional value that Structured Dialogues create for connections and relationships is independent of whether or not psychological safety is present.

☐ ☐   8. The four (4) core Safe Conversations Tools in your new tool belt are Affirmations, Zero Negativity, Psychological Safety, and the Space-Between.

☐ ☐   9. It is up to the sender to lead and begin each of the six core steps in the Structured Dialogue conversation.

☐ ☐   10. Mirroring is a powerful and unique skill made up of two (2) dimensions: reflecting a message and checking for accurate understanding of the message.

☐ ☐   11. The Connection Cycle is a never-ending loop that illustrates our movement from phases of connection to disconnection and then back to seeking connection throughout our lifetimes.

☐ ☐   12. It is important to begin adding awareness to a connection by always considering a person's past challenges when working to understand their current emotional needs.

Go Deep & Wide

Dialogue is a powerful and versatile tool that can be used in various situations. It is effective in both brief interactions and those requiring more depth and detail. You can use dialogue to address a wide range of topics, from appreciations to frustrations.

Depth of Understanding

Each dialogue varies in the depth achieved during the Share & Mirror step.

Sometimes, the sender responds to the receiver's mirroring sentence stems with multiple replies that are rich in depth.

Other times, the sender may respond with minimal detail and quickly end the mirroring step with, *"Nope, you got it all."*

DEPTH

Feelings, Impacts, Needs, Histories, Hopes, Fears, Solutions, & more
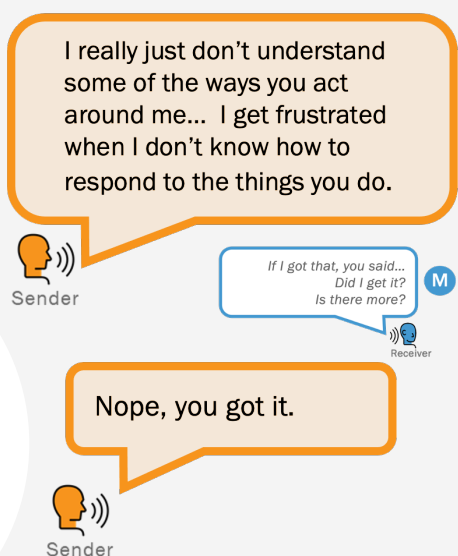
Both outcomes mentioned above are beneficial. Lengthier mirroring interactions provide the receiver with deeper insights, fostering greater validation and empathy toward the sender while enhancing connection. In contrast, shorter exchanges may deliver less information, but they still show the receiver's willingness to listen to the sender, encouraging the sender to open up more in future conversations.

Dialogue Grid

To assist you in learning and practicing Structured Dialogue, we've created a collection of four *Dialogue Guides*. Each guide is tailored to a specific topic (appreciations, affirmations, frustrations, and unmet needs/past challenges). These guides walk you step-by-step and word-for-word through the Structured Dialogue, so no guesswork or memorization is required. You'll find all four *Dialogue Guides* at the end of this *Participant Guide in the appendices*.

Below is a grid highlighting the differences between the *Dialogue Guides*.

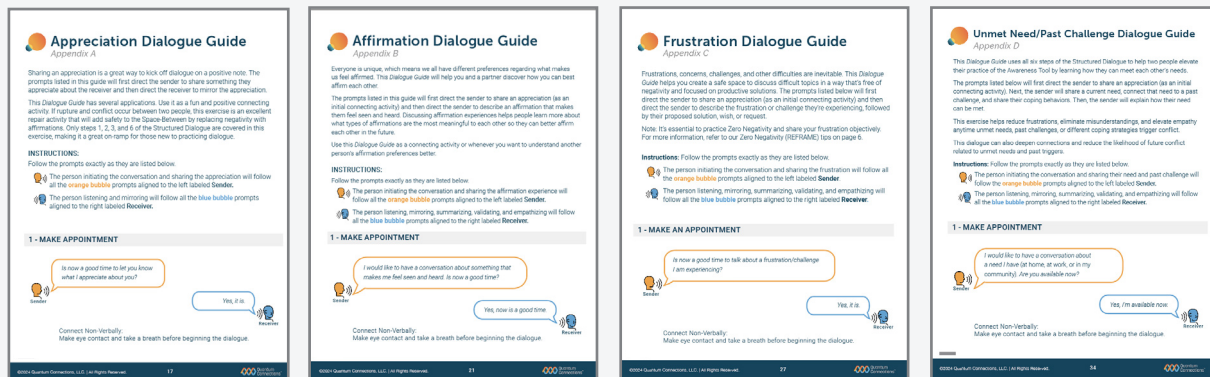| Structured Dialogue	Appreciation Dialogue	Affirmation Dialogue	Frustration Dialogue	Need/Past Challenge Dialogue
01 Make Appt.	• Make Appt.	• Make Appt.	• Make Appt.	• Make Appt.
02 Share & Mirror	• Share Appreciation Ⓜ • Share Feeling(s) Ⓜ • Share Past Experience/History Ⓜ DEPTH	• Give Appreciation Ⓜ • Share Affirmation Ⓜ • Share Past Experience/History Ⓜ DEPTH	• Give Appreciation Ⓜ • Describe Frustration Ⓜ • Share Feeling(s) Ⓜ • Share Past Experience/History Ⓜ • Desired Change Ⓜ DEPTH	• Give Appreciation Ⓜ • Share Current Need Ⓜ • Share Past Challenge Ⓜ • Share Feeling(s) and Current Response Ⓜ • Share New Response Ⓜ DEPTH
03 Summarize	• Summarize: All	• Summarize: All	• Summarize: All	• Summarize: All
04 Validate		• Validate: Affirmation and Past Experience	• Validate: Feeling(s) and Past Experience	• Validate: Current Need, Past Challenge, and Current Response
05 Empathize		• Empathize: Affirmation and Feeling(s)	• Empathize: Desired Change and Feeling(s)	• Empathize: Current Need, New Response, and Feeling(s)
06 Close	• Close Appreciation	• Close Affirmation	• Close Frustration	• Close Need/Past Challenge

