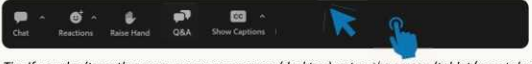


Welcome to Today's Webinar

Access your menu options on the bottom of the screen (desktop) or tap the screen (tablet/smartphone).




Tip: If you don't see the menu, move your cursor (desktop) or tap the screen (tablet/smartphone).


- **Chat:** Watch for information and resources from the event hosts. Chat technical issues to all panelists.
- **Reactions:** Click the button to react to the presentation. Click the arrow to change reaction intensity or hide reactions shared by others.
- **Raise Hand:** All participants' lines are muted during today's webinar. During the Q&A session, raise your hand if you want the host to unmute you.
- **Q&A:** During the Q&A session, send questions for panelists.
- **Show Captions:** Show or hide subtitles, view a transcript in a separate Zoom window, and change settings.

1

Questions?



Use **Q&A** for subject-matter questions.



Use **Chat** for technical support or resource questions.

2

Reminder

Please speak clearly and avoid using inappropriate language. Maintain a polite and respectful tone.

3

Difficult Conversations, Mental Health and Belonging

A Workshop for Leaders

March 13, 2024

4

Welcome

SHIP
State Health Insurance Assistance Program
Navigating Medicare

SMP
Senior Medicare Patrol
Preventing Medicare Fraud

**nc
oe**
national council
on aging

5

Today's Speaker

Gina Weekley
Consultant & Owner of [The Weekley Connection](#)

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Session Norms

BE OPEN	BE PRESENT	EMBRACE DISCOMFORT

8



Learning Objectives

- 1 How to Navigate Difficult Conversations
- 2 Protecting our Mental Health
- 3 Avoiding Masking and Fostering Belonging

9

DISCLAIMER

"Exploration of this work is not about villainizing one group over another or making anyone feel guilt, shame, or fear. It's about making progress on our behaviors and understanding how they limit possibilities for us or others. Our hope is that this experience creates awareness, connection, and commitment."

10

Consider a time you had a difficult conversation, what made it difficult?

Jot down your thoughts.



11

What is a Difficult Conversation?

- A difficult conversation is one that is uncomfortable, emotionally charged, or challenging to have.
- It may be about a sensitive topic, or it may involve conflict between two or more people.





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Why are Difficult Conversations Important?

Difficult conversations can be uncomfortable, but they are **essential** for *building strong relationships* and *achieving our goals*.

13

Why are Difficult Conversations Important?


When we are able to have **constructive difficult conversations**:

- We can **resolve conflict**,
- Build **trust**,
- Create a more **positive and productive environment**.

14

How to identify a difficult conversation?

The topic of conversation is sensitive or taboo.



15

How to identify a difficult conversation?

The other person seems angry, upset, or uncomfortable.



16

How to identify a difficult conversation?



You feel yourself getting defensive or angry.



17

How to identify a difficult conversation?

You have different values or beliefs than the other person.



18

Tips to Approach a Difficult Conversation

- *Choose the right time and place to have the conversation!*



19

Tips to Approach a Difficult Conversation

2. *Be clear about your goals for the conversation!*



20

Tips to Approach a Difficult Conversation

3. *Engage goodness and assume positive intent!*



21

Tips to Approach a Difficult Conversation

4. Listen to the other person's perspective.



22

Tips to Approach a Difficult Conversation

5. Be respectful and empathetic, even if you disagree.



23

Tips to Approach a Difficult Conversation

6. Share the **impact**, using "I" statements to express your feelings.



24

Tips to Approach a Difficult Conversation

7. Provide solutions, or alternative phrases or replacement behaviors.



25

Tips to Approach a Difficult Conversation



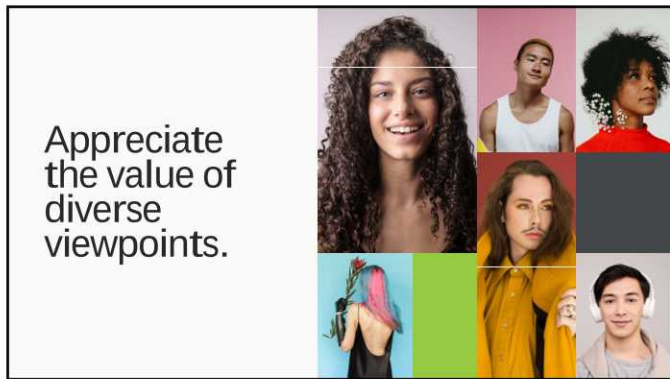
8. Stay calm and centered. If you feel yourself getting worked up, remove yourself!

