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Roslyn Goldner: Good afternoon, and thanks for joining us for part 2 of our Conflict Engagement session, a presentation in our 'It Starts with Us' series put on in collaboration with the UBC Equity & Inclusion Office and UBC Conflict Theatre.

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Last week's session was very exciting and really well-received by all of the participants, many of whom wrote in to tell us how much they enjoyed the interactive components of the presentation.

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And we hope that the play and the interventions by our courageous Faculty [of Medicine] volunteers were thought provoking and sparked continued dialogue about the various issues raised.

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As Tom mentioned last week, the play is really a catalyst; it doesn't provide answers – it provides the basis for ongoing conversation. So, I hope that happened.

1:02

For those who are here today who missed last week's session, it has been recorded and the link has been provided to you along with the email that was sent out about this session.

1:22

If you don't have that link, don't worry, I invite you to visit our website at [redi.med.ubc.ca](http://redi.med.ubc.ca) for more information on 'It Starts with Us' and for access to our recorded sessions.

1:35

Today's session will also be recorded, and during the session we will ask you to participate using Slido. You might want to open Slido now, in another browser or on a different device.

1:48

The connection to Slido will be [Slido.com](https://www.slido.com), and the event is #CONFP2. And that's case-sensitive, so it's all upper-case. #CONFP2.

2:07

We've also scheduled a Q&A session at the end of this presentation, and you can submit questions throughout the session and they will be read out to the panel in the last 10 or 15 minutes at the end of the session.

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Once again, at the end, we will be asking participants today to fill out our survey. This information is very helpful to us in designing future sessions of the 'It Starts with Us' series.

2:34

Before we get started with today's session, I invite Dr Paul Winwood, the Regional Associate Dean of the Northern Medical Program to make a land acknowledgement. Dr Winwood?

2:47

Dr Paul Winwood: Thank you Roslyn.

2:48

I'd like to start by recognizing that the land acknowledgement is all the more important than the light of the tragic discovery at the site of the former Kamloops residential school that we heard about last week and the legacy of that residential school system in terms of ongoing intergenerational trauma.

3:07

So, I'm an uninvited white settler from the UK, and I'd like to acknowledge that I speak today from my home office, which, along with my UNBC office where I work, is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Lheidli T'enneh, who are part of the Dakelh First Nation.

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I'd also like to acknowledge that you're joining us from traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories around the province and acknowledge the traditional owners and caretakers of those lands, specifically the Vancouver point Grey campus is located on

3:43

the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory the Musqueam, and many of our UBC operations are spread across the territories of the Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples. The Okanagan academic campus is located on the traditional, ancestral

4:01

and unceded territories of the Syilx people, and the University of Victoria is on the traditional territory Songhees, Equimalt, and Saanich peoples, and I invite you to make your own land acknowledgement. Thank you.

4:18

Roslyn: Thank you very much Dr Winwood.

4:20

I'm now pleased introduce our very talented collaborators, Ashley Moore from the Equity & Inclusion Office. Tom Scholte and Roquela Fernandez from Conflict Theatre. And I am going to disappear so that I can enjoy this presentation.

4:39

Thank you.

4:43

Ashley Moore: Thanks Roslyn and thanks Paul for the land acknowledgement. I think maybe we could do a quick intro of the three of us before we launch into it? I'm Ashley Moore, I use she/her pronouns and, I work in the Conflict Engagement portfolio within the Equity & Inclusion Officer. Or sorry the- Yeah. Equity & Inclusion Office. Where am I?

5:08

You may know me from last week - I was the junior admin, and I'm excited to pass this over to my colleagues Tom and Roquela for a quick intro?

5:20

Roquela Fernandez: Hello, my name is Roquela Fernandez, I am the Program Manager of Conflict Theatre here at UBC and I'm joining you from my home, which is on the unceded stolen territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil- Waututh, Stó:lō, Qayqayt, and Stz'uminus Nations, over to you, Tom.

4:44

Tom Scholte: Thanks Roquela. My name is Tom Scholte. I'm a professor in the Department of Theatre and Film on the UBC Vancouver campus on the traditional, unceded ancestral territory of the Musqueam peoples coming to you from my home on those same territories.

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And, in addition to being professor in the Department Theatre and Film on the faculty lead and artistic director of Conflict Theater at UBC, which is a program that uses methods devised and adapted from a Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed to explore workplace conflict across our campus. Back to Ashley.

6:21

Thanks Tom. Let me see here, get this slide deck moving forward. So, this is an overview of what is going to be a jam-packed session. We're really hoping today to take some of the learning from last week, and you don't have to have been there, but hopefully the embodied we learning

6:45

we had from last week where we realized that conflict is both uncomfortable and an opportunity. And to pitch that today, we're going to start with just the definition of what conflict is and what conflict isn't. I think the recent - just in terms of the land acknowledgement - the recent discovery of the 215 bodies and the Kamloops residential school will be sitting heavy with me right now and I wanted to acknowledge that.

7:19

And we're going to talk about how conflict is an opportunity, and also distinguish it from acts of real harm and violence, so that'll come up in a moment. But I just wanted to acknowledge I'm also sitting on the stolen the territories of the Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and Musqueam people.

7:38

We're going to talk about conflict as an opportunity to engage in change and actually as a tool for making the world more equitable.

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We'll start with an assessment of what happens when conflict brews, when it arises, when it's left unchallenged, as it escalates, what are the dangers and what are the opportunities of conflict? Well then go through some decision-making factors for you yourself when you're in a moment of conflict when you find yourself with the opportunity to engage. How might you decide what to do, where to turn for help?

8:21

Tom's going to walk us through the systems thinking iceberg which is really a prep for the tools that we're going to use. Two of them O'DEAR, which is very simple model for raising your concerns in a way that makes you feel like you're putting your best foot forward.

8:36

You're saying what needs to be said in a fairly concise way and giving the other person a real opportunity to engage with you. And then we'll move from the O'DEAR, tool into another tool that we call The Argument, which is a way of having a conversation, about something that you disagree with or maybe there are multiple viewpoints, in a way that can really separate the content of what's being discussed with you know the person with whom you're having the disagreement.

9:07

So, there's going to be some ad-libbing in there we're looking forward to going through that with you. So, I think we'll start with the definitions of conflict, where does it mean that we, what does it mean to engage with conflict, how is that different from abuse, and then what does that mean within the UBC context? I'll pass this part over to Roquela.

9:37

Roquela: So, you may not be surprised, or you might be surprised, to know that there are many definitions of conflict. This one we find most useful for our purposes, and you may see why later.

9:51

But we really think of it as there are two components. The first is there's a disagreement. So, real or perceived, that there is an incompatibility between opinions, objectives, interest, or desires. So, that can be something simple like I would like spaghetti and my partner would like salad for dinner and so that might be an example of a disagreement.

10:17

But we find in our definition that there is something additional needed to make a disagreement into a conflict, and on the next slide, you will see that extra component is an emotional activation so it isn't just simply that you disagree.

10:42

You disagree and you're emotionally hooked by that disagreement, it touches somewhere within you that matters. So, very succinctly put, for us at UBC, conflict is *difference that matters*.

10:58

And I would like to distinguish that from abuse. So, when you get into a situation where there is a large imbalance of power, it becomes, it moves outside of the realm of conflict and into abuse, which we posit that conflict is not. Would you like to add anything to that Ashley?

11:27

Ashley: Only that it's taking me a second to unmute myself. There were definitely opportunities, moments in my life where the disagreement between salad and pizza would have been a conflict. So, I feel like there is the element of caring, but also I think the disagreement can build into conflict over time when it becomes part of a pattern and we'll talk about that a little bit more with O'DEAR. But that was great, thanks for Roquela.