We recommend you use our *Dialogue Guides* while you are new to this skill, but once you memorize the process/sentence stems, you can use the core six-steps to discuss any topic. If you need to discuss a topic not included in one of these four guides, use page 22 as a quick reference guide to walk you through the six core steps and key sentence stems.

Sender and Receiver Tips

Below are some tips to help ensure a psychologically safe, productive, and successful dialogue.

Sender

Your Job:
- Initiate Dialogue Process
- Share Depth & Feeling

Responsibilities:
- Own your feelings
- Share succinctly
- No shame, blame or criticism
- Replace "You" language with "I" language
- Risk vulnerability
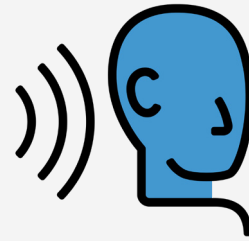
Receiver

Your Job:
- Be Fully Present & Listen
- Mirror, Validate, Empathize

Responsibilities:
- *Listen carefully & make eye contact*
- *Be fully present*
- *Be open, curious, & non-judgmental*
- *If overloaded, pause and ask: "May I mirror what you've said so far?"*

Activity 6
Frustration Dialogue
Interactive skill-building during class session

This exercise will give you the opportunity to practice the Structured Dialogue Tool. You and your partner will use the *Frustration Dialogue Guide* to direct you step-by-step as you discuss frustrations using our Structured Dialogue. Before you begin this dialogue, review the instructions below.

Instructions:

1. Pair up if you haven't done so already.

2. Choose the first sender and the first receiver.

3. Sender: Brainstorm the following before beginning the dialogue.

    a. What makes you feel frustrated? Examples: Challenges with technology, feeling overwhelmed with work projects, health challenges, struggles with raising children, etc.

    - *Example: I'm struggling to keep up with all the projects and tight deadlines being added to my plate at work.*

    b. How does this make you feel? What is the impact it's having on you?

    - *Example: I don't feel like I can do my best work under these circumstances. I feel like I am being stretched so thin that details are falling through the cracks. I have no control over my workload, which makes me feel stressed and powerless.*

    c. What past experiences/memories are related to your current frustration?

    - *Example: This reminds me of the time I almost got terminated at my last job when an overwhelming workload and limited resources resulted in a serious mistake on my part.*

    d. What is your wish, request, or desired solution?

    - *Example: I could ask the project manager to call me or stop by my desk before adding a new project to my plate so we can collaborate on realistic deadlines or shift priorities.*

4. Sender and receiver: Begin the dialogue. Locate *Appendix C: Frustration Dialogue Guide* on page C1 for step-by-step instructions.

5. Switch roles once the dialogue is complete and repeat steps 3-4.

Important Note:
Zero Negativity is the essential foundation for a successful Structured Dialogue.

Avoid put-downs such as shame, blame, and criticism.

Describe the frustrating experience in a way that is objective and avoids any personal attacks or put-downs.

Tips:

- Focus on describing your experience, feelings, and the impact the experience is having on you (instead of what the other person is doing wrong/what you don't like about them).

- Use *"I"* language instead of *"You"* language.

Examples:

- **Right:** *I often have a large number of projects. When new projects are added to my plate without my input, I worry I'll end up with more work than I can handle. I'm concerned that an overwhelming workload will increase my chances of accidentally making mistakes and prevent me from producing top-quality material.*

- **Wrong**: *You don't care about my work/life balance. You just keep adding more work to my pile without even taking the time to see what else I have on my plate.*

Activity 7
A Reason

Interactive skill-building during class session

Instructions:

1. Pair up if you haven't done so already.

2. Answer the questions below and then share your responses with your practice partner.

- What is one benefit, positive result, or desired outcome you expect to experience by using dialogue more frequently in your daily interactions?

_____

_____

- Make a list of people who would appreciate that benefit, result, or outcome.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Next Steps

A Choice

Changing long-standing behaviors is undoubtedly challenging. However, several strategies can help you integrate the knowledge and skills gained from this workshop into your daily routine.

| AFFIRMATIONS | ZERO NEGATIVITY | AWARENESS | STRUCTURED DIALOGUE |

- Reflect on your motivation and commitment to change.

- Set achievable goals and milestones with manageable levels of change, realistic timelines, and appealing incentives to maintain motivation.

- Focus on specific skills and habits you want to develop and incorporate them into your existing routine.

- Celebrate personal progress, even if it's just a step toward the broader goal of safer communication and deeper connections with others.

- Finally, remember that better connectivity and relational competency is not a one-time event to be achieved in an instant and then placed on a shelf and retired. Remaining connected requires a commitment to be tolerant and curious, to talk without criticism, to listen without judgment, and to connect beyond differences as a new way of life.

Daily Habits

Below are some tips for making the Safe Conversations Tools a new way of life.