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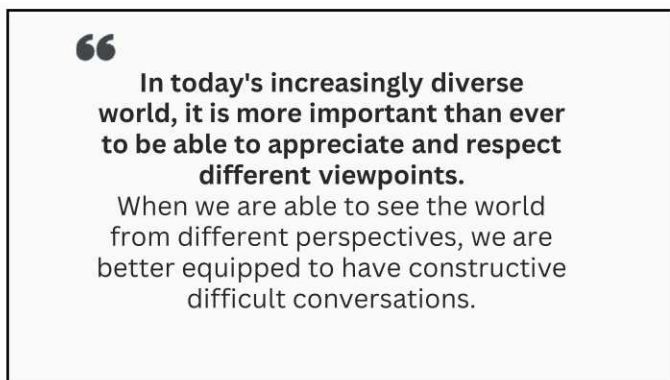


Active listening is a critical skill for navigating difficult conversations. It involves paying close attention to what the other person is saying, both verbally and nonverbally. It also involves asking clarifying questions and reflecting back what you have heard to ensure that you understand.

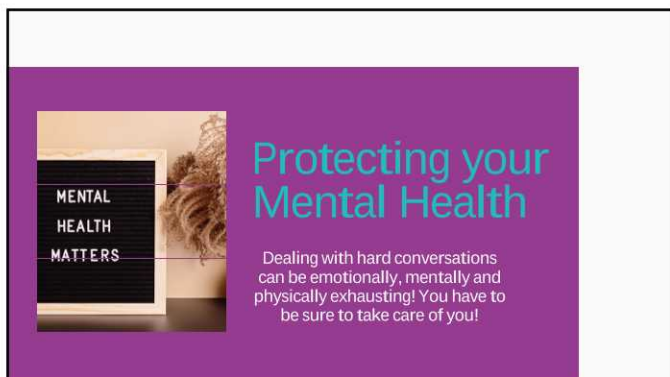
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Challenges

Emotional Toll:
being empathetic and understanding diverse needs can be draining.

Potential for misunderstanding:
even with the best intentions, missteps can and will occur!

Challenge of constant learning:
staying updated with diverse cultures, identities and issues.

31

Managing the Mental Stress?

Self Awareness: Recognize your own biases, triggers and emotions.

32

Managing the Mental Stress?

Set Boundaries: Ensure personal time, breaks, and opportunities for self-care.

33

Managing the Mental Stress?

Build a support network: Lean on mentors, peers, or coaches who understand the unique challenges.

34

Managing the Mental Stress?

Mindfulness and relaxation techniques: Deep breathing, meditation, and grounding exercises can help in staying centered.

35

Managing the Mental Stress?

Continuous Learning: Equip yourself with knowledge to navigate different challenges; it can be empowering.

36

Managing the Mental Stress?

Seek Feedback: Constructive feedback helps in growth and avoids potential pitfalls.

37

Commit to one new strategy

Encourage those around you to do the same, and create an environment where mental health is prioritized.

This is a journey, not a destination!



38

Avoiding Masking and Fostering Belonging




There are risks to hiding your true self!
Let's create a place of belonging.

39

Masking refers to the act of concealing one's true self or feelings in order to fit in, adapt to social expectations, or avoid negative perceptions.

In many contexts, masking involves suppressing characteristics or behaviors that might be deemed as different or unacceptable in a given social setting.



40

Belonging is the feeling of being accepted, included, and valued within a community, group, or environment.

It's a deeply personal, intrinsic experience that involves a sense of connection and affirmation, where one can be their authentic self without the fear of exclusion or judgment.



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Why do people engage in masking?

- fear of rejection
- societal pressures
- past traumas


42

What are the risks of hiding you?

Decreased Self-worth: *Believing that one's true self is not good enough.*

Impaired relationships: *Relationships built on facades lack depth and true connection.*

Mental Health Repercussions: *Increased anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation.*



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Tips to foster true belonging!

Self Awareness: Recognize when you're masking and understand the reasons behind it.

44

Tips to foster true belonging!

Practice Vulnerability: Share personal stories, challenges, and feelings with trusted individuals.

45

Tips to foster true belonging!

Cultivate Safe Spaces: Environments where people can be themselves without fear of judgment.

46

Tips to foster true belonging!

Engage in Active Listening: Truly listen to others, valuing their stories and experiences.

47

Tips to foster true belonging!

Encourage Diversity and Inclusion: Celebrate differences and create environments where varied perspectives are honored.

48

Tips to foster true belonging!

Challenge Societal Norms: Advocate for authenticity and challenge stereotypes or norms that push people to mask.

49

What is your commitment today?

How will you better navigate difficult convos?

How will you protect your mental health?

How will foster belonging?

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Thank you for your time!

Let's connect!






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Webinar Resources in the Libraries





1. Login at  www.shiphelp.org
2. Go to the Resource Library
3. Search for keyword "DEI"



1. Login at  smpresource.org
2. Search for keyword "DEI".



1. Resources will be emailed to NCOA's MIPPA listserv.

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Questions?

- Thank you for participating in today's webinar!
- Today's presentation is available for download in the Zoom chat.
- If you have questions later,

 info@shiptacenter.org

 info@smpresource.org

 centerforbenefits@ncoa.org



Use **Q&A** for subject-matter questions.



Use **CHAT** for technical support or resource questions.

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