

Conversational Capacity: Flexing Communication Muscle to Improve Maternal and Child Health Efforts

Ki'Yonna Jones, MHA, MBA



National **MCH** Workforce
Development Center
Advancing Health Transformation

Learning Objectives

Manage triggers that arise in difficult situations

Increase positive engagements in personal and work conversations

Describe specific communication strategies for conversations that increase engagement and decrease unproductive behaviors



Communication





Communication as a Change Strategy

Foster environments for learning by:

- Raising critical questions that challenge current operating assumptions
- Facilitating and engaging in reflection and generative conversations
- Finding new connections with others' perspectives and assets
- Framing the opportunity

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THE KEY TO OPEN, BALANCED, AND
NONDEFENSIVE DIALOGUE IN THE WORKPLACE

CONVERSATIONAL CAPACITY

The secret to building **SUCCESSFUL**
TEAMS that **PERFORM** when
the **PRESSURE** is on

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The Sweet Spot

Open, Balanced, Non-Defensive



Combines **CANDOR** with **CURIOSITY**



To Win or Minimize, that is the question..

Minimize

- Cover up views, ideas or info
- Unilateral control the situation to keep it safe
- Water down issue/ sugarcoat
- Prematurely withdraw
- Ask leading questions
- Avoid the issue change the subject
- Use email to voice concerns

WIN

- State position as fact
- Dismiss/discount alternative views
- Solicit support
- Use hyperbole
- Pontificate
- Interrupt
- Ask dismissive questions
- Don't inquire into alternative views



Thought behind the behavior

WIN

- "I need to be right"
- "I need my idea to win"
- "I want others to yield"

MINIMIZE

- "I want to be a team player"
- "I need to preserve this relationship"
- "I want to avoid conflict"
- "I want to be nice"



Reflect and Discuss

1. When do I minimize, shut down, or retreat?
2. When do I dig in, double down, try to “win”?

What does this LOOK like?

How does that affect the conversation?

Share in Chat.