Offer Daily Affirmations

Make it a personal goal to offer at least one affirmation per day.

An affirmation could be any of the following options below:
- Share Appreciations: *"I really appreciate…"*
- Offer Support: *"I'd be happy to help…"*
- Invite Connection: *"I would love to find some time to spend with you…"*
- Create Fun: *"Let's get together to have a little fun…"*

For more information, see page 13.

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Practice Zero Negativity In Every Conversation

1. AVOID put-downs (shame/blame/criticism)

2. CONVERT frustrations into wishes
    • Share your frustration or concern in an objective way that avoids personal attacks.
    • Focus on describing your experience, how the frustration is impacting you, and your feelings (instead of what someone is doing wrong).
    • Share your ideas for solutions or share your wish or request.

3. REPAIR to restore connection
    • Use the Safe Conversations Repair Process when negativity occurs.

For more information, see page 15.

Practice Awareness During Challenging Interactions

Always be mindful of the following fact:
• Past challenges create lingering frustrations and unmet needs that impact present behaviors and coping methods.

When you encounter challenging behaviors from others:

• *Suspend any judgments and assumptions about them and their behavior. Instead, respond with curiosity and empathy. This will help de-escalate the situation and break the cycle of reactive negativity.*

    • Ask yourself: What past challenges/current unmet needs might be driving this behavior?

    • Ask them questions to understand their perspective better.

    • Consider offering a Structured Dialogue to better understand the past challenges and needs that are contributing to their current behaviors. See *Unmet Need/Past Challenge Dialogue Guide* (Appendix D)

For more information, see page 19.

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Use Sentence Stems

The sentence stems are not limited to the Structured Dialogue.
You can use them individually in everyday conversations.

"Is now a good time to talk about..."

- Ask for an appointment anytime you need to have a conversation with someone. This will show them you respect their time and boundaries.

"Let me see if I've got it. You said...Did I get it? Is there more?"

- Use the mirroring sentence stems when accuracy and clarity are required, so no details slip through the cracks (i.e. task instructions, responsibilities, expectations, feedback, etc).
- Mirror others whenever they share concerns, worries, frustrations, or any other challenge with you, so they know they were fully heard.

"That makes sense!"

- Validate others to acknowledge that what they shared makes sense from their perspective.

"I imagine you might feel..."

- Empathize when appropriate.

Practice Structured Dialogue When Needed

Certain situations may require more time and attention than a casual, everyday conversation. You can use the Structured Dialogue when you need to address more complicated and challenging issues (such as ongoing frustrations, reoccurring conflict, or other major obstacles).

1. Make an Appointment – *Is now a good time?*
2. Share & Mirror – *You said... Did I get it?... Is there more?*
3. Summarize – *Let me see if I got it all...*
4. Validate – *That makes sense...*
5. Empathize – *I imagine you might feel...*
6. Close – *Thank you for sharing.*

Appreciation Dialogue Guide

Appendix A

Sharing appreciations is a powerful way to affirm and connect with others. The prompts listed in this guide will first direct the sender to share something they appreciate about the receiver and then direct the receiver to mirror the appreciation.

This *Dialogue Guide* has several applications. Use it as a fun and positive connecting activity. If rupture and conflict occur between two people, this exercise is an excellent repair activity that will add safety to the Space-Between by replacing negativity with affirmations. Only steps 1, 2, 3, and 6 of the Structured Dialogue are covered in this exercise, making it a great on-ramp for those new to practicing dialogue.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Follow the prompts exactly as they are listed below.

The person initiating the conversation and sharing the appreciation will follow all the **orange bubble** prompts aligned to the left labeled **Sender.**

The person listening and mirroring will follow all the **blue bubble** prompts aligned to the right labeled **Receiver.**

1 - MAKE APPOINTMENT

Is now a good time to let you know what I appreciate about you?

Sender

Yes, it is.

Receiver

Connect Non-Verbally:
Make eye contact and take a breath before beginning the dialogue.

SCDWed.

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2 - SHARE & MIRROR

Shares Appreciation

I appreciate that you ___.

Sender

Receiver:
If you get overloaded at any point in the dialogue, raise your hand and say:
"Let me try to mirror you back so far."

Mirrors and Checks for Accuracy

If I got that, you appreciate that I ___.
Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.
- or -
The part you got was ___, and I also said ___.

Sender

Receiver:
Continue to mirror the sender until the sender confirms you *"got it."*

Shows Curiosity

Is there more?

Receiver

Shares Feelings/Impact

Yes, when you do that, it really makes me feel ___.

Sender

Mirrors and Checks for Accuracy

If I got that, when I do that, it makes you feel ___.
Did I get it?

Receiver

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Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.

- or -

The part you got was ___, and I also said ___.

Sender

Receiver:
Continue to mirror the sender until the sender confirms you *"got it."*

Shows Curiosity

Is there more?

Receiver

Connects Current Appreciation/Feelings to Past Experience

Yes, when I feel ___, it reminds me of ___ (an action, behavior, or event that did/did not occur in my past).

Sender

Mirrors and Checks for Accuracy

If I got that, when I do that, it reminds you of ___. Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.

- or -

The part you got was ___, and I also said ___.

Sender

Shows Curiosity

Is there more?

Receiver

Yes, the more is ___.

- or -

No, you got it.

Sender

Receiver:
Continue to mirror the sender until the sender confirms there is *"no more."*

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3 - SUMMARIZE

Summarizes

Let me see if I got it all. You appreciate that I ___, and it makes you feel ___. It also reminds you of ___.