12:00

So, yeah, this slide here talks about how universities are prone to conflict. We believe that that happens because it's treated fairly unique factors that don't show up in organizations like governments or not-for-profits who have different kinds of conflict, different factors. But the unique conflict factors that help universities along are threefold.

12:23

The first one is the scholarly process itself. Peer review, the idea that if we hold ideas in tension that's where ideas grow, that's where techniques grow, that's where human thought grows. So within particularly the scholarly departments it's encouraged that people disagree and that you use that disagreements to grow a particular field. And of course, when you have folks who have dedicated their entire lives to studying a certain topic, of course they care about it.

12:59

So that disagreement has lots of opportunity to turn into conflict, because there's those elements of holding different ideas different perspectives and really caring deeply about the material.

13:10

The second piece that really promotes conflict or I should say, it could almost be a damper to conflict in many opportunities, is this strange power dynamic within the university: it is both a very collaborative space, we have lots of task forces, we have committees, we have people who are saying, you know, the best idea wins.

13:34

It's not hierarchical and, in some senses that's true - we have lots of opportunities to engage with people who have very different ideas and backgrounds and statuses from us in a collaborative way. And at the same time, there are tons of hierarchies within the system. There are socio economic hierarchies, there are hierarchies amongst different groups, in terms of their status.

14:00

You know, if you look at faculty, there's associate, there's adjuncts, there's a tenure track, there's full professors. There's that hierarchy between students, staff and faculty.

14:08

We all know where we sit in that hierarchy. And of course, within any workplace you saw these hierarchies between unionized staff, different unions, and union members.

14:19

So, we have these multiple, these two systems: one's very collaborative, one very hierarchical and we end up in these conversations where we're not entirely sure which one's that play. Or, I should say if you are on the bottom rung on one of these hierarchies, you're thinking that one of those hierarchies is at play in the conversation that somebody else who's sitting at the top of the hierarchy might feel is really collaborative. So, there's lots of confusion or possibility for confusion there.

14:48

And then the third thing is that this is a global institution, and so the any of the hierarchies or the power imbalances or the conflicts that are happening at the global scale - the university just as a fractal of that so they come onto our campus, and those social hierarchies and social complexes play a part within our daily interactions, because we're a global institution.

15:16

So, we see this as both, uh, dangers. So, certainly all of these things can increase the possibility of conflict on campus, which can be a really bad thing for some folks in it sometimes. And it's also a real opportunity so we get to engage with conflict differently and use it as a leverage for change both interpersonal and personal, but also at the social level which can be quite exciting.

15:49

Look my notes here. Another way to frame this would be along the lines of the Strategic Plan for UBC which is really taking the values of inclusion collaboration, innovation, and we're saying if we really truly want excellence in those three areas we are going to have to be engaging with conflict in a way that harnesses its potential.

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Roquela: So, here we have a metaphor that we use a lot in our work, and that is the metaphor of the iceberg. So, if you think of it as a group, when you have situations where you are working within groups, you will have kind of like the whole iceberg, and what's above that water line is visible and knowable by everybody within the group.

16:47

And so that can be the top layer of events so for example if you go to a meeting and everybody's read the agenda for the meeting, and they know what's going to happen and they know what's on there, then that would be sitting above the waterline.

17:04

But if you have a situation where you go into a meeting and maybe a group of people have discussed something that they want to add to the agenda, or they have something that they want to lobby for, that might not be within that top events layer; only a select number of people going into that meeting would know about that particular thing, so it would sit below the waterline in terms of that whole metaphor.

17:34

So, we can see this sometimes, when you're in the meetings, themselves, you will see, like, an escalation of resistance. So, we have a tool in terms of understanding how a conflict can escalate.

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So, on the far left you have smaller acts of resistance and then to the right you'll see as we go along, an escalation of that resistance. So, one thing would be not saying what needs to be said. So, maybe you've gone into that meeting, and there has been that previous discussion and there's an issue that's arisen. But it doesn't get laid on the table, it doesn't get said, for whatever reason, and there can be a myriad of reasons why not to say something.

18:23

It could be as simple as you want to preserve the relationship or preserve another person's feelings because what you may say, may have an impact on them.

18:37

Ashley: The next sign that there is probably some resistance within this group work, or I can speak for myself, would be the start of there being some sarcastic jokes being said. So I know for myself, especially, humor is a great way of bringing people together but I also do sometimes just can't help myself when I'm when I'm feeling a little bit of resistance to what's being said, it'll come out in an eye roll, it'll come out in a joke.

19:03

Like, you know, someone might say, you know, "Welcome. So nice to see you," and, at least in my mind I might think, "Is it?" Right? So, that resistance ekes out in sarcastic jokes, often because it can be safe to make a joke, and then retracted it because it's just a joke. But also what it does is it invites other people who might also be feeling that resistance to come and talk to you later and check in. So that sarcastic joke is almost an invitation for this next step in the escalation cycle.

19:44

Roquela: So, the next step in the escalation cycle is gossip. So, I know that gossip can get a bit of a bad reputation, but it does serve a function and so an example of that would be that hidden agenda. You have people with whom you're close and you're going into a meeting, and maybe you share something a little bit gossipy, and you're in a way trying to recruit people into a narrative and share that in a way that perhaps could not be shared within the wider group. And then along the line.

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Ashley: It also gets a really bad rap but I think there was some study right, Roquela, that came out, and that was talking about how maybe human language started from gossip. So that idea that you find alliances and you build power social power with folks who are like minded.

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And I know certainly, we don't see gossip as necessarily a negative, it can have positive or negative impacts. But it's certainly a way of validating thoughts that are not yet ready to surface to the group, and we see that as really positive.

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In an ideal world, let's say Roquela and I are experiencing some resistance to an idea that's being shared in the meeting and then we talk about it afterwards and we validate each of our own perspectives and say you know what, "I feel for you. Let's bring our concerns to leadership," and that's when we'd say that gossip is being turned to lobbying. We're moving our resistance above the waterline to leadership, to majority, and we're allowing them the opportunity to work with us to bring that into the main plan and to use that wisdom in a way that's really productive.

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And if sometimes that's not possible, based on you know the history of what's happened in the past that wasn't well received, or it doesn't feel yet like a safe place, we can see that resistance growing, and the next step that we often see is that people are starting to make excuses.

21:48

Either excuses to not show up or to not do something they're just everything's starting to move slowly things are starting to slow down. And I think a wonderful example of this happening, that Roquela often brings up, is Nelson Mandela when he was in prison.

22:07

He was letting his other- I feel like I should just pass it over to you, Roquela. It was something about breaking rocks right like you have to move- The guards say you have to move a chair across the room but you could you should go ahead you, you have to do it but you can go ahead and do it slowly you can take all day to do that and that is a form of non-violent resistance that's often used. Did I tell that story right?

22:36

Roquela: Beautiful. Okay, so as we go along the resistance line, we find that communication can start to break down so not only are you going slow, but maybe you aren't saying things.

22:55

You might be emailing things that could be in a conversation, and it can be a, an issue where there's withholding of information so not only are you not communicating, but you aren't sharing all the information that needs to be shared, for whatever reason.



23:16

Ashley: And we'll go through the next ones quickly because I think these are certainly when the resistance starts breaking down and being less productive less comfortable for people. They can be really strategies in terms of bringing awareness to the forefront, but certainly within workplaces and within groups, whenever possible, if we can bring our wisdom to the surface and work with it productively, that is the best.

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When we have that communication breakdown and that's allowed to escalate, we often see those silos forming. This group isn't talking to that group. Those silos can find themselves, breaking down in terms of identity groups. So clearly there are instances of real discrimination.

24:02

And I'd also say that conflict left unaddressed for a really long time, you will see that those identity groups start banding together and finding the "isms" in the conflict itself. So, we'll see the certain groups are feeling like they're left, they're carrying certain burdens, they're getting discriminated against because of who they are.

