# REPAIRING CONVERSATIONS

The mindset, words, and approach for reconnecting when **repairing a relationship is the goal.**

### REPAIR BEGINS WITH HOW WE REGARD ONE ANOTHER

A restorative conversation creates an opportunity to listen, better understand impact, and take responsibility. It cannot guarantee agreement, forgiveness, trust, or reconciliation. The relationship is more important than winning the argument.

## MINDSET BEFORE WORDS

1

### SEE A PERSON, NOT A PROBLEM

In *The Anatomy of Peace*, Arbinger distinguishes seeing others as people from treating them as objects or obstacles. Remember that the other person has needs, hopes, and fears as real as your own.

**Ask yourself: Am I seeing a whole person or only what they did?**

2

### BE WILLING TO LEARN, NOT JUST EXPLAIN

You can name real harm while questioning your assumptions. Listening to understand is different from listening for a moment to defend your position.

**Ask yourself: What could I be missing about their experience?**

3

### RELEASE CONTROL OF THE OUTCOME

Your part is to show up honestly, listen, own your impact, and respect boundaries. The other person retains the right to disagree, decline, or need time.

**Ask yourself: Can I offer repair without demanding reconciliation?**

### CONSIDERATION IS THE FOUNDATION

"The conscious regard for the needs, values, and dignity of others, especially when making decisions."

Concept reference: *The Anatomy of Peace*, The Arbinger Institute (5th ed., 2025). CARES reflection and conversation applications.

# Approach the conversation with care

Prepare an invitation, not a speech. Use CARES' established **Headline → Why → Invitation** approach to make room for another person's choice and perspective.

### 1 HEADLINE

Name the specific moment or concern without labeling the person.

### 2 WHY

Share why understanding or repair matters to you.

### 3 INVITATION

Ask whether they are willing, and whether this is a good time.

### AN OPENING IN YOUR OWN VOICE

"I'd like to talk about what happened because I value our relationship and want to understand your experience. Would you be open to a conversation?"

## FOUR PRACTICES WHEN YOU TALK

### LISTEN FOR MEANING

Let the other person finish. Listen for what matters to them, not only what you need to correct.

*"What would you like me to understand?"*

### DISAGREE WITH DIGNITY

You can disagree with a perspective or behavior without diminishing someone's humanity.

*"I understand this differently. May I share my view?"*

### OWN YOUR PART

Name your actions and impact without excuses or demands for an apology in return.

*"I see that my words caused hurt. I regret that."*

### ALLOW TIME AND CHOICE

Repair may require changed behavior, boundaries, or more than one conversation.

*"We may need time. I will honor that."*

### A QUICK REPAIR CHECK

Did I listen with curiosity? Can I name my own responsibility? Am I respecting the other person's right to disagree, decline, or take time?

**Safety comes first.** Never pressure disclosure, forgiveness, or reconciliation. Abuse, threats, coercion, retaliation, or serious power imbalances call for safeguards and appropriate qualified support, not an improvised repair conversation.

CARES training and support: careslp.org/contact/ • Educational guide; not mediation or restorative facilitation training.