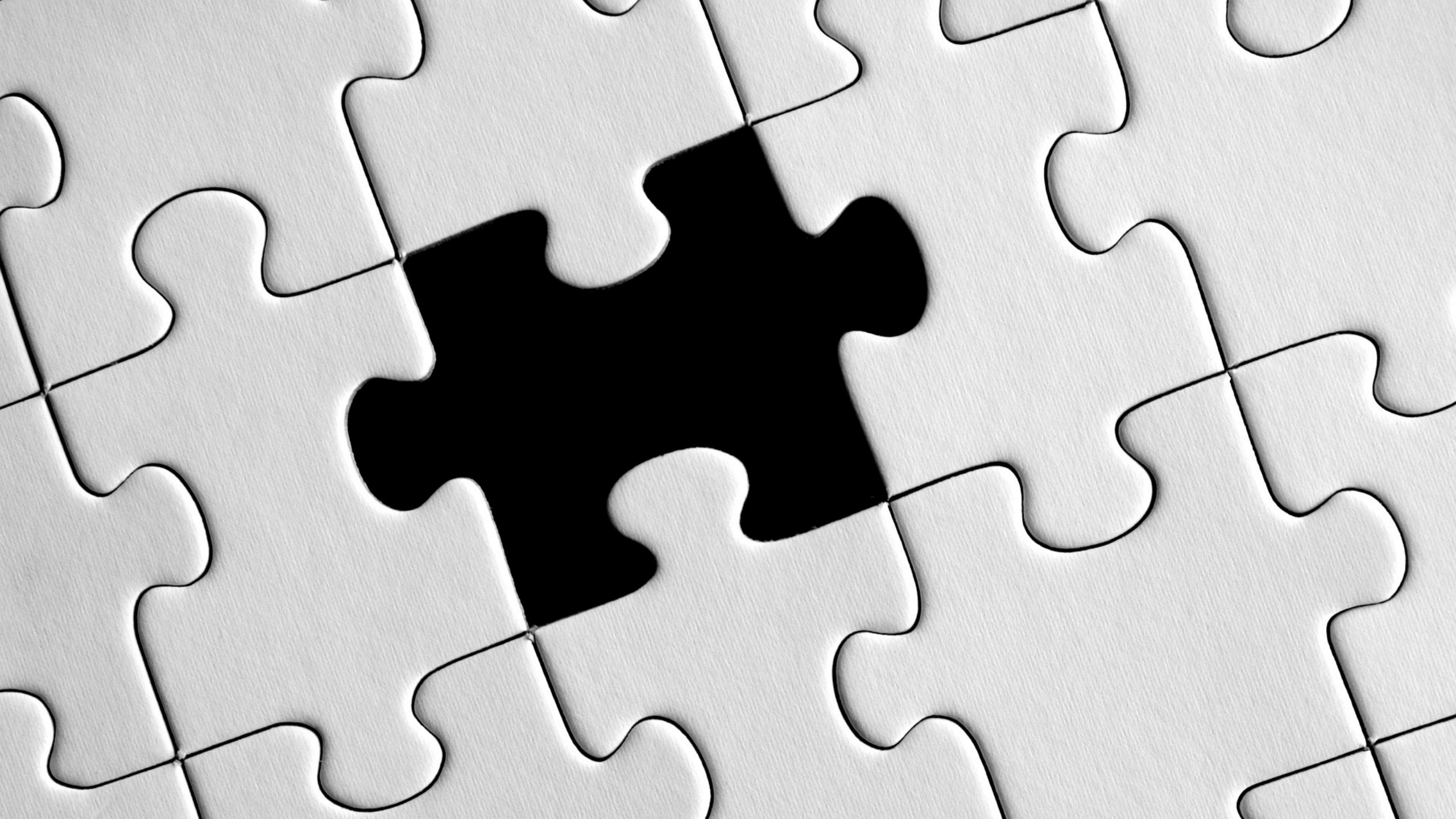


What *triggers* us to leave the Sweet Spot?

- Personal issue
- How important the issue is
- Status or Expertise
- Behaviors of others
- Personality
- Perceived risk of speaking up (or not)
- Culture



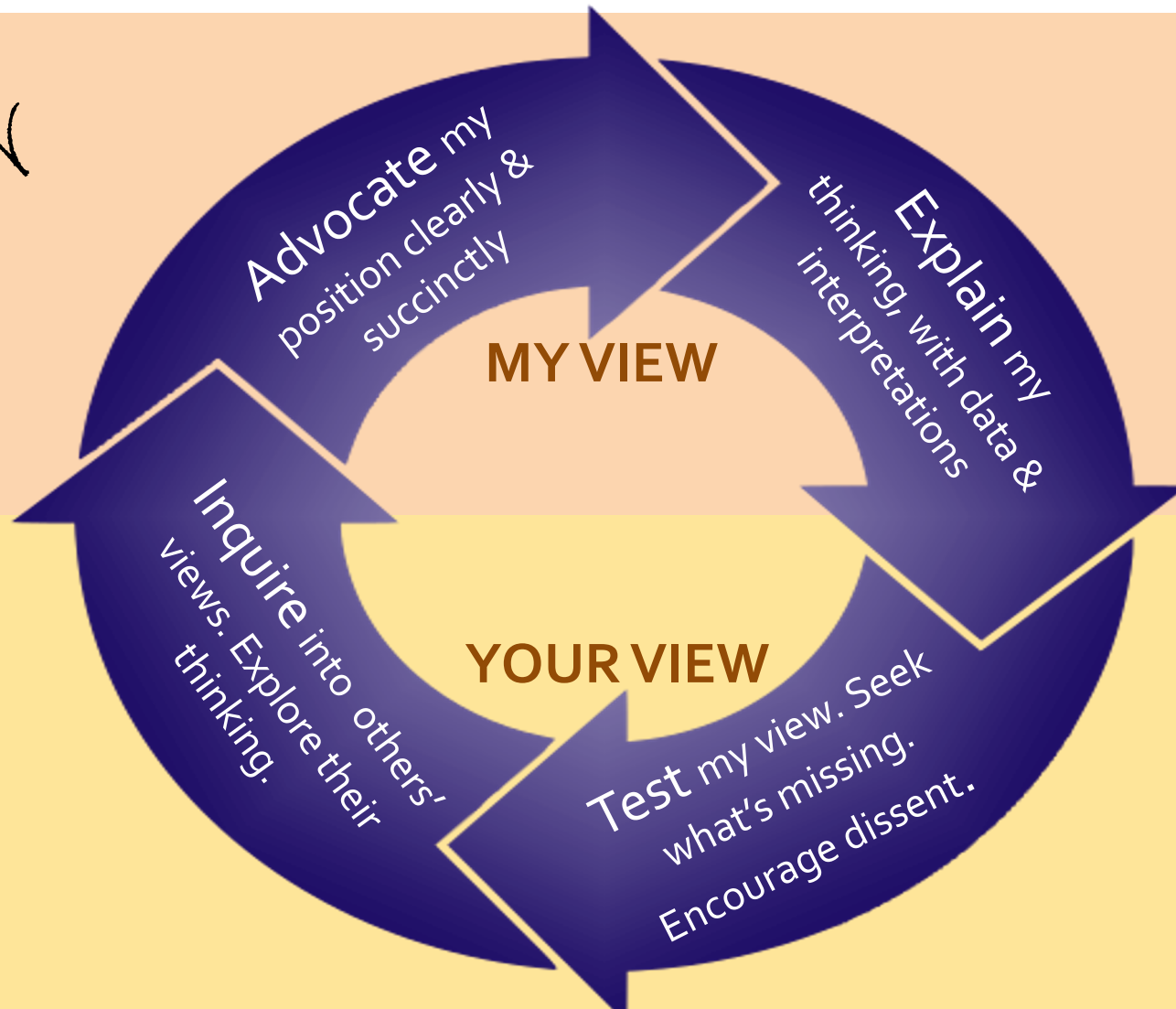
What are YOUR triggers?