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

Is that a good summary of your appreciation?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes. You got it all.
- or -
I also said ___.

Sender

4 - CLOSE

Thanks for sharing that.

Receiver

Thank you for listening.

Sender

Give each other a handshake or high five.

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Affirmation Dialogue Guide
Appendix B

Everyone is unique, which means we all have different preferences regarding what makes us feel affirmed. This *Dialogue Guide* will help you and a partner discover how you can best affirm each other.

The prompts listed in this guide will first direct the sender to share an appreciation (as an initial connecting activity) and then direct the sender to describe an affirmation that makes them feel seen and heard. Discussing affirmation experiences helps people learn more about what types of affirmations are the most meaningful to each other so they can better affirm each other in the future.

Use this *Dialogue Guide* as a connecting activity or whenever you want to understand another person's affirmation preferences better.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Follow the prompts exactly as they are listed below.

The person initiating the conversation and sharing the affirmation experience will follow all the **orange bubble** prompts aligned to the left labeled **Sender.**

The person listening, mirroring, summarizing, validating, and empathizing will follow all the **blue bubble** prompts aligned to the right labeled **Receiver.**

1 - MAKE APPOINTMENT

> *I would like to have a conversation about something that makes me feel seen and heard. Is now a good time?*

Sender

> *Yes, now is a good time.*

Receiver

Connect Non-Verbally:
Make eye contact and take a breath before beginning the dialogue.

SCDWed.

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2 - SHARE & MIRROR

Begin with an Appreciation

Sender

First, I would like to give you an appreciation.
I appreciate that ___.

Receiver:
If you get overloaded at any point in the dialogue, raise your hand and say:
"Let me try to mirror you back so far."

Mirrors and Checks for Accuracy

If I got that, you appreciate that I ___.
Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.

Sender

Thank you for sharing that.

Receiver

Thanks for receiving it.

Sender

Shares Affirmation Experience

Now, I'd like to talk about an affirmation I have received that makes me feel seen and heard as a person.

Sender

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Sender

I feel seen and heard as a person when I experience __.

Mirrors

Let me see if I've got it. You said you feel seen and heard as a person when you experience __.

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.

- or -

The part you got was __, and I also said __.

Sender

Receiver:
Continue to mirror the sender until the sender confirms you *"got it."*

Shows Curiosity

Is there more about that?

Receiver

Connects Affirmation/Feelings to Past Experience

When I experience __ (what makes me feel seen and heard), it reminds me of __ (an action, behavior, or event that did/did not occur in my past).

Sender

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Mirrors

If I got that, when you experience ___ (what makes you feel seen and heard), it reminds you of ___ (an action, behavior, or event that did/did not occur in your past).

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.

- or -

The part you got was ___, and I also said ___.

Sender

Shows Curiosity

Is there more about that?

Receiver

Yes, the more is ___.

- or -

No, you got it.

Sender

Receiver:
Continue to mirror the sender until the sender confirms there is *"no more."*

3 - SUMMARIZE

Summarizes

Let me see if I got all of that.
You feel seen and heard as a person when you experience ___, and it reminds you of ___.

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

Is that a good summary? Did I get it all?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it all.

- or -

The part you got was ___, and I also said ___.

Sender

4 - VALIDATE

Validates

That makes sense!
It makes sense that you feel seen and heard when you experience ___, which reminds you of ___.

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

Is that a good validation?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, that's a good validation.

Sender

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5 - EMPATHIZE

Empathizes

I can imagine that if you regularly experience ___ (what makes you feel seen and heard), you would feel ___ (happy, joyful, excited, etc).

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

Would that be your feeling? Are there other feelings?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes.
- or -
I'd also feel.

Sender

6 - CLOSE

Thank you for sharing that with me.

Receiver

Thank you for listening.

Sender

Give each other a handshake or high five.

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Frustration Dialogue Guide
Appendix C

Frustrations, concerns, challenges, and other difficulties are inevitable. This *Dialogue Guide* helps you create a safe space to discuss difficult topics in a way that's free of negativity and focused on productive solutions. The prompts listed below will first direct the sender to share an appreciation (as an initial connecting activity) and then direct the sender to describe the frustration or challenge they're experiencing, followed by their proposed solution, wish, or request.

Note: It's essential to practice Zero Negativity and share your frustration objectively. For more information, refer to our Zero Negativity (REFRAME) tips on page 16.

Instructions: Follow the prompts exactly as they are listed below.

The person initiating the conversation and sharing the frustration will follow all the **orange bubble** prompts aligned to the left labeled **Sender**.

The person listening, mirroring, summarizing, validating, and empathizing will follow all the **blue bubble** prompts aligned to the right labeled **Receiver.**

1 - MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

Sender

> *Is now a good time to talk about a frustration/challenge I am experiencing?*

Receiver

> *Yes, it is.*

Connect Non-Verbally:
Make eye contact and take a breath before beginning the dialogue.

SCDWed.

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2 - SHARE & MIRROR

Begin with Appreciation

First, I'd like to share an appreciation with you.

I appreciate that you ___.

Sender

Receiver:

If you get overloaded at any point in the dialogue, raise your hand and say:
"Let me try to mirror you back so far."

Mirrors and Checks for Accuracy

If I got that, you appreciate that I ___.

Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.

- or -

The part you got was ___, and I also said ___.

Sender

Receiver:

Continue to mirror the sender until the sender confirms you *"got it."*

Thank you for sharing your appreciation.

