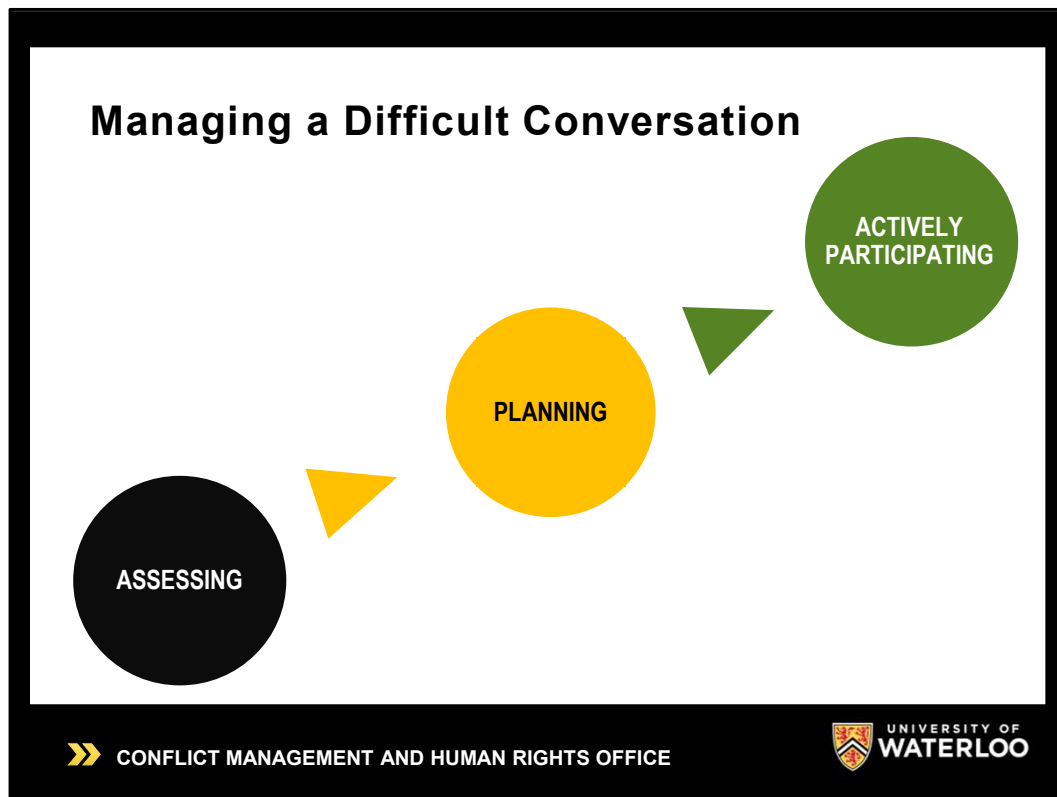


Welcome to Maintaining Effective Relations with your Supervisor for Graduate Students, Part 7 – Blue Zone Tools (Planning). This is the seventh module in a series of short recordings designed to provide you with tools and resources to help you respond effectively when tension arises in work or academic relationships.

If you have not yet viewed Parts 1 through 6, please take the time to do so as the content of this module builds on what was learned in the earlier modules.

Before we begin, pause the video and take time to download the worksheet associated with this module so that you can jot down your thoughts as we go along.



Remember, planning a difficult conversation - one intended to overcome relationship barriers - involves three steps: assessing, planning, and then actively participating in the difficult conversation.

ASSESS

- 1. Is a conversation appropriate?
- 2. Why is this conversation going to be difficult?
- 3. Set context

PLAN

- 4. Clarify the issues
- 5. Be aware of communication barriers.
- 6. Communicate impact using “I” statements
- 7. Consider the setting
- 8. Prepare for follow-up questions
- 9. Plan the conversation

PARTICIPATE

- 10. Participate actively in the conversation



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Modules 5 and 6 focused on the Assessment process and took you through all three steps while considering a number of scenarios. The handout provided for this module is intended to be a planning sheet that you can use for all 10 steps. Feel free to revisit modules 5 and 6 if you wish to consider their content in relation to a conversation you are currently planning.