24:27

We'll then see conflict potentially escalate to open strikes, so people are using to go to work, or they're refusing to engage with a certain party. And of course, we don't want to ever get here in a work setting, but we often hear about people leaving jobs because of conflict that's left unaddressed. And of course, the extreme example of war is something that is a possibility at the global level when conflicts aren't addressed.

24:55

So, we have a Slido poll here that will ask you to let us know, I guess, what kinds of behaviors you've seen in workplaces that you've been in. And, I guess if you're a student and this includes your schooling community. What would have these behaviors have you seen? And please click all that apply.

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And then, I know that there's a delay so maybe while we're doing that Roquela, do you want to-we can start going through maybe some of the-

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Roquela: Yeah, so we have this resistance line that kind of surfaces wisdom and gives you a way to think around conflict, and give you kind of those markers or flags that there's something underneath the surface that needs to be addressed.

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So, we're going to start by giving some tips to leaders for how to address conflict. So, really read resistance as wisdom struggling to be heard. So often, there can be a defensiveness but really recognize that this is something that is under the surface, and hearing it is helpful in addressing it.

26:18

The second would be to pay attention to jokes and gossip, get in on it, understand it, and be part of those conversations as much as you can, by being open to it. Encourage opinions early and often. So, have that openness of dialogue so that those things can surface when they're small. And then use that position to invite resistance, including your own. So, you might model your own apprehension.

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We, as Walt Whitman said says, contain multitudes. So we can have kind of two perspectives on one issue, so if you raise both of them and consider them that can really model that openness for resistance.

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And then, finally, make it safe to disagree. Don't let dissenters become scapegoats. So, often you'll have the known person in a meeting, somebody who objects often. And it might be just as simple as agreeing with them, if a small part of their resistance resonates with you, or opening it up asking, who else might feel that way.

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And then we have some tips for dissenters.

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Ashley: Yeah should be should we just- I'm looking at the Slido answers come in. Should we just take a look at them before we go into the tips for the dissenters. Looks like for the most part, it pretty much follows the resistance line. So, not saying what needs to be said, which is where we said is typically the start, and war which we're saying is, hopefully something most of us never end up in.

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The numbers are sort of falling in line with that. So super often down here, and less often down here. But what's interesting is that some of them are switched. So of course gossip is showing up more often.

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I think that's, it's a pretty common human trait. But I guess gossip, in response to conflict would be hard to distinguish from just regular old, you know, people having conversations.

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And then I also thought that was really interesting is separation is actually quite high down at 30%. So that's 30% of people saying, I think, that we've seen people leave over unaddressed conflict, which is high, but certainly not uncommon from my experience, I think.

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Isn't there a saying about, 'People don't leave jobs they leave managers'? Yeah, certainly when there's lots of opportunities out there for people to find work and conflicts feel like really intractable we see people leave.

29:06

And that's my heart goes out to anyone who's been in that scenario and that's going to be one of the tips that actually we have for the dissenters. Roquela, any thoughts on this? Thanks everyone for sharing your responses.

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Roquela: Yeah, it's fantastic and it's very telling. Just as you said, how it follows the resistance line, and just how much opportunity there is to grow and learn, by saying what needs to be said and raising those issues.

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Ashley: Just taking back control here. So, thanks everyone can you see my PowerPoint back up? Great. So, Roquela gave some tips for the leaders when you find yourself in the majority position and you're seeing the resistance around you, but you're not in on the, I guess, you know on the sarcastic jokes and gossip and you're not seeing that behavior surface yet.

30:09

So, we have some tips for dissenters and I'm happy to start that off. I think we've already brought up the first one, which is as early as often as you can, bringing that wisdom to the surface, so that it can be engaged with and it can be folded into the sort of the master plan or the plan of the majority, or of leadership that's super helpful. When you're building power with colleagues, doing that in order to engage and to make things better for the entire group, rather than to take someone down or two or to destroy some things also very important.

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Packaging your wisdom so that it can be heard is one that I'm always a little bit, I get a little resistance to. And I'd say, I can't find a way around it. So, if we want to change the minds, and the hearts, and the path of the majority, we need to find a way of engaging them in a way that they want to listen. And taking care of yourself first.

31:11

Doing that self care, making sure that you have support from your allies first I think it's just really important to bring up. And then of course we saw in the polls, when a situation keeps you absolutely voiceless, consider moving on your talents to be used elsewhere.

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Roquela: So, I just wanted to add, in terms of that thing that you said about packaging a message. Like you said, I would put that up in leadership. So, when those moments happen where you something like this is landing, again there is that strong instinct to be defensive - that's there for a reason it's useful, but maybe not in this context, maybe being open.

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So, if someone's gone to the effort to package a message recognize that is a very difficult thing that they're doing, particularly if you have that power imbalance. So, receiving it with grace I think is very valuable and an opportunity to connect more deeply with others.

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Ashley: Thank you. Thanks for that. So this is kind of the general assessment of where a group is at in conflict, we're going to move now into what are your personal options.

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You find yourself in conflict, you probably didn't want to, that you probably choose to find out what pathways are available to you? And it builds up, it dovetails will with the upstander training a few months ago. We've broken it down differently in the conflict engagement framework, which is a UBC's guiding document on engaging with conflict, and we've got it in these five buckets.

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So again starting at the left, it's always within your power to say you know what, this isn't a battle I want to take. It's not a big deal in terms of a topic or, I know for myself I'd say 95% of the time when I get hooked by something, it's not actually that scenario it's, you know, it reminded me of something else or something else happened this morning, and giving myself time to think, "Is this really important?" and sleeping on it. Most of the time I'd say it's not. And it was probably something else, so I will put it down.

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I'll drop it, and it can take some emotional maturity to do that I can't always do that. And if it's still sticking with you say 24 hours later, 48 hours later, it's probably a sign that it's maybe more important than you might have originally thought of, and then you might move into the next categories.

33:54

Roquela: Yeah, which is directly engage. So, in terms of avoid and drop, we know that a huge percentage of conflict can't be completely solved. It can be navigated, so that would bring us to directly engage. So, there would be an opportunity to come forward with your concern if it's really a sticky issue to connect with the person and have a conversation, and try and sort it out and navigate the conflict in which one finds themselves. And then it moves along.

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Ashley: People often think, "Oh, you know the other person doesn't want to hear from me. It would be really hard for me to engage them directly." And if you turn the tables around, I'd say, most of the time, folks would say, "Actually if I offended somebody else I would want them to come and talk to me. That would be my preference. Come and talk to me first, because I really didn't mean to offend them."

34:58

And you'd be surprised at how many people think that. Roquela, if I said something that offends you, I hope you would come and talk to me about it and they would try to certainly do my best to work it out with you. And I can completely understand why that might be very scary, based on all sorts of different factors that will we'll touch on a couple of minutes.

35:19

But sometimes we feel like we might need some help in order to have that conversation so there are folks within the UBC community who can act as a third party, someone who's impartial and can maybe help facilitate that conversation. Certainly in the Equity & Inclusion Office, we can do that.

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I know, REDI - Respectful environments, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in [the Faculty of] Medicine can support some of those conversations. Maybe you have a colleague or a classmate who can help you with that. A grad student advisor or someone within the system who really help either coach you to have that conversation yourself, or maybe say, you know, "I can come along and give you a hand and we'll see what we can deal with, what we can work out informally between the three of us." That can be super helpful.

36:09

Roquela: And so, if that is not an option one option would be to file a complaint. So, at UBC there are various policies that you can go into and that would be like the Respectful Environment Policy or Policy Three, which roughly follows human rights.

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So, those are policies that you can get to know and you can take your grievance and file a complaint and have it dealt through those more formal channels and have it looked at from that lens, from a policy lens and sort it out that way. And then it continues on, if that no longer becomes an option.