Receiver

Thanks for receiving it.

Sender

Shares Frustration

Now, I'd like to discuss a frustration/challenge I'm experiencing. That frustration/challenge is ___.

Sender

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Mirrors and Checks for Accuracy

If I got that, the frustration/challenge you're experiencing is ___. Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.

- or -

The part you got was ___, and I also said ___.

Sender

Receiver:

Continue to mirror the sender until the sender confirms you *"got it."*

Is there more about that frustration/challenge?

Receiver

Shares Feelings/Impact

Yes, the more is when I experience this frustration/challenge, I feel ___.

Sender

Mirrors and Checks for Accuracy

If I got it, when you experience this frustration/challenge, you feel ___. Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.

- or -

The part you got was ___, and I also said ___.

Sender

Shows Curiosity

Is there more?

Receiver

C3

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Connects Current Frustration to Past Experience

Yes, when I feel ___, it reminds me of ___ (past experience).

Sender

Mirrors and Checks for Accuracy

If I got it, it reminds you of ___.
Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.
- or -
The part you got was ___, and I also said ___.

Sender

Shows Curiosity

Is there more?

Receiver

Shares Wish/Request/Solution

I'd like to share my wish/request/solution,
which is ___.

Sender

Mirrors and Checks for Accuracy

If I got it, your wish/request/solution is ___.
Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.
- or -
The part you got was ___, and I also said ___.

Sender

Shows Curiosity

Is there more?

Receiver:
Continue to mirror the sender until the sender confirms there is
"no more."

Receiver

C4

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3 - SUMMARIZE

Summarizes

Let me see if I got it all.
The frustration/challenge you are experiencing is ___.
It makes you feel ___, and it reminds you of ___ (past experience).
You shared a wish/request/solution, which is ___.

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

Is that a good summary? Did I get it all?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.
- or -
The part you got was ___, and I also said ___.

Sender

Receiver:
Continue to mirror the sender if a part was missed.

4 - VALIDATE

Validates

Well, that makes sense! It makes sense that the frustration/challenge you're experiencing makes you feel ___ because it reminds you of ___.

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

I want to validate you. Is that a good validation?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, that's a good validation.

Sender

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5 - EMPATHIZE

Empathizes

*If you/we address this frustration/challenge by doing __,
I imagine you would feel __ (relieved, happy, less anxious, etc).*

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

*Am I getting it?
Is there more about how you'd feel?*

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

*Yes.
- or -
Yes, I'd also feel.*

Sender

Receiver:
Continue to mirror the sender if additional feelings are shared.

6 - CLOSE

*Thank you for sharing the frustration/challenge
and your wish/request/solution with me.*

Receiver

Thank you for listening.

Sender

If appropriate, discuss the next steps. See the next page for instructions.

If there are no next steps to discuss, conclude the dialogue with a
handshake, high five, or other connecting activity.

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OPTIONAL- DISCUSS NEXT STEPS

Would now be a good time to discuss our next steps?

Sender

Yes, now is a good time.

Receiver

Receiver:
If now is NOT a good time, make an appointment with the sender to discuss next steps later.

Sender and Receiver:
As you discuss the next steps, mirror each other using the mirroring sentence stems (*If I got that, you said ___. Did I get it? Is there more?*).

After you've finished discussing the next steps, give each other a handshake, high five, or other connecting activity to conclude the dialogue.

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Unmet Need/Past Challenge Dialogue Guide
Appendix D

This *Dialogue Guide* uses all six steps of the Structured Dialogue to help two people elevate their practice of the Awareness Tool by learning how they can meet each other's needs.

The prompts listed below will first direct the sender to share an appreciation (as an initial connecting activity). Next, the sender will share a current need, connect that need to a past challenge, and share their coping behaviors. Then, the sender will explain how their need can be met.

This exercise helps reduce frustrations, eliminate misunderstandings, and elevate empathy anytime unmet needs, past challenges, or different coping strategies trigger conflict.

This dialogue can also deepen connections and reduce the likelihood of future conflict related to unmet needs and past triggers.

Instructions: Follow the prompts exactly as they are listed below.

The person initiating the conversation and sharing their need and past challenge will follow the **orange bubble** prompts aligned to the left labeled **Sender.**

The person listening, mirroring, summarizing, validating, and empathizing will follow all the **blue bubble** prompts aligned to the right labeled **Receiver.**

1 - MAKE APPOINTMENT

Sender

I would like to have a conversation about a need I have (at home, at work, or in my community). *Are you available now?*

Receiver

Yes, I'm available now.

Connect Non-Verbally:
Make eye contact and take a breath before beginning the dialogue.

SCDWed.

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2 - SHARE & MIRROR

Sender:

Before I start, I would like to share an appreciation. I appreciate that you _____ (something special or important about the receiver).

Receiver:
If you become overloaded at any point in the dialogue, raise your hand and say: *"Let me try to mirror you back so far."*

Mirrors

Let me see if I got it. You appreciate that I _____.

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes, you got it.

Sender

Thanks for sharing that.

Receiver

Thanks for receiving it.

Sender

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Shares Relationship Need

Now, I'd like to tell you about a need I have (at home, at work, or in my community).
This need is ___.

Sender

Mirrors the Need

Let me see if I've got it.
You shared that your need (at home, at work, or in your community) *is ___.*

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes.
- or -
Yes, I'd also feel.

Sender

Shows Curiosity

Is there more you'd like to say about this need?

Receiver

Receiver:
Continue mirroring, checking for accuracy, and asking, *"Is there more?"* until the sender is ready to move on.