ASSESS

1. Is a conversation appropriate?
2. Why is this conversation going to be difficult?
3. Set context

PLAN

4. Clarify the issues
5. Be aware of communication barriers.
6. Communicate impact using “I” statements
7. Consider the setting
8. Prepare for follow-up questions
9. Plan the conversation

PARTICIPATE

- ➡ 10. Participate actively in the conversation

This module will take you through steps 4-10 in order to help you further plan and actively participate in a difficult conversation.

ASSESS

1. Is a conversation appropriate?
2. Why is this conversation going to be difficult?
3. Set context

PLAN

4. Clarify the issues

5. Be aware of communication barriers.
6. Communicate impact using “I” statements
7. Consider the setting
8. Prepare for follow-up questions
9. Plan the conversation

PARTICIPATE

10. Participate actively in the conversation



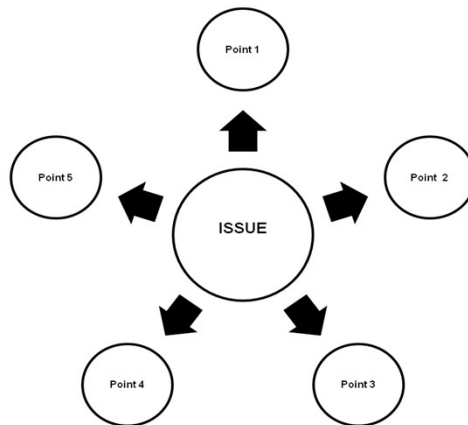
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Let's begin with Step 4: Clarifying the Issue that needs to be addressed.

Clarify the Issues



Sometimes an issue may seem so complex that when you consider having a difficult conversation about it, you don't know where to start. Take time to make sure the issue is clear in your own mind before you begin the conversation.

It can sometimes be helpful to talk the issue through with someone you trust during. In addition, staff in the Conflict Management and Human Rights Office can help you process your thoughts and separate the issue into its key points.

You may have more or less key points than this diagram indicates. The number of points is not important. Break the issue down sufficiently in your notes to help remind you of where you want to go next if emotions or other elements of the discussion distract you.

ASSESS

1. Is a conversation appropriate?
2. Why is this conversation going to be difficult?
3. Set context

PLAN

4. Clarify the issues
- 5. Be aware of communication barriers.**
6. Communicate impact using “I” statements
7. Consider the setting
8. Prepare for follow-up questions
9. Plan the conversation

PARTICIPATE

10. Participate actively in the conversation



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Next take time to consider what barriers might interfere with this conversation.

