



Difficult Conversations: We've all had them

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Outline



- Difficult conversations
 - What they are/what do they look like?
Different sorts of difficult conversation
Celebrity/sport
 - Example of senior manager and bad behaviour
 - Rail /airline industry example
 - Use of ACE FIRST model for coaching difficult conversations
 - Using the 7C's model for “disputed” or multiparty difficult conversations
Building difficult conversation competence
 - Your action plan

We've all had them



- Whether sensitive “confessional” conversations
 - Difficult even for insensitive oafs!
- Difficult and sensitive confrontations
 - Especially when we need to act
- Tough workplace conversations
 - From redundancy to you've been too long in the loo!
- Strategically tough news and communication.
- Difficult performance feedback



Difficult Conversation 1: Defiant Leader



- Key employee
 - To 10% performers
 - Best costs and revenue performance in division
 - Best prospect for DOA role
- Team of 45
 - Major technical role in purchasing
 - Responsible for PM over 5 line managers
 - BUT
- Very poor 360 reports
 - Domineering
 - Impatient
 - Unwilling to listen
 - Blame shifting
 - Credit hogging
 - Self over/under-rating
- Poor peer reports
 - Verbal “nightmare”, “bully” “untrustworthy”, “inhuman”
- Poor personal conduct
 - Complaints re “throwaway offensive remarks on foreign assignment”
 - Poor attitude to staff
 - Divisive favourites etc.



The Problem



- HRD gave detailed report and asked BU BP to “Have a chat”
 - Concerns re
 - Seniority and sensitivity
 - Need for mgt team involvement.
 - Genuine concerns about confronting individual
 - Guided by me as coach
- Coaching Approach
 - GROW/basic coaching skills
 - To elicit his
 - Goal
 - Reality
 - Options
 - Way forward
 - Fraught conversation
 - Defensive
 - /aggressive
 - Self justifying

Context: Identified and tackled



Conversation structure

- performance review discussion
- ACE model
- Eliciting response
- Listening
- Evidence where appropriate
- Challenging appropriately



