Changing our Minds: REFRAMING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

Develop a common language to talk to and about each other, based in empathy and understanding

Reframe "difficult customers" as individuals with a possible unmet need

Understand challenging behavior, the impacts of trauma and toxic stress

What do you need?

Start by checking in with yourself. When you're struggling at work, what need is going unmet? *What do you need to be able to do your best in this moment?*

Empathy; the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. When we are able to *identify our own feelings*, we develop the skill to relate authentically and to help others to do so in turn

People do well if they can

- We all have desire to feel successful and content
  - Find safety and belonging?
  - Feel healthy and fit?
  - Have a sense of agency and control?

- If someone is having a difficult time (perhaps you both are becoming frustrated), begin to question,
  - What's **getting in the way**?
  - What does this individual **need** to be **successful**?

Common Needs	Feelings when Unmet
Consistency	Frustrated
To matter	Uncomfortable
Shelter/Safety	Angry
Connection	Hopeless
Order	Vulnerable
Ease	Overwhelmed
Control/Autonomy	Afraid
Sleep/Rest	Confused
Meaning	Lonely
Stability	

Trauma, adverse experiences, toxic stress, and Dementia

all negatively impact life expectancy, sedentary behavior, memory and **cognition**, attention, **emotional regulation**, sleep, beliefs about self, ways of **interrelating**, etc

Trauma-Informed Care invites us to **appreciate the impact** of these experiences in our lives in order to build empathy and understanding, and to **expand our interpretations of others**.

Applying a **new lens** to frustrating interactions allows us to reframe challenging behavior.

- *Yelling and attempts to leave the building...*
  - Determined to catch a flight to Iowa for a funeral?
  - A need for connection and community may be unmet?

- *Rude, disrespectful, derogatory comments...*
  - Reminded of someone from the past?
  - Decline in cognitive functioning, "filter" degrading?

Now What?
RESPONDING IN THE MOMENT

1. Identify and understand the individuals concern

Remain curious: asking questions to identify the issue, generate shared understanding
- "Can you tell me about the problem?"
- "How can I help?"

Observation: verbalizing the unspoken, while avoiding criticisms or judgement
- "I noticed that you haven't been coming to activities lately"
- "It seems like maybe you're frustrated?"

Reflection: confirmation that you understand the issue at hand
- "What I'm hearing you say is…",
- "It sounds like… did I get that right?"

Validation: acknowledge real concern, recognition that their feelings are valid and worthwhile
- "That sounds like a difficult situation"
- "I can see why that might be upsetting"

If you never get further than helping an individual feel heard and understood, then you have **succeeded**

2. Self-regulate and identify own concern

Ultimately, we are here to serve. When we are **flustered** or **frustrated**, it's much harder to be helpful.

Accept an invitation to **check in with ourselves**, to meet our own needs.

- Focus on your breathing, getting assistance, distancing self from situation when reasonable, basic needs (food, water, rest)

Reflect on the true concern. Emergent safety concerns will arise, however, sometimes the answer is "*I just need to get the thing done*".

At times, we may need to **divorce ourselves from the completion of the task** when by insisting on doing so we impede another's need for autonomy or respect.

3. Working collaboratively

Partnering in care acknowledgement of the universal desire to enact **agency** (control and autonomy) over our lives

Doing **with**, not doing **to** builds trust and shares the reigns, instead of taking power away.

- When we behave as if to say "*this is how it's going to be*", we are demonstrating that their wishes and desires do not matter

Putting our skills to work

Transparency -making clear expectations and indicating what's to come

Consistency - meeting our innate need for predictability helps us feel safe and in control

Choice - prioritizing others' needs for autonomy and control

Empathy - building understanding through shared experiences

Collaboration - doing with, not doing to, acknowledging our need for agency and control

Self-Care - helping others to the best of our abilities asks us to identify and take care of our own needs