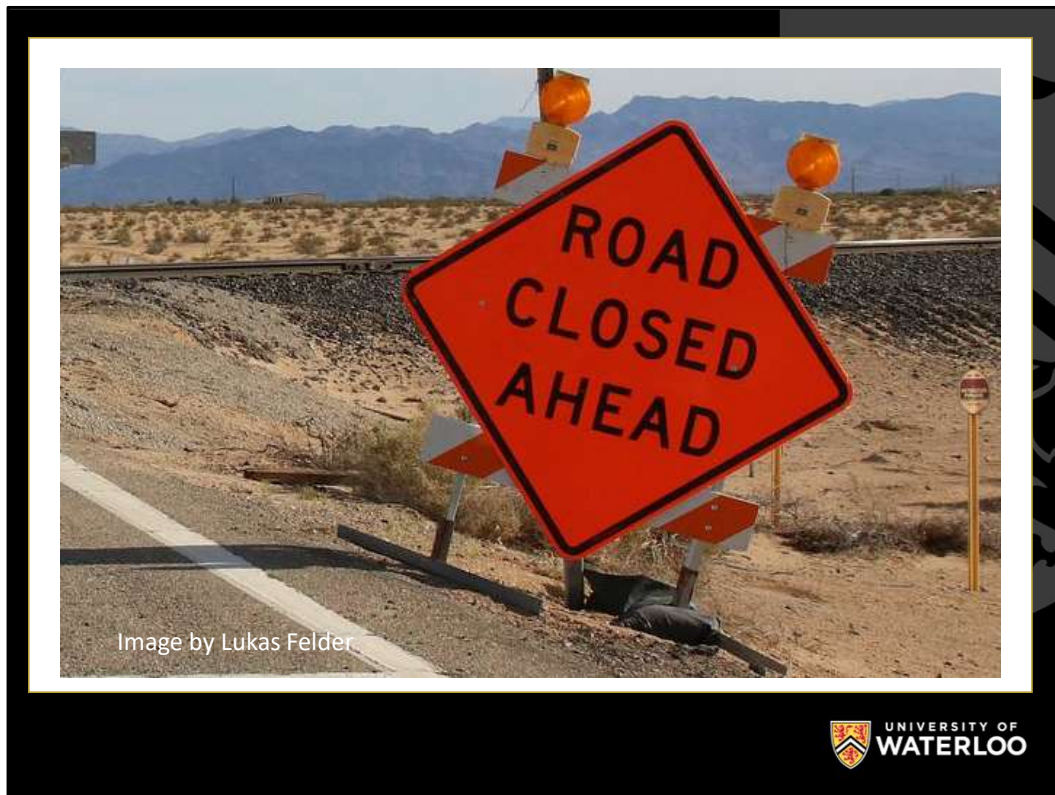


Image by Lukas Felder from Pixabay

Part 4 of this series takes a very thorough look at barriers that are impacting you as an individual including assumptions you might be making, negative filters you have in place, and untruths you may have been telling yourself.

Part 5 helped you examine the impact of substance, process and relationship on the conversation that you are planning. Go back and reflect on the notes you made for each of these modules and consider how to ensure these barriers do not negatively impact the conversation that you are currently planning.

Remember in Part 6, when we discussed Li and Dr. Keller and reflected on the ideal time for their conversation? One reason you might consider delaying a conversation, is to give yourself time to remove or minimize a barrier that you think will interfere with effective communication.

If you're not sure how to minimize or remove a barrier, you may wish to reach out the Conflict Management and Human Rights office for guidance.

ASSESS

1. Is a conversation appropriate?
2. Why is this conversation going to be difficult?
3. Set context

PLAN

4. Clarify the issues
5. Be aware of communication barriers.
- 6. Communicate impact using “I” statements**
7. Consider the setting
8. Prepare for follow-up questions
9. Plan the conversation

PARTICIPATE

10. Participate actively in the conversation



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Back in Part 2 of this series, we discussed Green Zone Tools, and you were introduced to communicating impact. This is a tool that can also be applied within a conversation in response to a Blue Zone situation.

Communicate Impact Using “I” Statements

When you _____

I feel (felt) _____

Could you _____



It can be helpful to consider ahead of time how you might communicate impact during your conversation. Remember, the intention is to tell the person how their behavior impacted you without labelling them or labelling their behavior. Preparation can help you consider what wording may be more or less effective and boost your confidence going into the conversation. The model on the slide can be used as a guide, feel free to modify the model to fit your needs, but always double check that your focus is on communicating impact.

If you need a bit of a refresher on this topic, feel free to go back and review Part 2. A few examples are also provided in your handout.

ASSESS

1. Is a conversation appropriate?
2. Why is this conversation going to be difficult?
3. Set context

PLAN

4. Clarify the issues
5. Be aware of communication barriers.
6. Communicate impact using “I” statements
- 7. Consider the setting**
8. Prepare for follow-up questions
9. Plan the conversation

PARTICIPATE

10. Participate actively in the conversation



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Back in Parts 5 and 6, I mentioned that where and when you have your conversation can be important especially if there is a power imbalance between you and the other person. One of the benefits of preparing a context statement, like we did in module 6, is that it can provide the other person with an opportunity to help choose the setting.