Leadership Coaching

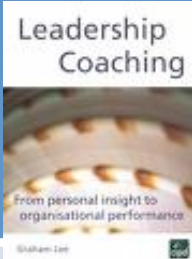


Consequences



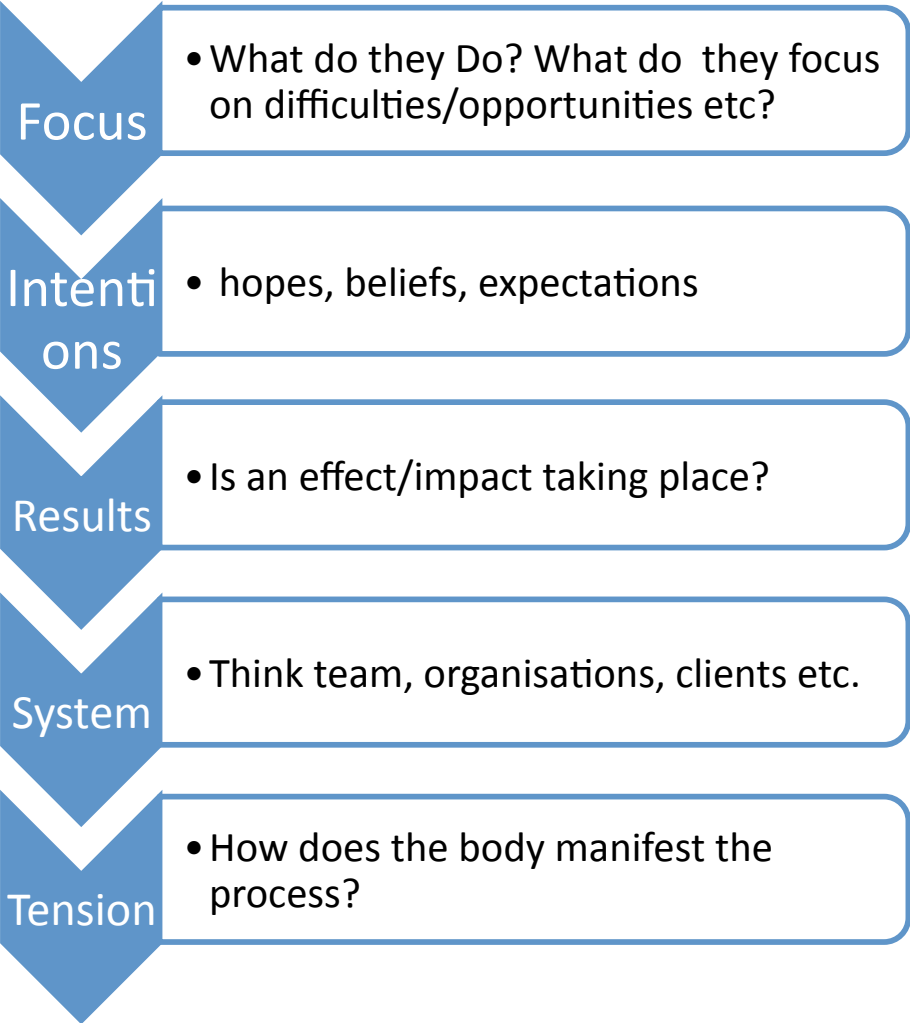
ACE Model



<p>Actions What do you do in meetings /in field with people?</p> 	<p>Description of actions “tell people what they need to know and what’s what”</p>	<p>Helps define how they operate in a way they can self describe. This leads to awareness and insight that other people may see differently</p>
<p>Cognitions What are you thinking? how are you thinking?</p>	<p>We only meet once a month I have to “lay down the law/ “put peoples feet to the fire”. They need to get this. I am protecting them</p>	<p>Gets deeper into the reason for behaviour and listening intently and re-capping we can get down to real motivations</p>
<p>Emotions What are you feeling?</p>	<p>In control but nervous about my team not performing</p>	<p>Anxiety surfacing below bravado etc. may merit further discussion</p>

Blending FIRST/FACTS

Feedback
Accountability
Challenge
Tension
System (Blakey
and Day 2010)



Issues



- Individual not treated well by system
- Difficult conversations get passed on
- Confronted without real context
- Little understanding of his context
- HR's problem to sort



Real Difficult conversations

2: Flight Deck Drug and Alcohol



- Drug and alcohol problems are everywhere
- Airline industry issues became apparent
- UK government response to probs
- Less than 1/7th of 1% lose licence.
- More but how do we detect?

Difficult conversations



- BALPA 2003 Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Negotiations with BA and others
- Against random testing
- Peer Interventions(US Navy)
- SWIFT
- “Tough love conversations” to confront with care”
- Stepped process
 - UK : use existing Pilot Advisory group (counselling network)
 - US family intervention

Difficult conversations about drinking: Context (Caught)



- Colleagues encouraged to monitor “bottle to throttle”
- Any signs of drinking and drug taking off duty which could seep into work reported
 - Testing for cause
 - Accident /incident
 - First 6 months