36:54

Ashley: Yeah, the last bucket here, 'Go Public' is not sanctioned within the university as a legitimate channel, but it's certainly something that we see a lot of in society right now. And that happens when, often when people believe, or I guess don't believe in the system that is holding those formal complaints. So, we see people turning to essentially the public, often through social media, to do call outs.

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There can be real benefits to that, or I'd say movements like Black Lives Matter and the Me Too Movement gained a lot of a lot of traction and has benefited a lot of a lot of folks by calling your institutional racism and sexism to the forefront. And I'd say when it comes to a personal complaint, there's some real concerns about going public without having tried the lower, the more informal and more direct approaches first.

38:01

Certainly, the higher up this spectrum, if you make it a spectrum, the higher up the ladder you go, the more damage to the relationship it does. So, if you maintain relationship with a person with whom you are in conflict, I'd say directly engaging with them keeps it the most contained. As soon as you bring in another person, depending on who that is, it can feel like an escalation.

38:24

Often that's worth it, because you're going to have a better quality of conversation. But you can expect that, as soon as you've looked at another person, if you're on the receiving end it's going to feel a little bit like affront. And then the other thing especially when we get down to the far end of the spectrum, your control over the message and over the outcomes diminishes significantly the further right you go.

38:48

So, when it's just the two of us engaging in conversation, you can decide what you're going to say and what you're not going to say. As soon as you introduce the third party, of course there's another perspective in the mix. And then, essentially when you get to the fourth, you're handing over the adjudication, the decision-making rights to somebody else.

39:05

They're going to decide what remuneration would happen or not. And certainly, when you go public, I just need to look at the internet to find out what happens when someone brings something up in the public sphere and how that can go wrong.

39:23

So, certainly trying to use the avenues on the left is more beneficial for you at the start. Any other thoughts on that one Roquela? We've talked about this a few times recently and always something new comes up.

39:44

Roquela: It's true. No, I think that the very succinctly those options.

39:50

Ashley: Okay, so we have another poll here which is, here we go. I'm sure you've all found yourselves facing conflict before. We were interested in, specifically what factors have kept you from engaging directly with conflict.

40:12

Because the work that we do - conflict theater and then the conflict engagement portfolio- is very much focused towards those buckets number two, which is dealing with conflict directly and buckets number three, which is engaging through a third party, so we facilitate different kinds of conversations.

40:29

And we're always interested in finding what specifically made it very difficult for you, when you had conflict, when you were disagreeing with someone, that you felt like you couldn't bring it up with them directly? So could we bring up that word cloud, hopefully, I know there's a minute delay there, But what's coming in here?

40:57

Roquela: Fear for repercussions. So that would be a bit of a power imbalance that might surface in bringing up conflict directly.

41:08

We have fear, of course, power imbalance made its appearance. Uncertainty. So, uncertainty can be very scary in that we don't know how that will land for another person, or what the outcome might be. Awkwardness, conflict avoidance. We see that a lot in conflict theater, it is a real, real thing. And I think that that can be culturally based as well, in that we have maybe a bit of a culture of not engaging in conflict. Wow wonderful answers. Ashley you want to pick it up?

41:48

Ashley: Oh yeah, I'm just loving the answers that are coming in. Looking at- exhaustion, I think is a big one. I think that goes a little bit with the power imbalance or certain, certain people who are in the position of having to bring up these concerns over and over and exhaustion's real piece of it.

42:05

But I think fear is such a big one. And we have a - I can't remember the number of the policy right now because we just changed them- but there is a policy of about, it's not called 'Repercussions', I'm losing my language here. I think Roslyn's probably twitching in her seat - she knows that the word that I'm looking for.

42:28

Tom: Retaliation

42:29

Retaliation, reprisal. Yeah there's a whole - thank you Tom – a whole policy that says that the university has a very strong stance against retaliation and reprisals. And yet I think that that fear is some is real, so know that there's a policy out there that is trying to cover that and there are different avenues of support.

43:58

So, I know our office has folks who can talk to you before you launch your formal complaint or healthy if you don't want to launch a formal complaint, but can talk you through the different avenues of support and what safeguards can be put in place so that you won't be retaliated against. So please reach out to those avenues of support.

43:24

Roquela: I just wanted to note on the word cloud, I saw things along the lines of violence. So those really, really overt things as a barrier for engaging in conflict. And I would say that that's a very good reason to not engage directly in a difficult conversation, if there's a fear of harm that is absolutely appropriate.

43:31

Yeah, absolutely. And I think that that comes into this next section about some, the factors that we use to decide whether or not we're going to engage in conflict, or how we're going to engage in conflict.

44:03

I think we went through a number of different things to consider, in the upstander training, so I don't want to go on and on about them but they are you know how likely is it going to be well received right now in this moment? There was also do want to do it publicly in the moment? Do you want to you want to prepare for it and do it later?

44:25

So, all sorts of factors within this very moment, within the situation. Clearly if you're unsafe within this moment, if you're in a dark alley alone at night, you might make a very different decision than if it was in a classroom in the middle of the day. But there's certainly factors within this very moment, that will help you make that decision.

44:41

I'd say, when we're talking about decision-making in conflict in the Equity & Inclusion Office or from, from a lens of equity and inclusion, we're looking at extending the timeline beyond just this one scenario into wherever you want to get to in the future, what is our desired outcome?

45:11

I'm starting to see in our movements, maybe it's been there for a lot longer than I've seen it, but this resistance to call out culture, and questions around what values do we want embedded in our movements?

45:27

So, how do we have these conversations about accountability in a space where there hasn't been very many? But with love and with care at the center of how we're engaging in this change movement, so we're not replacing one dominant party with another, or one oppressive party with another oppressive party, or one system of oppression with another.

45:51

And of course, we're also talking about the present is not just informed by what's happening in the situation, it's informed by a long-inherited past that includes both relationships, and that can be simply the relationship between you and your supervisor, like that the power balances, and imbalances within particular roles and relationships.

46:19

But also with lived histories that we all come to these with different histories different, I'd say, traumatic events and different inherited privileges. And of course, it happens within a social context, and within systems that still influence our opportunities and our barriers today.

46:46

Roquela: I wanted to add something about desired future. So, someone told this to me and it was always very meaningful. And so, the metaphor was Cathedral thinking. So, I know that years and years, hundreds of years ago, cathedrals were built. But it would take several generations to build these beautiful buildings that would stand for long, long times.



47:11

So, it's both a beautiful metaphor, in terms of moving towards that desired future having that plan, but it also makes the task less overwhelming. So, if you think of it, brick by brick, you're not expecting to wake up one day and have a beautiful cathedral, although that would be ideal.

47:33

Those cathedrals are made of those smaller decisions, and placing one brick at a time, over generations. So, moving towards that I think is a wonderful way to frame that desired future.

47:50

Ashley: I love that metaphor, cathedral thinking. It's a task that I guess faces a lot of us in a lot of our social or large intractable conflicts right now, is how do we live that desired future with the inherited past?

48:08

And I think that's- hopefully we're not all in conversations where these large bubbles are always at play, but certainly when we see them, I think it's very helpful to move my own reactivity and discomfort and conflict avoidance into a place of well, "What am I contributing to, that writes the wrongs of the past? What's happening in this moment that I can contribute towards a desired future?"

48:35

And we're all defensive, and I'm thinking, specifically, right now again to my to my settler position: we need to be able to move through our defensiveness to right the wrongs of the past and to create this better future.

48:53

And if this moment is where it's showing up, then this is my opportunity, that's what an ally is. So, I know we've just launched into some like large scale questions here, and I'm going to pass it over to Tom now, to walk us through the last sort of conceptual tool before we jump into the really practical tools. So here is our other iceberg.