Connect Current Need to Past Experience

This need reminds me of a challenge I had in my past (recent or distant), which is ___.

Sender

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Mirrors

Let me see if I've got it. The need you have reminds you of a past challenge, which is _____.

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes.
- or -
Yes, I'd also feel.

Sender

Shows Curiosity

Is there more about that?

Receiver

Receiver:
Continue mirroring, checking for accuracy, and asking, *"Is there more?"* until the sender is ready to move on.

Shares Coping Strategy

When I remember this, it makes me feel _____, and I respond as a (Maximizer or Minimizer) *by doing _____.*

Sender

Mirrors

Let me see if I've got that. When you remember this past challenge, you feel _____ and respond as a (Maximizer or Minimizer) *by doing _____.*

Receiver

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Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes.
- or -
Yes, I'd also feel.

Sender

Shows Curiosity

Is there more about that?

Receiver

Receiver:
Continue mirroring, checking for accuracy, and asking, *"Is there more?"* until the sender is ready to move on.

Shares How Need Could be Met

One way I'd like my need to be met is ___.
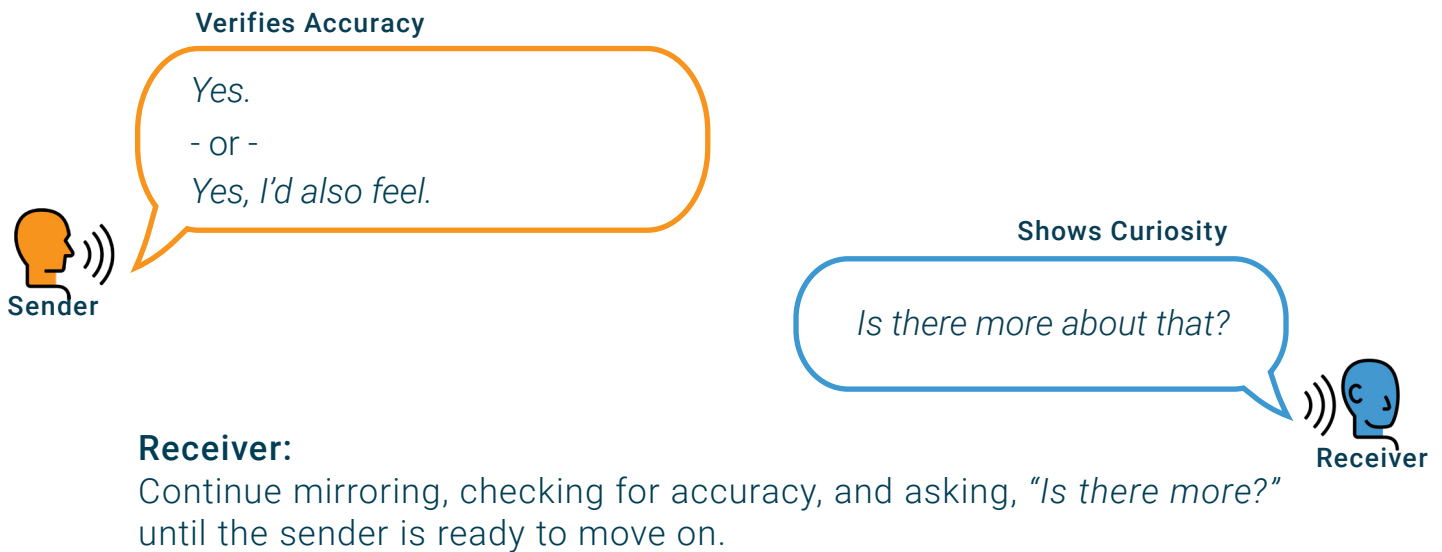*This would allow me to do/think/act ___.*

