

CORNERSTONE 2020 RESOURCE

The Art of Having Difficult Conversations

[Elective 3]

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SUMMARY:	In this session you will have the opportunity to observe, practice and reflect on the art of having difficult conversations. We will explore various components of difficult conversations, and you will come away with tools and strategies that can be applied to your work and relationships this summer. - <i>Submitted by Jonah Canner & Seth Braunstein</i>
TOPIC(S):	Difficult Conversations, Engaging Campers
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will come away with strategies for engaging campers, peers, and supervisors in difficult conversations
AUDIENCE:	Staff, 20 people
TIMING:	90 min
APPENDICES:	Text & Strategy Worksheet; Observation Worksheet; Making Mensches Periodic Table
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Making Mensches Periodic Table or Cards, Pens
SET-UP DETAILS:	Open space for participants to move around and sit in a big circle

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

Open with “Bop” (10 min)

The Group stands in a circle. One player starts out in the middle of the circle. That player will go up to other players on the perimeter of the circle and, one by one, attempt to get them “out”. If a player gets “out” that player replaces the player in the middle and continues trying to get back into the circle by getting other players “out.” There are two basic things that the player in the middle can do to try to get the other players out:

1. The player in the middle walks up to a player on the perimeter and says, “bibidy-bibidy-bop.” The player on the perimeter who is being challenged must say, “bop” before the player in the middle finishes saying, “bibidy-bibidy-bop”. If s/he does not then s/he replaces the person in the middle.
2. The player in the middle walks up to a player on the perimeter and says, “bop.” The player on the perimeter must remain silent. If s/he does not then s/he is in the middle.

Once the group understands and has practiced these two there are many more things that the player in the middle can say. In these examples the players challenged must perform the task before the player in the middle can count to ten. Here are a few examples: “Fire Hydrant” – the player challenged must stand still with his/her hands on his/her head, while the players on either side of the player challenged must lift a leg a make a pissing sound as though they were dogs peeing on a fire hydrant. “Charlie’s Angles” – the player challenged and the ones on either side must get into a Charlie’s Angles pose and, in their most seductive voices, say, “hi charlie.” “Disco Ball” – the player challenged has to

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spin around while the players on either side do the disco dance while singing, "Stayin' Alive." There are many more of these that can be added.

Transition to "Sculpted Images" (20 min)

With the group still standing in a circle explain that you will be calling out words and they will be sculpting their own body into a physical and visual representation of the word you call out. Have them spread the circle out so they are double arms-length apart. Call out the following words from Making Mensch: A Periodic Table:

- Understanding (4)
- Compassion (10)
- Love (14)

Now have them find a partner (preferably someone standing next to or near them). Explain that they will take turns sculpting their partner for each of the following words:

- Curiosity (15)
- Humility (20)
- Gratitude (21)
- Patience (26)

Now randomly call out these same words (or numbers). When you call out a word (or number) they have to get into their sculpted image that corresponds to that word (or number).

Have each pair join two other pairs to form groups of six. Each group will create a collective image using all of their bodies for each of the following words that you call out:

- Community
- Trust
- Conversation
- Conflict

Conversation Practice (60 minutes)

Turn to a buddy and discuss, what kinds of difficult conversations are you anticipating having this summer? What kinds of conversations would you like to practice? Then open to whole group.

Move to an open space style group breakouts to practice these conversations.

After they discuss for a while introduce our texts and tools.

Get everyone back into one circle. Ask how it felt to participate in this series of activities. Ask what came up for people. Ask what they are taking away from this session. Revisit the characteristic that you called out at the beginning of the activity. Explain that those are the characteristics of listening. Reveal specific things to do to be a good listener:

- 4 - Understanding - put yourself in the speakers shoes
- 10 - Compassion - assume best intent
- 14 - Love - decide to love the person who is speaking
- 15 - Curiosity - ask questions
- 20 - Humility - it's not about you!
- 21 - Gratitude - share that you appreciate that they have chosen to share with you
- 26 - Patience - allow for silence but stay with them

Take a moment to reflect on the entire session. Invite questions.

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ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

“Bop” is a game that can be brought directly back to camp in many settings.

The “Sculpted Images” activity can be repeated with any age group. Just choose different words depending on your audience and your learning objective. The Making Menschen: A Periodic Table can be mined for lots of great characteristics to have participants embody through sculpture.