49:22

Tom: Great. Thank you very much, Ashley and Roquela. So, I'm going to introduce a different iceberg. There's a lot of iceberg metaphors in this kind of work. And this one specifically comes from the world of systems thinking, and my own personal research is very much grounded in a systemic approach to conflict, informed by very you know systems thinking, systems science, systems theory - a number of different intersecting communities.

49:46

So, similarly to the other iceberg, this is the idea that what sticks up above the water is the events of the day. And of course, because of the pace of work that we're constantly faced with at UBC, it's very hard for us to get past just wrestling with the events of the day, firefighting, dealing with what the most urgent event is.

50:11

But as we go further down the iceberg, there is more leverage to change the system, and to alter some of the outcomes that the system is producing. So, if we're just reacting to the day-to-day, we might be able to cope with some of those day-to-day events, but in terms of creating long term change and addressing some of the deep underlying structures that generate conflict, we won't necessarily have that much leverage.

50:37

And by leverage we really mean in that, really, that you have coming straight out of physics, you know, there's that great display at Science World where you know you put the leverage point at one place on the beam and you can't lift the weight, and then you move the leverage point to another part on the beam, and with the same amount of force that you're exerting, suddenly you can lift this weight.

50:56

So, really that sense of leverage of being the same amount of force or attention or concentration, depending on where you place it, it has exponentially greater or exponentially lesser impact. And so, the idea is that the further we go down the iceberg, the more leverage we're going to have to change something. So, an event is can be catching a cold, but each one is nested inside the next layer below in the ice in the iceberg.

51:25

We may notice that these events are actually patterns, they actually make up patterns, they're nested inside of patterns. So, I've actually been catching more colds, while sleeping less. So, the top level we can react, but maybe if we go in one layer down, we've got some more leverage where we can anticipate, because we're noticing some patterns and trends.

51:47

Those patterns and trends also don't just come out of nowhere, they come out of designed structures, either structures that were deliberately designed, or structures that just simply had been put in place through ongoing self organizing processes that have gone on over decades or generations, that have given us the structures that we have. So, what has influenced the patterns, what are the relationships between the parts?

52:09

Well, I'm experiencing more stress at work, I'm not eating well and having difficulty accessing healthy food near home or work. But the lowest part in this on this iceberg model, is conceptual tool, that has the most leverage, are in fact the mental models.

52:24

These structures don't just grow on trees right, or they're not as inevitable as gravity, they come out of the mental models that created them What assumptions beliefs and values do people hold about the system?

52:37

What beliefs keep the system in place? For instance, mental models such as: career is the most important piece of our identity. Another one might be: healthy food is too expensive. And another one might be: rest is for the unmotivated.

52:52

So, you take those three mental models, that gives birth to the design in this case of individuals, you know, structure of how they conduct their life, into the patterns that that produces, into the events. So, as we move into these two specific tools, one of them, the first one, O'DEAR, is one that we can apply, I think, when there's an event that's taken place, and we've noticed that it's part of a pattern, and it's a pattern that we want to address.

53:25

But then we look at all that stuff that showed up on the word cloud, there's all of these obstacles. And this it goes into the, you know, bucket number two of trying to address it directly with the person. But at the very least we're down to at least the second level of patterns and trends. Something is happening here, that's a difference that matters, it's engaging me emotionally, and I feel a need to speak about it.

53:47

And I'm at least already down to the second level of this iceberg, which is I'm noticing a pattern, and a trend. By using O'DEAR, starting at that level, you might also then create an opportunity for yourself, and the person you're in conflict, to dive deeper down all the way down to the mental models as a result of this type of conversation.

54:09

And then the second to the second tool we're going to get The Argument is, I think, when we're a little further down, and we are as a group, maybe looking at design and transform, where we've already started to identify some underlying structures, and we want to talk about different options, and again, they may surface the mental models.

54:27

Because the thing about mental models is, we often don't even know what they are until we're in a position where we're asked to articulate them. Again, because we're normally just up at the level of events fighting fires, and maybe we catch some patterns, and maybe we get to some structures, but those mental models, getting those up, again lowering the waterline and finding those is really key.

54:48

So, I guess we can move here now into O'DEAR, or the first of the really practical ones. So, I'm going to talk us through the initial O'DEAR, is that correct Ashley? Should I just keep going with this one. Yeah, sure. Okay, great. So, this is a really convenient acronym.

55:03

We are not suggesting that this is a magic bullet that will take care of everything, in terms of a difficult conversation that maybe you've been avoiding. But once you've decided to try and engage in sort of

bucket number two the direct engagement, this is a way to prepare for that conversation, and a way to guide the opening of the conversation.

55:22

After that, of course, there's going to be some improv, and your things are still going to, you're not gonna be able to plan everything, but this is a, I have found, a very powerful way to organize my thinking to go into one of these conversations. Again, usually if I'm at the second level down the iceberg of at least, recognized the pattern.

55:39

So, the 'O' stands for Opening, which is first making sure is it, as much as possible, is this a good moment to try and engage this person? So, can I either set up a time ahead of time, letting them know I want to have this conversation? Or whatever you need to do to check and see whether or not this is a less or more ideal moment to actually engage this person.

56:00

Obviously if they've got someone sick at home and they, you know, there's all kinds of different circumstances under which it might not be ideal. So, can you try and make an opening that creates a place where maybe this is a good moment to do this?

56:15

D then is to Describe. And what's really key about this, and I'll use an example in a moment, is that, to try and describe the empirical observations that one has made, and not skip to anything that tries to characterize the other person's behavior or the other person's attitude.

56:35

Like, "You've done this to me," or "You've hurt me in this way," or "You've been ignoring me." So, the example I'm going to use is someone's not answering my emails, and I've noticed it's a growing thing over time. And this person just doesn't answer my emails, until I bug them a few times and then I finally get a response.

56:53

So, I'm going to try and describe that in as impartial away as I can, just empirical description. Those of you who are old enough or had parents that were old enough to remember the old TV show and radio show Dragnet where the Joe Friday the detective used to say, "Just the facts, ma'am." Don't give me any interpretation right now.

57:16

So, for instance, I might say, "I've noticed that when I send you an email, sometimes I, or often I find myself having to send a second email, and then maybe even a third email before I get a response."

57:34

This may already draw some defensiveness but even so you're not saying, "You're ignoring me," or you know, there's no accusation - there's a description. And the case like email you probably can actually

have the emails, so you've got you know just establishing what your observation is. And, again, most of already know this form the realm of basics or of non-violent communication. So, use "I" statements, not "you", right? So, "I observe that when I send an email, I don't get a response, and I often need to follow up with a few responses before I get a response back."

58:09

I've even tried to phrase that where the word "you" never even comes up, right. It's about owning one's own description of the event. Then we move into E, and the separation between those is really key, the separation between all of these components because often we come out with all of this at once.

38:27

And next is the Explanation. Explain is explain the impact that what I've described is having on me, on an emotional level, psychological level. How is it affecting me? And again, it's still not a description of what the other person's doing. It's an explanation of how it impacts me.

58:27

"When I find myself having to follow up with emails, I feel, I start to feel as if my work is maybe not important, or maybe there's, you know, something between us that we need to discuss or that, you know my needs are not important, or I'm a nuisance and I'm just bothering you."

59:09

This is how it's making me feel. This is how I'm feeling as a result of what's described. The impact, what is the impact? And then the A is really significant because then it's an opportunity to turn it over to the other person and ask simply, "So, what's going on for you?" when you get one of my emails.

59:29

The ask, we put R for Request underneath because the last one is going to be that you can make a request to the other person for some kind of behavior change or some kind of adjustment. But you better be ready to change that request because you might be very surprised by what you get back with the Ask.

