

Leading Difficult Conversations

LEAD 6211

Course Outline

Description: Having difficult conversations is part of every leadership position. Learn to approach the toughest conversations with confidence by developing skills to move past emotion and deliver your message clearly and positively.

Topics

- Assertive Communication
- Reducing defensiveness and seemingly illogical resistance
- Defusing emotions
- The focused conversation method
- The power of a positive no

Course Goals: To create greater comfort with initiating, and engaging in, difficult conversations, by learning how to structure the conversation, how to reduce defensiveness in others.

Course Objectives: At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand what makes some conversations difficult for them
- Know when to speak up (and when to choose a different approach)
- Differentiate between assertive, aggressive and passive approaches
- Say what you know to be true and not more than you know to be true using 'I' statements'
- Ask questions without causing defensiveness
- Handle seemingly illogical resistance
- Use empathy and active listening to reduce emotional intensity
- Structure conversations using findings from neuroscience
- Say 'no' without harming the relationship

Texts: Course manual is provided at the start of the course

Attendance Requirements:

Students are required to attend 100% of class time in order to receive a completion for this course. A grade report can be printed from myWCS.

Code of Student Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to define the general standard of conduct expected of students registered at Western University, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions that may be imposed, and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow. For the complete Code of Student Conduct: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/board/code.pdf>

Course Schedule: Two consecutive days from 9 am to 4 pm

What makes some conversations 'difficult'?

Assertive contrasted to passive and aggressive approaches

When to speak up

Video 'Assert Yourself'

'I' statements

Open versus closed questions

Focused Conversation Method

Scrambled conversation exercise

Develop conversation using 'I' statements and open questions

Seemingly illogical resistance and SCARF

Empathy and Active Listening

Case study

Practice sessions

Evaluation Method:

As part of the course/instructor evaluation, a survey will be sent to you electronically by Continuing Studies. You will be asked the following questions. Please consider these throughout the course.

1. How would you rate your overall experience?
2. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements:
 - a. The course content was relevant and valuable.
 - b. The instructor conducted class sessions in an organized, well-planned manner.
 - c. The instructor explained concepts clearly.
 - d. The instructor displayed enthusiasm and energy in conducting class sessions.
 - e. The instructor made me feel comfortable in the learning environment.
 - f. The instructor encouraged my participation and interaction.