

Difficult Conversations - why we find them challenging and what we can do to make them learning conversations

Heather Grusauskas¹, Patrick Kinsella²

¹Eastern Victoria General Practice Training, Victoria, Australia. ² Eastern Victoria General Practice Training, Victoria, Australia.

Introduction/background:

Delivering negative feedback can be very challenging. Many “difficult” conversations fail because they begin with us starting the conversation from our own perspective.

Purpose and outcomes:

This workshop explores what makes conversations difficult; why we often manage them poorly and what we can do to make them more effective.

Issues for exploration or questions for discussion:

Conversations will be explored using a framework developed by the Harvard Law School. The model describes the fact that there are in fact 3 conversations occurring in most difficult conversations - the "What Happened Conversation", the "Feeling Conversation" and the "Identity Conversation".

Outline of workshop activities - 2 hours

This "hands on" workshop gives participants the opportunity to practice their skills in small groups utilising two scripted scenarios and one unscripted scenario. The participants will work in groups of three in which two will role play whilst the third will observe. These roles will rotate within the group of three. Participants are requested to bring to the workshop a "difficult conversation" that they are about to have or one that they have had in the past. There will be the opportunity for individual participants to feedback on their experiences to the larger group - all within a safe learning environment.