

Complete Clinician Model

How to Disagree Without Being Disagreeable

Disagreement is a normal, healthy part of human interaction. But when disagreements become heated and tempers flare, if we're not careful, disagreement can lean toward incivility. Overt personal attacks, a poor choice of words, or dismissing the input of others can crush a person and create unnecessary psychological distress among teams.

HOW TO DISAGREE

1 Acknowledge what you're feeling

A challenge to our decisions can feel like a challenge to our expertise. Feelings of anger or fear creep in and the amygdala takes over, hijacking our emotions. Here are a couple ways to move through emotions effectively:

- **Emotional agility** – the ability to manage one's thoughts and feelings in a mindful, values-driven and productive way
- **Affect labeling** – simply identifying the underlying emotion

2 Drop the rope—connect with the person while identifying the problem

All negotiations rest on two big priorities: **results** and **relationships**.

If you don't know the individual on a personal level, get to know them. Start by asking a simple question: "Help me understand..." When you take the time to get to know the other party by asking questions, seeking to understand, and reasoning out the crux of the issue, it's possible to get the results we want without ruining our relationships.

3 Solve the puzzle together—take a collaborative approach

Embrace a growth mindset: we can all learn to stay open, curious and maintain a questioning attitude. If we understand our own feelings, and then seek to understand what matters most to the other individual, we can collaboratively identify shared purpose—nudging us one step closer to mutual understanding and resolution.

It's not easy, but it's worth it.

When you come across your next disagreement, take a moment to identify any negative emotions, connect with the person while identifying the problem, and be curious about collaborative opportunities

If we are introspective about our own responses to disagreement and aim to improve ourselves, our teams will continue their transformation to excellence.