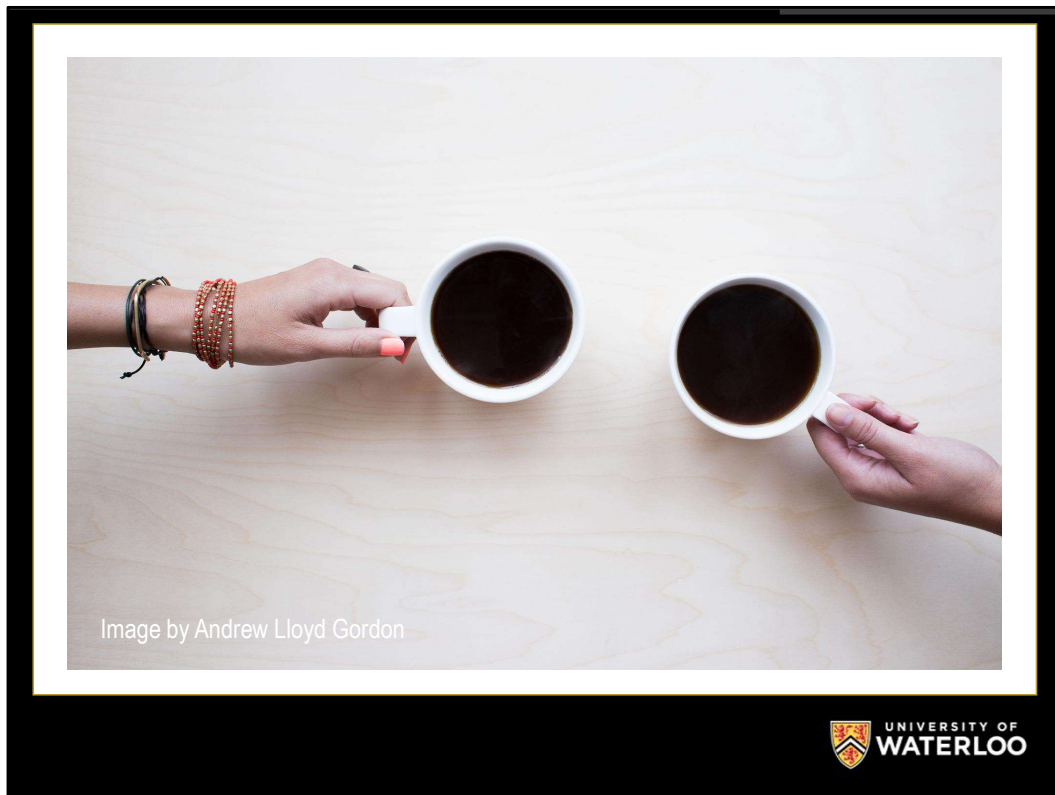


Image by Andrew Lloyd Gordon from Pixabay

I remember speaking with someone who had been invited to have a conversation with a supervisor in their office. When they entered the office, they were offered a tiny seat in the corner in front of the supervisor's huge desk which took up most of the office. They recounted how intimidating this setting was and how it magnified the power imbalance that was already apparent. Consider how much it could have helped the conversation if the supervisor had met with this person in a more comfortable setting that put them at ease.

When you are preparing for your conversation, consider carefully when and where it will take place. If possible, select a time when neither of you will feel stressed, distracted, or emotional and choose a quiet place where your conversation will not be overheard or interrupted by others.

ASSESS

1. Is a conversation appropriate?
2. Why is this conversation going to be difficult?
3. Set context

PLAN

4. Clarify the issues
5. Be aware of communication barriers.
6. Communicate impact using “I” statements
7. Consider the setting
- 8. Prepare for follow-up questions**
9. Plan the conversation

PARTICIPATE

10. Participate actively in the conversation



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Remember, this conversation will not be one sided. Are there questions you think the other person will ask you? If so, what are they? Take time to jot them down on your handout. Think about how you will respond so that you are not left struggling for words.

ASSESS

1. Is a conversation appropriate?
2. Why is this conversation going to be difficult?
3. Set context

PLAN

4. Clarify the issues
5. Be aware of communication barriers.
6. Communicate impact using “I” statements
7. Consider the setting
8. Prepare for follow-up questions
9. **Plan the conversation**

PARTICIPATE

10. Participate actively in the conversation



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Consider taking some of the notes you have made in this planning process with you when you have the conversation. You can simply explain that you’ve brought few notes as reminders. The fact that you have taken time to make notes will reflect the fact that you care about your relationship with the other person.