Sender

Mirrors

Let me see if I got that. One way you'd like your need to be met is ___. This would allow you to do/think/act ___.
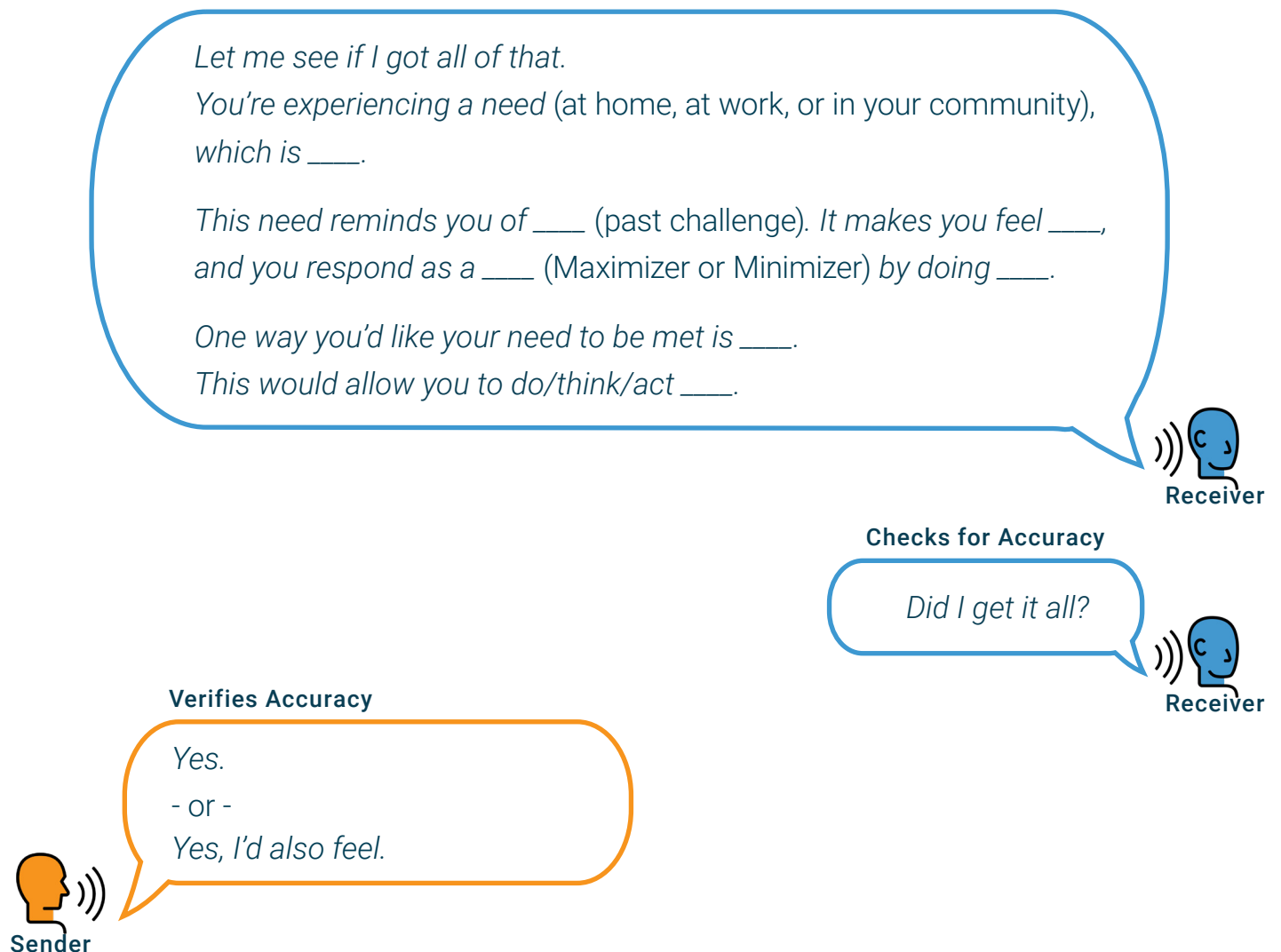
Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes.
- or -
Yes, I'd also feel.

Sender

Shows Curiosity

Is there more about that?

Receiver

Receiver:
Continue mirroring, checking for accuracy, and asking, *"Is there more?"* until the sender is ready to move on.

3 - SUMMARIZE

Let me see if I got all of that.
You're experiencing a need (at home, at work, or in your community), *which is ____.*

This need reminds you of ____ (past challenge). *It makes you feel ____, and you respond as a ____* (Maximizer or Minimizer) *by doing ____.*

One way you'd like your need to be met is ____.
This would allow you to do/think/act ____.

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

Did I get it all?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes.
- or -
Yes, I'd also feel.

Sender

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4 - VALIDATE

You make sense!
What makes sense is that your need, which is ___, reminds you of ___. It makes sense that this memory causes you to (Maximize or Minimize) *by doing ___.*

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

Is that a good validation?

Receiver

5 - EMPATHIZE

Expresses Empathy

I can imagine that if your need, which is _____, was met by _____ (new actions or behaviors), *you would feel _____* (glad, happy, fulfilled, joyful, etc).

Receiver

Checks for Accuracy

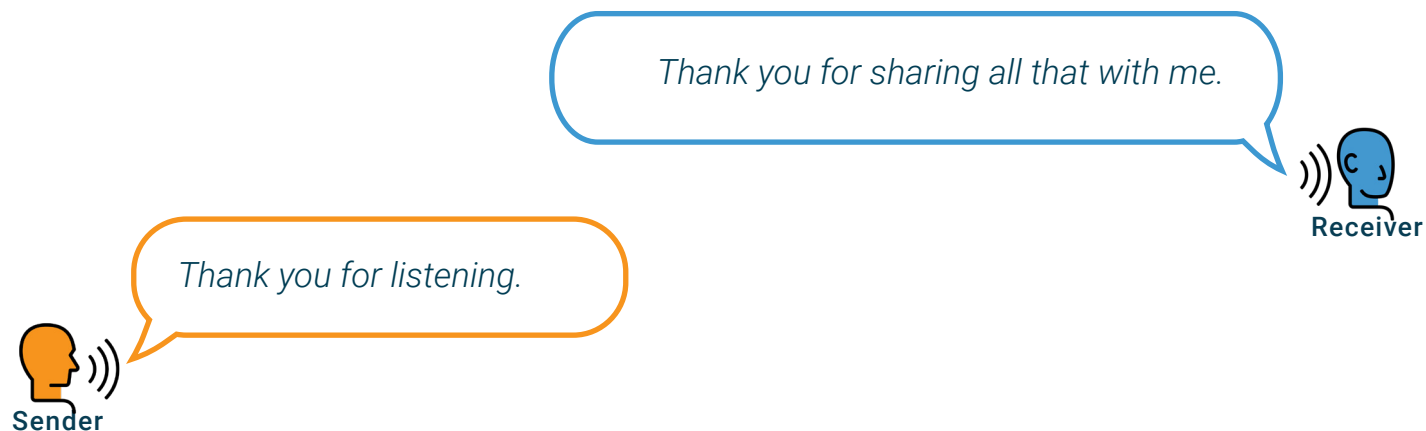*Is that your feeling?*
Are there other feelings?