59:47

An example I was used as I had a there was a guy knew and theatre school when I was young, who I thought was this was very snobby and didn't want to talk to anybody because he was just so above us all. And he would come into the green room of the theater and never even acknowledge anyone else's presence, and then years later I found out he was painfully shy.

1:00:02

And so, I'd told myself a story about, you know. So, if, my ask to him - I would have got a very surprise-, I did eventually get a very surprising answer. And so my request is going to change as a result, because now I have a completely new picture.

1:00:15

But again, this is the opportunity to ask, and then you must really actually listen. You must actually approach this with genuine curiosity, in order to hear what's going on for the other person. So, often in this email example I use, nine times out of 10, someone's going to say is, "Oh my god, it's not you, it's not personal. I'm just so overwhelmed, I get a hundred emails a day," etc. Right?

1:00:40

I'm still allowed to ask something and make a request and I could say, for instance, "I understand that. Great to know that it's not personal. Do you think that if you can't give me a complete response in that moment, you could even just send me a three word email just acknowledging that you received my email, and maybe give me some sense of when you might get back to me so that I'm not just sort of in a vacuum?"

1:01:06

And they may be able to make meet that request or not. So that's just a really simple example of how this technique works. The conversation is in going to unfold from there. Of course, you may still run up against levels of defensiveness.

1:01:21

But a couple of things about that: one is, I've found that if nothing else, using this formula can allow me to leave a transaction or an interaction, rather, feeling clean so to speak, feeling like all I did was speak from my experience, and ask an honest question with genuine curiosity. If they are going to react with defensiveness in the face of that, that's kind of their thing, right? I've come in, and I've done this in as clean away as I could.

1:01:53

And if they can't honor my request, at least often times, I'll feel like I was still able to establish some kind of boundary, some kind of boundary. If this is happening in a situation where someone has power over me, I might not have a lot of leverage to ask them, to make my request. But I've at least asked them to be clear with me.

1:02:15

And I've at least brought something to their attention that they're going to need to clarify they're thinking about, or at least prevents some kind of clearer version of what's driving their decision making or their process.

1:02:27

And the other thing I've noticed is that, it can still be hard to be on the end of this. As non-violent as O'DEAR seeks to be, it can still be difficult for someone to be on the other end of this, because it's still in a sense pointing out something that feels like a fault.

1:02:43

I've noticed sometimes that, while a person could can be defensive in the moment, and be unable to admit wrong or, you know, are trying, or they'll try and minimize what's being brought to them, once they're left alone, I can see that request actually start to be honored within. When they're out of the

pressure of the immediate face to face that can be uncomfortable, there's something because I've been clear, because I haven't gone in there accusing them of anything, and I've just been clear and curious, they've actually gone away and thought about it, and I actually start to witness the behavior change.

1:03:18

Because when they're out of that proximity of with me that makes them makes it feel like they need to defend themselves, they've got time to process what I brought to them. Because I brought it to them in an organized, non-accusatory way.

1:03:32

So, again it's not a magic bullet it doesn't solve everything but, for me, this has been a very powerful way to start at the level of events, point out a pattern, and then, of course, when I make that ask ideally what's going to happen is they're going to go all the way down to their own mental models to try and explain what it is they're doing or why they're thinking that way. And may discover something new about their own mental models.

1:03:58

So, it starts at the level of patterns, but it's actually an invitation for us both to take a deep dive down our own our own icebergs, and maybe get to a level of mental models that are generating this this difference between us. I'm going to throw it back to Ashley.

1:04:14

Ashley: Thanks, Tom. We're actually opening up a Slido right now. And we're a little bit behind time, so we're only going to have a couple of time for a couple of examples. But we're going to ask you to put some, just some very brief descriptions about a conversation that you'd like to see O'DEAR used to try to directly engage a conflict that some that you've experienced.

1:04:45

You're welcome to put some sort of complicated conflicts, but I'd say, ask yourself, would this be a conflict that you would actually realistically engaged person directly in? And, and if it's like a maybe, then absolutely give us give us some language or some context and you'll see the three of us here trying to ad lib, or improv – I should use the language of the theater with conflict theater - improv some O'DEARs around. I've got some examples up here, Tom, Roquela, do either of you want to try just off the top formulating an O'DEAR based on either of these examples, before we get into the Slido?

1:05:30

Tom: Yeah, the question that's being put up here is in terms of what you would like to see us folded into an O'DEAR, because I'm seeing some responses about some other things you'd like to see O'DEAR address. But this is really question about, imagine a situation you've been in that you wish you could approach someone about how might you turn that into an O'DEAR.

1:05:48

So the examples that Ashley put up where you've overheard to people, basically gossiping about a third person in your workplace, and it's made you uncomfortable. How might you approach those people with O'DEAR.

1:06:03

And the other one was someone's constantly interrupting you in meetings, before you get a chance to put out your idea, how might that be turned into an O'DEAR.

1:06:19

Ashley: So, we've already got some tough ones in here I see one "Feeling judged." That I'll try, I'll make up some scenarios around it. Let's just say for the sake of it, Roquela is the person that I'm having a conversation with about feeling judged based on something that happens in a meeting. So, my opening might be, "Hey, Roquela, do you have a minute to talk about what happened in the meeting this morning?"

1:06:47

Roquela: "Sure, yeah."

1:06:48

Ashley: Describe – "When I brought up an idea, in our group, I saw you sit back and roll your eyes and start looking around the room." So that's, I'm trying to objectively state what I saw. And then Explain "I kind of feel like, maybe you were, you didn't think my idea was very good. I felt I felt a little bit judged in that moment, and I'm a little bit concerned, because it's not the first time that I've seen this."

1:07:20

So, under Explain, two things: I'm using the "I" statements, I'm saying the impact on me as I felt judged, and I'm bringing up that you know this was an incident, but it's also part of a pattern, like it's not the first time that I've noticed that. So now if I was to use A, Ask: "What was going on for you in that moment?"

1:07:40

Roquela: "[Sigh] Well, you know, I really appreciate your ideas and I know that you offer a lot of ideas to our team, I just felt that like, I've seen that idea before. In fact that was something that I was mentioning previously in a meeting and it had no uptake, but all of a sudden like I felt like you were saying it and then all of a sudden, it had all of this uptake. So I think that that was landing that way for me. I'm sorry, that it was landing differently for you. I just felt really frustrated."

1:08:21

Ashley: Hey, so I mean in real life, I would probably just show a lot of appreciation so, "Thanks for sharing that with me. I know what it feels like to not feel heard and, I guess, I'd appreciate it if, when that happens, if you just came and talk to me about it? Because I get really nervous talking in front of people, and to see that from people that I know and trust, that kind of behavior, I worry that I'm doing something wrong.



1:08:48

Roquela: "Mhm. Yeah."

1:08:52

Ashley: "I'll follow up, I guess."

1:08:55

Tom: So, I'm just seeing, I mean there's just tons of stuff coming here, we could do two weeks using O'DEAR, and I think we probably should like create some kind of O'DEAR gymnasium. I'm hoping people find this- So, there's some, some themes coming up in the comments here that I definitely want to address, which is you know, what if people deny the problem?

1:09:12

What if people just don't want hear it? And of course, there is no easy conflict engagement tool to make someone see what you see. To make someone. But hopefully what this does is, it's easier- It's harder for someone to argue with you, when all you're presenting to them is, "These are my observations. This is how it's making me feel, and these are what I think might be the consequences if it continues this way."

1:09:47

And then the other person is in a position where, having not been accused of a particular nefarious intent, they simply have to look, at you, know what it is that you presented as your experience. I wish there was a magic bullet to get people to be less defensive, but this is, you know, I don't know of another method that can approach- A difficult conversation is going to be a difficult conversation.

1:10:15

There will be discomfort, there will be uncertainty, and there always is the opportunity for pushback and for, and for defensiveness. But I think that what we're getting at here is the is the capacity to try and just talk about one's observation. So even again I wouldn't say, "In that meeting you said, x," I would say, "In that meeting, I thought, I think I heard you say x."