ASSESS

1. Is a conversation appropriate?
2. Why is this conversation going to be difficult?
3. Set context

PLAN

4. Clarify the issues
5. Be aware of communication barriers.
6. Communicate impact using “I” statements
7. Consider the setting
8. Prepare for follow-up questions
9. Plan the conversation

PARTICIPATE

- 10. Participate actively in the conversation**



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Finally, remember that you need to participate actively in the conversation. You are not just having this conversation to present your own thoughts and feelings. You are there to work collaboratively with the other person in order to come up with a mutually acceptable solution to the issue at hand.



Image by user1505195587 from Pixabay

Here are some strategies for actively participating:

- Speak calmly.
- Be aware of the nonverbal messages that you are sending through body language and tone of voice.
- Make less statements and ask more questions.
- LISTEN to what is being communicated. This will help you develop an understanding of the other person's message to you and will help minimize assumptions, misinterpretations, miscommunications, and misunderstandings.
- By making a sincere effort to understand the other person's point of view, you are demonstrating that you care. When an individual feels that you care about them and what they are saying, tension is often reduced.
- Let the other person know that they have been heard and understood by summarizing what you have heard them say.
- Be honest with yourself. If your emotions are having a negative impact on the conversation, consider stopping the conversation temporarily if possible.

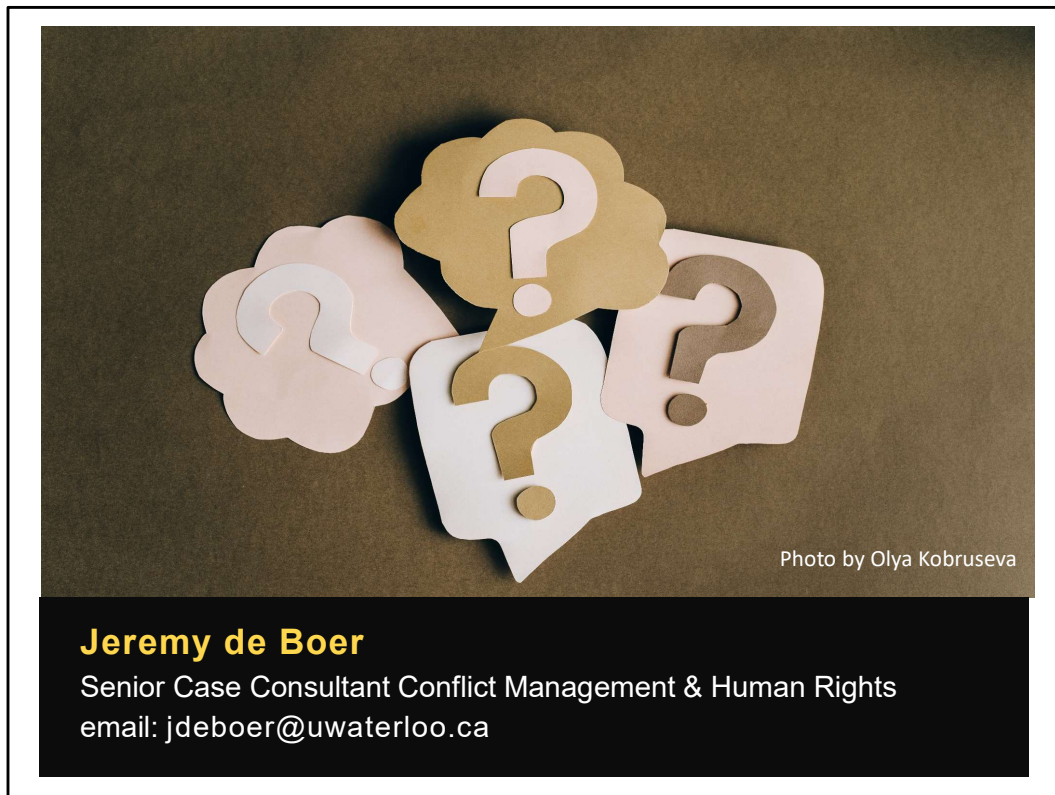


Photo by Olya Kobruseva: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/question-marks-on-paper-crafts-5428836/>

If you have any questions or concerns or if you would like to access any of the services offered by our office, contact Jeremy de Boer.

In our next module will focus on recognizing and responding when you have arrived in the redzone.