Personal

- Behaviour
- burdens
- History



Problems

- Warning signs
- Monitoring



Performance

- Review of performance
- Critical incidents
- Challenge

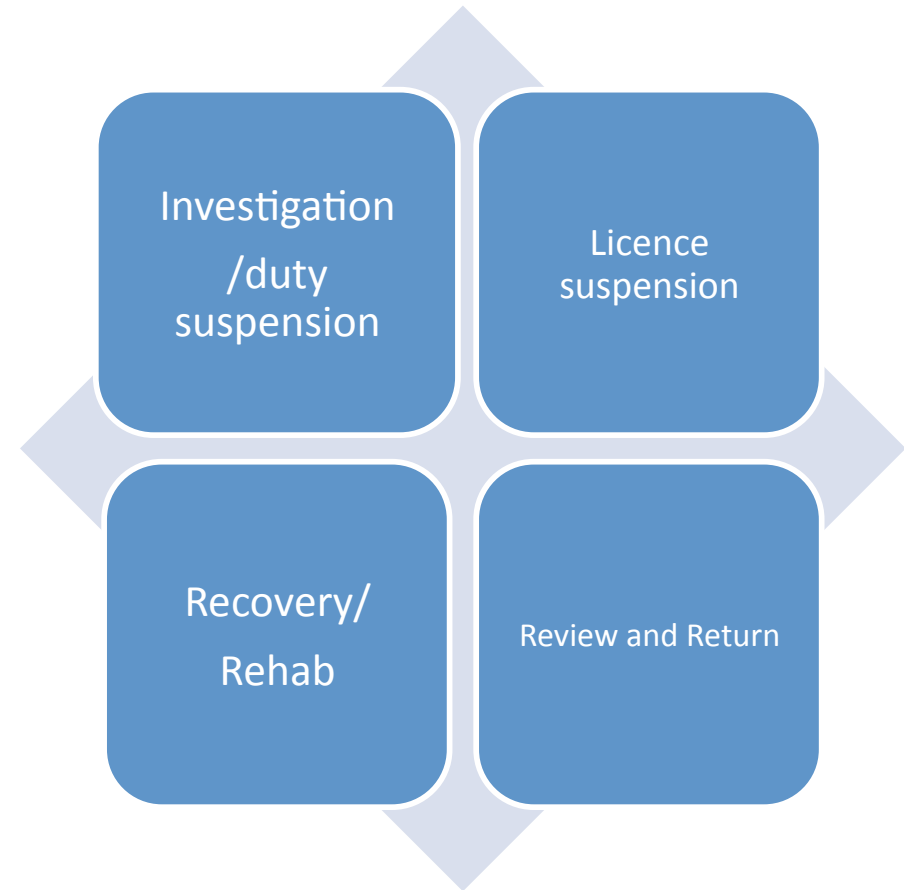
Context: Denial or undetected



Conversation structure



Consequences



Group Exercise



- Have a difficult conversation from script. Try to **be** the person and how they would feel and act. Pick role of:
 - **Instigator (use models if you wish)**
 - **Subject**
 - **Observer**
- Observer will note the conversation how it took place what people did how they acted and reacted and record how it went.
- 15 mins 5 mins feedback



Difficult conversations



- Awkwardness
- Uncomfortable/shifting position
- Not getting words out
- Too blunt
- Not blunt enough
- Too rushed
- Too subtle



Submarine



Subtle

All under the surface but then...