1:10:42

Perhaps that person then has an opportunity to say, "No I didn't say x, I said y." "Okay, well okay good, because when I thought I heard x, I thought it was-" So, there's opportunities to try and clarify. Again, none of this is going to be a magic key to take you all the way through to perfect resolution at the end.

1:11:01

And I think that, in terms of power and balance, I mean, I think that, obviously, there are issues and of course, we have all had difficult managers. But also, in terms of, if I couch my O'DEAR into some way that's about the capacity of our team to perform – because I've seen a number of the examples coming up: our team is starting to fray because of the workload, or I know that two people don't get along.

1:11:28

So, I think that if you also continue to just try and frame these conversations in terms of the impact they're having on all of us to do our job, I think any manager who's really invested in in managing, and

chances are they're being assessed by somebody in terms of their capacity to manage the team, the more I can speak to how this is actually impacting our unit's ability to do its work.

1:11:54

I think it's also helpful in getting managers to listen, but yes there's of course there's going to be levels of defensiveness perhaps, or denial, that are hard to get through. But, if you stick to the O'DEAR formula, if you really get good at it, and you build those muscles, it becomes harder and harder for that other person to knock you off your game.

1:12:15

And it becomes much harder for them to walk, again as I said, walk out of the discomfort of the initial interaction, it gets harder for them to not go away and keep thinking about it, because you presented it in this empirical well thought out manner. It's going to be a voice, more times than not, in that person's head that they're not going to be able to completely dismiss.

1:12:38

Again, I wish I had the magic key to the really obstinate kinds of denials, but I've found success for myself using this model in having conversations that I previously could not begin at all. [Over-talking]  
Roquela: Sorry, go ahead.

1:12:55

Ashley: Well I have three practical tools that can augment the O'DEAR. I'd say, first, change doesn't happen in one conversation. I would expect to have a number of conversations. And I'll frame it a little bit in terms of the power of conversation: when you are in a position to lower power and you want to continue the conversation, and you want to call in some accountability, a very small conversation about one event, but one incident in time can feel the safest.

1:13:29

If someone is going to say, "No I don't agree with you," and deny and deny it, that's a reasonable, it's a predictable defensive response. So, plan for it. You might need to just back away from that conversation and you could try again next time. You want to do that in a way that preserves the relationship.

1:13:49

So, by making it a small conversation, making it fairly contained, "I saw this," "I heard that," "I felt that," "How do you see it? Oh, you didn't see it that way," okay back away. The next one you go and have that conversation in a new setting, it becomes harder for that person to keep denying it, and eventually you could have a conversation about, "You know, I've heard something different than you maybe three or four times, and like where are you sitting on that?" and it just, it creates a different level of accountability.

1:14:22

So, like planning to have multiple conversations is one strategy, that sort of timing over time, like if someone's having a bad day. Another one is a really practical strategy is letting them know that you're

on their side, right? Like, this is about the relationship, it's about making a better relationship, it's not about who's right and who's wrong. It's about making things better.

1:14:48

So, you know, building relationship through reassurance, "I'm here to help. I might have gotten this wrong. I was left confused because that's not that's not how we think of you. I know your intentions are good." So, whatever you have in your back pocket that you can prepare for, to reassure someone that you're there for really good intentions to work with them, is really helpful.

1:15:11

And I'd say you could have a conversation about what's happening in this conversation. So, I'll use the O'DEAR, and again it's using the O'DEAR formula. "Hey Tom, can I talk to you about a pattern that I feel like is coming up?"

1:15:30

So, you and I have had a couple conversations now where, you know, I've come and I presented you with what I'm seeing as problematic behavior that's making other people within the meeting uncomfortable, and we've ended up in a conversation that feels quite acrimonious. It feels like we just leave these conversations in a worse place, or at least I know I'm feeling like I'm leaving these conversations uncomfortable with where our relationship is at. How are you feeling about it?"

1:16:06

Tom: "Yeah, I'm pretty uncomfortable about it too, to be honest. Yeah, these leave me feeling very uncomfortable."

1:16:13

Ashley: "Yeah, so wouldn't it be nice if we could find another way to have these conversations? Can I request that we use this next tool called The Argument in order to sort of flesh out where we're thinking on this you know controversial topic that just seems to leave us in a strange place?"

1:16:33

Tom: "Okay, so you've got a method for helping us get through this in a way that's not going to keep making it- because I like you, and I believe we're on the same team but it's feels, like we get in these, you know, I don't want to fight with you so if that if you think this will help and let's try it." Okay. Seque way.

1:15:54

Ashley: Seque way! Roquela, you were gonna say something?

1:15:57

Roquela: I was just really thrilled about that beautiful, elegant segue way!

1:17:08

Ashley: Okay, let me take back control of this. Here we go.

1:17:23

Roquela: So, we've agreed that we're going to go into an argument, it's going to be the three of us. So, this is a tool that we like to use, and it's available to you now, once you learn the process, to see how an argument for us will work.

1:17:28

So, in our version of the argument, it's very much like a debate, but instead of there being two camps, where people kind of entrench in their positions will all explore one issue from one side and then the other.

1:17:43

So, in that way the issues get separated from the people. And so that will help with scapegoating, and help with raising that kind of "No" or disagreement within a group or a team. So, going into an argument, we have three very important premises that we have to lay out before we even begin the argument.

1:18:07

The first is just stating that we want to stay in relationship, so this isn't a case where the conflict has escalated to war or separation. Our intention is very much to stay within the relationship. The second premise is that nobody has a monopoly on the truth. So, this one's very important for me because I really enjoy being right, and I can really attach to that role of being right and the informed one.

1:18:37

So, just recognizing that nobody has a monopoly on the truth will help with our third premise, which is we are going into this argument in order to learn and grow. So that speaks right back to our very first kind of framing of conflict as an opportunity to learn and grow.

1:18:54

So, the third premise is we're going in to the argument in order to learn something and grow, and harvest those insights, and act in a meaningful way upon those insights. So, we are going to explore it. We have an argument pre-loaded.

1:19:11

So, this is something that is top of mind for everybody, or most people, right now which is: on one hand, should we continue to work from home in September? So, we've gone through a migration off campus for many of us. So, the majority of us are working from home. So come September, should we continue working for our home?

1:19:35

And then on the other side, we have: come September, the majority of us should go and continue to work on campus, as it was before. So, those are our two polarities. We're going to explore them first from one side and the other. And so, I just wanted to ask, is there anything you need either if you to go into this argument to feel safe and comfortable in order to fully engage?

1:20:05

Tom: "Um, two things for me one is confidentiality." So again, I'm playing a role in this thing we're doing with Roquela right now. "Nothing leaves this room in terms of this argument. And two, is that because the argument asks us to speak from both sides, even though we might feel more aligned to one side, I don't want to be held accountable, necessarily, for things I might say on behalf of the other side that in the end I don't really endorse. I'm just trying to make sure the other side is heard."

1:20:35

Roquela: Right. So, in a nutshell: The stories and specifics stay inside, but the learning can go outside, without particularly naming them. And then the second was, you may inhabit a role more strongly than another, so, just to recognize that you might not hold one particular position as strongly as maybe you're amplifying, in order to put it on the table.

1:21:00

Tom: Yeah, great. Well said. Thank you.

1:21:02

Roquela: Perfect. Ashley?

1:21:05

Ashley: I think I'm good I feel like the only tension that I have, walking into this argument, is that we don't have a whole lot of time left, and I want to leave enough time for questions and answers. So, maybe I'll ask that we just keep, keep it short because-

1:21:21

Tom: We might want to even describe it more than actually do it, to be completely frank, with the amount of time how much time we've got left?

