

# CONVERSATION CHEAT SHEET



# 1 Before the Conversation

- **Clarify your goal**      What outcomes do you want?  
Resolution, alignment, or to be heard?
  - **Anticipate emotions**      What feelings might surface (yours or theirs)?
  - **Choose the right time and place**      Select a private, neutral setting.
  - **Practice your opening**      Be clear, calm, and respectful from the start.
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# 2 During the Conversation

- **Start with curiosity**      “I’d like to understand your perspective...”
- **State facts, not assumptions**      Stick to observable behaviors, not labels.
- **Use “I” statements**      “I feel concerned when deadlines slip” versus “You’re unreliable.”
- **Acknowledge emotions**      “I can see this is frustrating.”
- **Pause before reacting**      Take a pause as needed to respond thoughtfully.
- **Seek common ground**      “We both want this project to succeed.”

## 3 After the Conversation

- **Summarize agreements** “So, we’ve decided to...”
  - **Follow up** Send a quick recap or check in later.
  - **Reflect** What worked well? What could you improve for next time?
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## 4 Phrases to Keep Handy

- “Help me understand your perspective.”
- “Here’s what I’m experiencing...”
- “What do you need right now?”
- “Can we brainstorm solutions together?”
- “I hear you. Let’s find a path forward.”

## 5 Common Pitfalls to Avoid

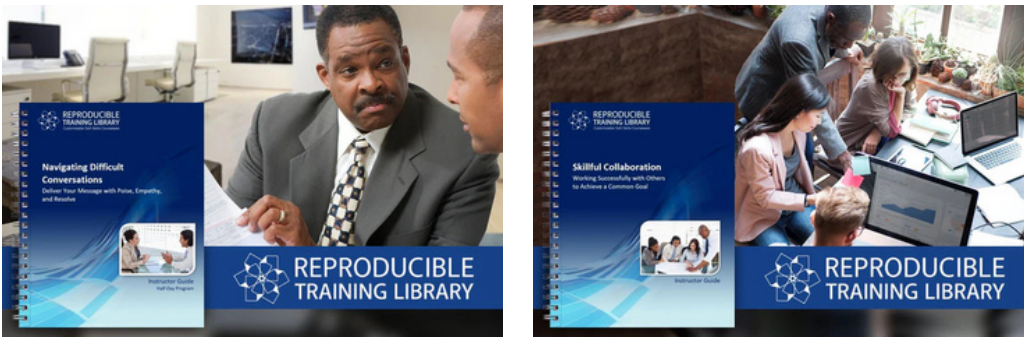
- Avoid blaming or accusing
  - Don't interrupt or talk over
  - Don't minimize their feelings
  - Don't go in without a goal
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## 6 Formula for Framing Difficult Conversations

- **Open with purpose:** “I’d like to talk about how we can improve \_\_\_\_\_.”
- **Share your perspective:** “I’ve noticed \_\_\_\_\_ and it impacts \_\_\_\_\_.”
- **Invite them to share their perspective:** “How do you see it?”
- **Collaborate on next steps:** “What would work best moving forward?”

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