# CONSIDERATION CONVERSATION GUIDE

A useful starting point for approaching important conversations with clarity, respect, and room for another person's voice.

### THE IDEA BEHIND THIS TOOL

A considerate conversation is not about finding perfect words or getting someone to agree. It reflects a relational stance: consciously regarding another person's humanity before, during, and after we speak.

Consideration: “The conscious regard for the needs, values, and dignity of others, especially when making decisions.”

## THREE LENSES. ONE PRACTICE.

The same conversation can be experienced differently depending on your role and influence.

### INDIVIDUAL

Notice what you feel, need, and may be assuming.

### LEADER

Make space for honest voice without using position as pressure.

### ORGANIZATION

Support dialogue through fair expectations and safe processes.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

1. Choose one everyday, one-to-one conversation where respectful dialogue is appropriate.
2. Use the three-part framing on page 2 to prepare a short invitation, not a script to memorize.
3. Use the listening reminders and reflection questions to notice your own relational stance.

### A NECESSARY LIMIT

This is a personal conversation aid, not permission to press for disclosure, conduct mediation, or facilitate a restorative process. Participation and safety matter as much as the words you choose.

# Before you start: frame the invitation

CARES uses three simple elements to frame deeper or challenging conversations: a headline, a why, and consent or buy-in. They help communicate purpose without assuming the other person is ready to talk.

1 **THE HEADLINE**

Name the topic clearly. Be specific without labeling the person or assigning motives.

"Could we revisit how responsibilities were divided yesterday?"

2 **THE WHY**

Explain what you hope the conversation will make possible, such as understanding or clarity.

"I want to understand how we each saw it and avoid confusion next time."

3 **THE INVITATION**

Ask whether the person is willing and whether the time is appropriate. Make room for another time.

"Would you be open to talking today, or would another time work better?"

## YOUR CONVERSATION STARTER

Write it in your own voice. Your opening should be clear, brief, and genuinely inviting.

**TOPIC / HEADLINE** *What do I want to talk about?*

**WHY / PURPOSE** *Why does it matter to address this thoughtfully?*

**INVITATION / TIMING** *How can I invite, rather than demand, participation?*

# During the conversation: stay relational

The goal is not to win an argument or force agreement. Draw on these practices as needed; they are not a rigid sequence or a substitute for professional facilitation.

### LISTEN FOR MEANING

Give attention to what is said and how it is expressed. Notice the urge to prepare your rebuttal.

### INVITE PERSPECTIVE

Ask open, respectful questions. Give the other person room to decline personal details.

### CHECK ASSUMPTIONS

Distinguish observation from interpretation. Consider what you may not yet know.

### RESPOND WITH CARE

Watch pace, tone, and power differences. Acknowledge impact while keeping appropriate boundaries.

## FOUR PHRASES THAT MAKE ROOM

"What would you like me to understand?"

"I may be missing something. How are you seeing it?"

"Would it be okay if I shared my perspective?"

"What would be a reasonable next step from here?"

### WHEN THE CONVERSATION STALLS

Pause, clarify, or agree to return another time. You can respect someone's dignity and hold a boundary. A pause is not a promise of agreement, forgiveness, or reconciliation.

# Afterward: notice what changed

A conversation becomes more considerate through reflection and follow-through, not a perfect opening line. Choose one insight and one action that remain within your responsibility.

1. **What did I learn that I had not considered?**

2. **Where did I listen well, and where did I make assumptions?**

3. **What is one commitment or boundary I need to honor?**

## KNOW WHEN A GUIDE IS NOT ENOUGH

This guide does not qualify someone to facilitate circles, mediation, restorative conferences, investigations, or trauma-focused conversations. Do not use it to pressure someone into disclosure, forgiveness, reconciliation, or participation.

For safety concerns, threats, harassment, retaliation, coercion, or serious power imbalances, follow appropriate reporting and safeguarding processes and seek qualified support.

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP WITH CARES

Explore Restorative Leadership Training, Conflict Repair & Mediation, or support for your team. CARES can help identify when deeper learning or skilled facilitation is appropriate.

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