1:21:29

Roquela: So just to put it out there, we'll explore maybe have like one point from each side from each of you. And just to keep it really succinct and short and I will add anything, I'll just maybe do a little bit of amplification if necessary, is that okay?

1:21:44

All right, I'm just going to autocratically choose the first side so, work from home. So, we're going to explore work from home and reasons for why that is definitely what we should do. So we'll just take that side. Who would like to go first?

1:22:07

Tom: I'll start off by just saying that it has allowed people to create more of a chance to be flexible. Like, you can pick up your kids, and still be doing work and so it's more humane in terms of dealing with the circumstances of people's lives.

1:22:24

Roquela: Right. So, working from home has benefited people in terms of their own lives. So they can pick up their kids, or if there are particular accommodations for example, that can be best served at home, those needs are met. Yes. Okay. Ashley?

1:22:45

Ashley: Um, yeah, I mean I feel like mine is just an ampli- a step further on that. It's been much more equitable: people's homes are set up in a way that you know they have the screen that they can read, access to washrooms, they don't have to like traipse across campus to find the gender-neutral washrooms, they don't have to traipse across the campus to find the prayer space at the appropriate time. For the disabled community, I feel, like this time has been super accessible in a way that we never were able to do when you're on campus. So, going back to campus would be a step backwards.

1:23:27

Roquela: Okay, So, our homes suit us. Accommodations that we need are available at home, in a way that they aren't available on campus, and aren't easily accessible.

1:23:42

Ashley: Yeah.

1:23:43

Roquela: Okay. So very quickly, we're going to move to the other side. So, we'll just sometimes it's helpful just to switch, we may not line up perfectly on Zoom, but just in order to explore that from a different angle. So, now we're going to explore work on campus. So, come September, we're going to return to campus.

1:24:05

Tom: Can I just say something Roquela? So, what's really important, because we're doing this very truncated version, is that we would not move to this other side until we felt that we had pretty much exhausted, as a group, the other side. The idea is that you fire all the arrows from one side, rather than doing what we normally do which is bounce back and forth, pro, con, pro, con, pro, con. We try and empty the tank on one side, before we all move to the other side.

1:24:32

Roquela: Yeah. There are no quivers left.

1:24:37

Tom: So I will say, go ahead, go ahead, Ashley.

1:24:41

Ashley: only just maybe for the sake of time we just say, here we would empty our quiver on the other side, all the reasons why you'd want to work from campus. Inevitably, someone would go back to the other side, about working from home, we would just go back and forth, until we were done. And then we would gather some insights at the end. Roquela, you want to tell us about insights that we can go to the Q&A?

1:25:05

Roquela: So very, very quickly, and you can add something if you'd like, so, once you have fired all of your arrows, sometimes we find that an arrow lands and there will be an insight there that you can harvest. And it can be just a small grain of truth, something that resonated.

1:25:22

And so, it's those little "Aha"s, or maybe even a big "Aha" moment that you can explore, and make a decision of how to behave like in the future. An example would be, like in the terms of the accommodation, like advocating when it's appropriate to work from home, and when it's appropriate to be on campus, in order to get those needs met. Is there anything you'd like to add?

1:25:53

Ashley: Ideally you, you could bring up this formula, this this approach called The Argument, well ahead of finding yourself in a conversation where you needed to use it. And you could say, "Hey, we've got this tool. Can we try it on next time we have a disagreement, it would help us maintain some relationship and explore all of the wisdom within our entire group?"

1:26:14

And that's not always possible so there are ways of just setting up a discussion in the moment that uses those agreements. So, you can say, "Hey, could we explore the pros and cons of this approach together for the sake of learning, in order to maintain our relationship?"

1:26:31

Let's just maybe one at a time, look at both sides and think of all the pros, and then all the cons together, and then come back and make a decision together later. So that might be quick three-line way of framing the format of the arguments in the moment to make that conversation safer. So, hopefully some- Yeah, I guess, Tom anything else to say?

1:26:56

Tom: I think we should just see if we can get a couple of questions in.

1:27:00

Ashley: Hopefully folks have been putting some questions, and Ashra, you are going to come in and moderate some questions for it, or was it Roslyn?

1:27:07

Ashra: I will do it. Thank you, Ashley and Roquela and Tom. So, yeah, we've had a bunch of really wonderful questions coming in, and the ones that we won't have time to get to today, we will respond to in writing and we'll post the answers on our website, along with the recording of this event.

1:27:25

So, the first, the most top-rated question that we've gotten is: Where do things like bullying, micro-aggressions, avoidance, intentional or unintentional over-talking, or unconscious bias fit into the first iceberg analogy that you used, from less conflict to more conflict?

1:27:53

Ashley: So, it's a good question. I've missed some of the specifics but I remember bullying, micro-aggressions, and where do they fit into that first iceberg. I see there's one thing that should be separated right from the get go is intention and impact. Someone might have really good intention, and it doesn't mean that that negates a really negative impact.

1:28:21

So someone might say or do something that they don't intend to be hurtful, and I think a micro-aggression is a good example- there are lots of unintended micro-aggressions that come from just folks not knowing history, or not understanding a particular, the context, or the history of harm that happens to certain people.

1:28:38

So, their intention might be good, and the impact of what they say or do might be quite bad. So, I think we can all ourselves get better at receiving feedback. We can also probably all get better at learning some of the histories that are not our own, so we would not be able to step into it.

1:28:58

But we can't know what we don't know, so being open to that feedback, inviting that feedback, and then learning from it and recognizing that we can have a negative intention, it doesn't mean that we're – sorry, we can have a negative impact, it doesn't mean we're bad people. It's what we do with that feedback, that is our responsibility. To learn from that and move forward in a way that's less harmful, I think, is really important. There was other aspects to that question. So Tom, Roquela?

1:29:29

Tom: I know I know we said we weren't going to do this, but what I'll just say is, in terms of how it sits on the on the on the resistance line, I would say that it becomes one of those things that ends up not being talked about.

1:29:40

“Oh someone's constantly creating micro-aggressions,” or “Someone's constantly over talking.” And so that ends up being the stuff that doesn't get talked about, and before we know it, we've got sarcastic jokes about so-and-so the over talker. We've got sarcastic jokes about so-and-so. To me those end up being the kinds of root issues that are, that fall under the things that need to be said that aren't being said, that then lead to the rest of it.

1:30:05

Ashra: Thank you, Tom. We're out of time. So, I think maybe I will hand this back to Roslyn. And we're sorry we didn't get time to answer more questions, but will absolutely do that in writing later.



1:30:20

Roslyn: Thank you, Ashra. Thank you to our wonderful collaborators, Roquela, Tom, and Ashley, and to all of the participants in today's event. In each of our sessions, we ask participants to make a commitment to change, based on what you've learned or what you've experienced in today's session.

1:30:39

And this can entail identifying something you're going to stop, doing what you continue to do, or identifying a new action that you're going to bring into your repertoire, as you move forward in your day and deal with the inevitable conflicts, and micro-aggressions, and other challenges that we face.

1:31:05

I going to ask you to please take a moment to fill out our survey, it's a mere five questions, it won't take very long. The survey is that on the screen, <https://tinyurl.com/REDI-conflict2>. And I also encourage you to visit our website to learn more about respectful environments equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives across the Faculty of Medicine, and our website is <https://REDI.med.ubc.ca>.

1:31:40

And as Ashra said, we will absolutely take the questions that were put into Slido. Apologies for not being able to have a Q & A session today - I know that's a frequent failing and we are working on it - but I did not want to cut short the, particularly, the great practical advice that we were receiving today. So, I hope that people can walk away today with a few arrows in their quivers, and can start practicing really productive and authentic conflict engagement. I look forward to seeing you at our next 'It Starts with Us' event. Thank you.