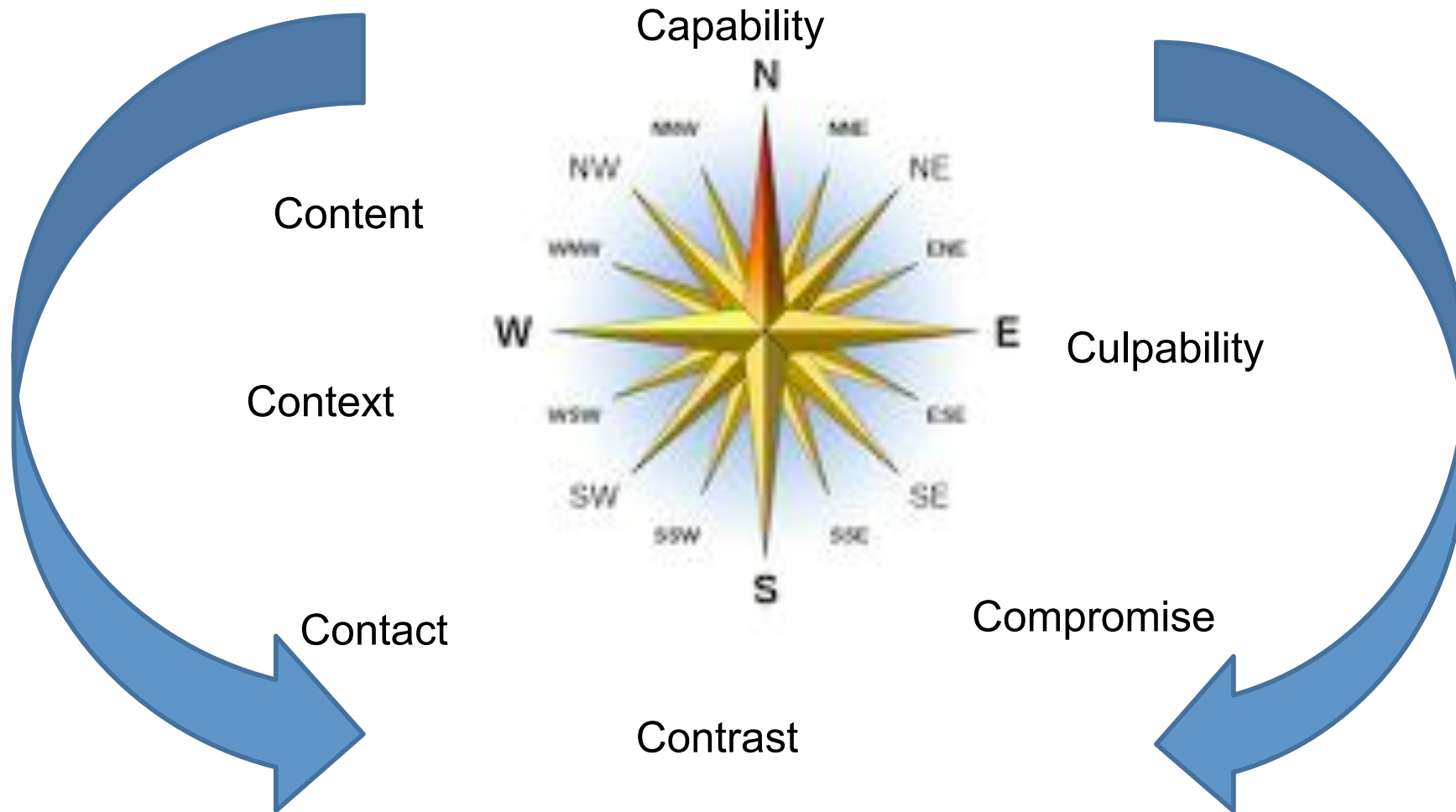
Multiparty difficult conversations



- Sometimes in teams/projects he/said/she said
 - No but yeah whatever!
- Can be between two or more people
 - Disputed accounts
 - Anger
 - Lining up sides (Bridge v Terry)
 - Loggerheads
 - Emotional
 - Cycle of blame and recrimination



Keddy Seven C's model



Content	What's' really being said when content is disputed	Read between words probe and watch for cues
Context	Coach/mediator can sometimes put things in context	Reframe and help individuals see different points of view
Contact	All disputes leave traces try to find these in conversation and through system.	Words nuance, intonation , body language are all important look out for them
Contrast	Contrast the perspective on dispute helps to see where people are coming from	Get views of people
Compromise	Compromise without requiring surrender	
Culpability	Accept responsibility and being culpable	Recognise role of systems
Capability		



Conclusion



Difficult conversations

- We need to have them regularly
- Conduct them systematically and in a structured way
- Supportive challenge
- Probe and question
- ACE your understanding
- FIRST helps to manage the situation.
- Seven C's

Do's and Don'ts

- FACTS to keep on track
 - Watch the signals
 - don't be submarine subtle
 - don't fire and forget
 - Remember people are different and operate differently
 - Be an optimistic realist
 - Draw up a learning Action plan for DC's



My smile and my
swing are my brand



Guess when I asked Elin to swing for me she got the wrong idea