Difficult Conversations

Objectives:
1. Understand why certain conversations are difficult to have
2. Identify the positive impacts of well managed conversations
3. Develop tools to effectively manage difficult conversations

Origins:
Girl Scout volunteers really care about our organization and our mission. Being a Girl Scout is part of who they are.

A.C.T.I.V.E. Listening:
A – Acknowledge the Speaker
C – Concentrate on the Content
T – Track the Sequence
I – Inquiring Minds Want to Know
V – Vocal & Visual Cues
E – Emotional Control

ERA 1SM:
E – Show Empathy. Open the conversation by showing the listener you understand how they feel.
R – Explain the Reason. Keep this simple and straightforward.
A – Offer an Alternative Solution. Typically this would be one that involves the other person’s participation.
1 – Go one step further. This may not always be possible but see if you can.

Careful Communication:
Stay away from phrases like:
“You must...” and “Don't ask why, just do it”
“You always” or “you never”
“You know better than that”

Instead try...

Explaining what you need and why you need it. Rather than generalize, explain why some thing is an issue, and suggest another way of handling it. Assume they had good intentions and made an honest mistake. Rely on A.C.T.I.V.E. Listening to find out what motivated their behavior.
Example Scenario:
Imagine you are a troop leader. Sally, a parent of a girl in your troop approaches you after a meeting and tells you “you don’t camp enough! When I was a Girl Scout we went camping!”

Exercise 1: A.C.T.I.V.E. Listening
Next to each question, indicate if it is a ‘helpful’ question or a ‘harmful’ question. ‘Helpful Questions’ can help you identify the source of the issue and ‘harmful questions’ could harm your relationship with Sally. Keep in mind you want to avoid accusations!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Harmful</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Why is camping important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Why don’t you ever step up to help out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Why are you always complaining about things?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can you tell me more about your Girl Scout experience?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise 2: ERA 1℠
For this activity, you will draw lines between the components of ERA 1℠ and their corresponding responses. You may choose to work with a neighbor or a small group. Please raise your hand when you have completed the activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empathy</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>1 step further</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can I count on you to team with some other parents to organize the next camping trip?&quot;</td>
<td>As with all activities, for girls to participate there is an adult/girl ratio we need to maintain for safety reasons.</td>
<td>I understand that you would like to see more camping, and I agree – the girls gain so much from this experience.</td>
<td>I can even help you get connected with the online Outdoor Skills training!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>