Receiver

Verifies Accuracy

Yes.
- or -
Yes, I'd also feel.

Sender

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6 - CLOSE

Thank you for sharing all that with me.

Receiver

Thank you for listening.

Sender

Give each other a handshake or high five.

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Group Dialogue Guide
Appendix E

The *Safe Conversations Group Dialogue* promotes cohesiveness among a group of people. By providing a structured process for analyzing situations and systematically brainstorming solutions, it ensures that all perspectives are heard, understood, and recorded.

The *Group Dialogue* is highly versatile and can be applied in numerous scenarios. For instance, it can help repair ruptured connections by creating a Zero Negative environment where groups can address frustrations or concerns in a productive, solution-focused manner. Another effective use of this dialogue is to establish a psychologically safe setting for groups to brainstorm and share ideas, which can enhance creativity and lead to innovative solutions.

Follow the steps listed below when practicing a *Group Dialogue*.

1 - AGREE TO COMMITMENTS

The person who initiated the dialogue (facilitator) will ask the group members to commit to the following:

- Practice Zero Negativity (Avoid personal attacks, put-downs, shame, blame, and criticism. Describe frustrations and concerns objectively).
- Give every member the opportunity to contribute, and regard every viewpoint as valid.
- Encourage expressions of diversity, and discourage debate.
- Avoid statements that imply absolute and objective "truths."

2 - DISCUSS ROLES, PURPOSE, AND GUIDELINES

a. Determine Roles

Facilitator: This person initiates and guides the *Group Dialogue.* Depending on the situation, the facilitator may bear some responsibility for the action steps resulting from the dialogue.

Summarizer: This role could be fulfilled by the facilitator or one of the group members. Their job is to take notes during the dialogue and then give the group a summary of everything the members shared.

Group Members: Everyone present for the dialogue assumes this role. Each member will have the opportunity to share, be mirrored, and validated, as well as

mirror and validate another member.

Scribe (Optional): This role may or may not be necessary, depending on the situation and depth of discussion. The scribe takes detailed notes during the dialogue to document what is shared. Designating a scribe is critical for dialogues involving high-stakes topics where accuracy and attention to detail are essential. Scribes are also helpful if the meeting is one of many, requires documentation and/or minutes, or involves detailed, complicated information and next steps.

b. Identify the purpose, topic, and desired outcome of the dialogue. Depending on the situation, the facilitator may establish these in advance or have them discussed collaboratively by all group members at the start of the dialogue.

- Examples: Brainstorm ideas/solutions, share concerns and feedback, check in and connect, determine action steps and responsibilities for a project, etc.

c. **Everyone:** Confirm that the right members are present to achieve a positive outcome.

d. **Everyone:** Decide how you want to mirror one another:

- Option A: Sequential (Mirror the person next to you).
- Option B: Popcorn (Randomly volunteer to mirror each other).

e. **Facilitator:** State the process and mirroring standards.

- Everyone will have the opportunity to both mirror and share.
- Direct mirroring to the center of the group, rather than to specific members.
  - *"If I got what (sender name) shared, she/he/they said___."*
  - *"Did I get it? Did anyone else get something I missed?"*
- Follow the dialogue process and sentence stems. Save questions and side conversations for after the dialogue. If the *Group Dialogue* goes off track, all members are responsible for encouraging others to get it back on track.
- Share in short, clear sentences to make it easier for others to mirror you.

3 - SHARE, MIRROR, & VALIDATE

a. The first sender will volunteer to share first.

"I'll start the process and share.
(Share your response to the topic)."

First Sender

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b. The first receiver will mirror the first sender.

Mirrors and Checks for Accuracy

"If I got what (sender name) *shared, she/he/they said ___."*

Did I get it? Did anyone else get something I missed?

First Receiver

c. If the first receiver missed any details, the other members will mirror any additional details they captured and then check for accuracy.

Mirrors Additional Details and Checks Accuracy

"I also heard ___." Did I get that as well?

Other Receivers

d. If time permits, the first receiver may invite the first sender to share more.

"Is there more on this topic you'd like to share?"

First Sender

e. If the sender shares more, the first receiver will mirror, check for accuracy, and ask the other group members to mirror any details they missed.

f. Continue the above process until the sender says there is *"no more."*

g. The first receiver will validate the first sender and then thank them for sharing.

What you shared makes sense.
Thank you for sharing.

First Receiver

Thank you for listening.

First Sender

h. Repeat the above process with all other members. Continue until all members have had the chance to share and be mirrored and validated.

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4 - SUMMARIZE

a. The summarizer will share a summary of everything that all members shared.

"If I got it all, a summary of what the group shared is ___."
"Did I get it all?"

Summarizer

b. Other group members may add missed items if necessary.

5 - DETERMINE NEXT STEPS

a. The facilitator will invite members to share their suggested next steps.

What are some next steps we should take?

Facilitator

b. The facilitator will mirror each member as they share.

c. If a scribe is present, they will record the next steps and any pertinent information.

d. If relevant, the facilitator will share action items and details for the next meeting. Example: *We will present your ideas to management and schedule a follow-up meeting in two weeks to discuss tasks.*

6 - CLOSE

a. The facilitator will thank everyone for their participation in the dialogue.

Thank you all for sharing and listening!

Facilitator

b. All group members will share a high five, group cheer, or other connecting behavior to end the dialogue.

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