

Navigating Difficult Conversations with Confidence

Activity Overview

This educational activity helps clinicians and interprofessional team members navigate difficult or emotionally charged conversations with greater confidence. Through practical examples and real-world scenarios, participants will explore why conversations become challenging and how emotional responses can affect communication. The activity introduces self-management strategies and a structured communication approach to support respectful, empathetic dialogue during complex interactions such as coverage discussions, prior authorizations, and system navigation.

Key Takeaways

- Recognize what makes conversations difficult and identify emotional responses that can derail productive dialogue.
- Apply self-management principles to regulate emotions, stay respectful, and remain curious under pressure.
- This activity introduces the LEAP (Listen, Empathize, Add context, Provide closure) communication framework to structure difficult conversations with empathy and clarity.
- Evaluate communication choices in real-world scenarios to build trust, convey accurate information, and support constructive outcomes.

Tools and Resources

- LEAP Communication Framework (Listen, Empathize, Add context, Provide closure)
- Vital Points on Sparq – A centralized resource offering clear insights into complex health care topics and system navigation
- Scenario-based learning modules featuring applied practice (e.g., Sofia and Alex conversation)

References and Further Reading

1. Managing Difficult Conversations: An Essential Communication Skill for All Professionals and Leaders. <https://academic.oup.com/academicmedicine/article/97/7/973/8345190>
2. Complex conversations in a healthcare setting: Experiences from an interprofessional workshop on clinician-patient communication skills. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12909-021-02785-7>
3. Avoiding Difficult Conversations in the Australian Health Sector <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2377960820941978>
4. Navigating Difficult Conversations in the Inpatient Setting: A Framework for Hospitalists. <https://bpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.brown.edu/dist/9/350/files/2025/07/141104-navigating-difficult-conversations-in-the-inpatient-setting-a-framework-for-hospitalists-1.pdf>