Candor & Curiosity

Candor



Curiosity



Candor & Curiosity

I think we should do \mathcal{X} .

I believe that \mathcal{X} is the best choice at this time.

I'm intrigued by the way you see this; can you give me an example?

Help me see this through your lens.

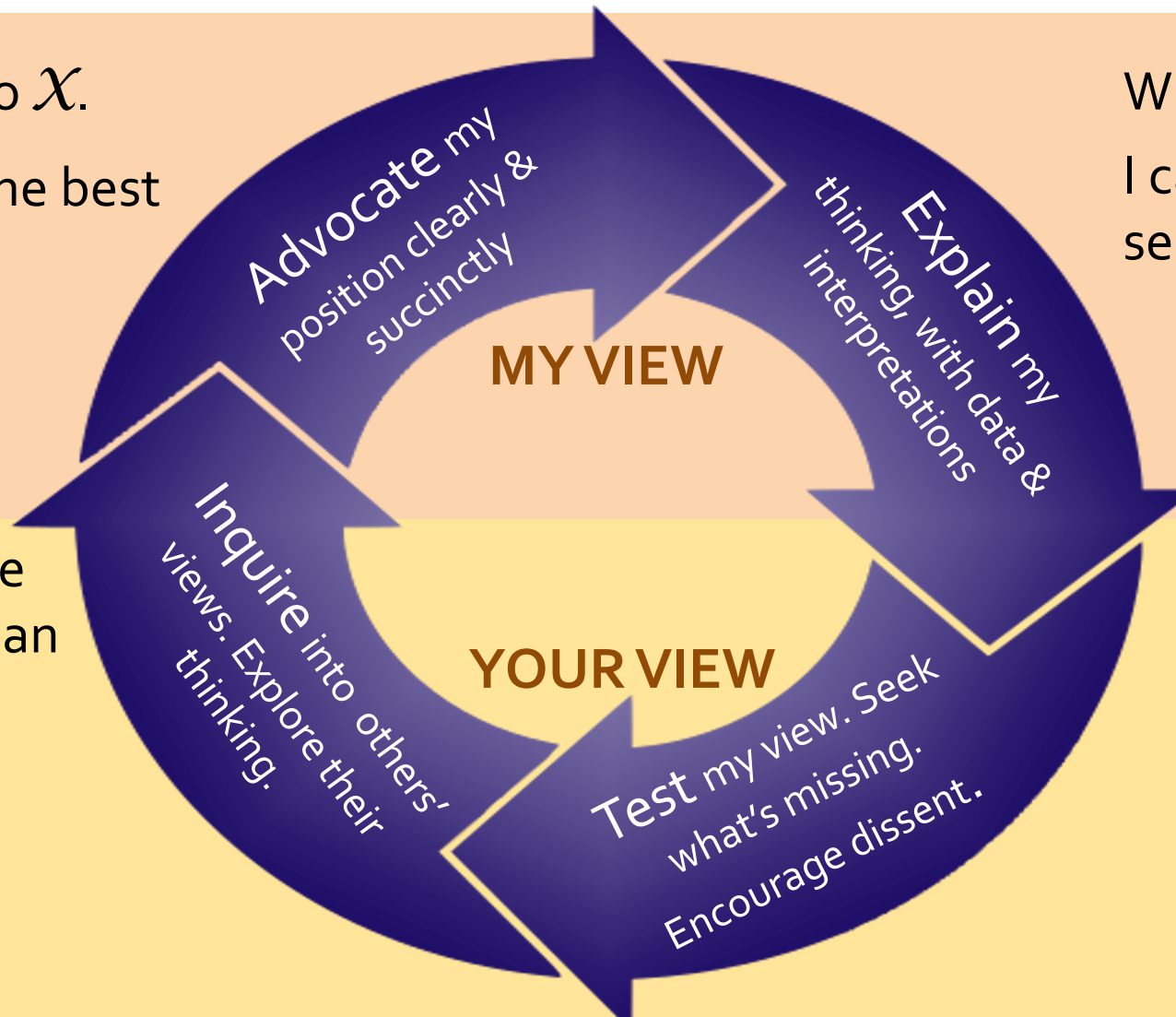
What leads me to think this is \mathcal{Y} .

I came to this conclusion after seeing \mathcal{Y} .

What might I be missing?

Push back on me here, what do you think?

I've said what I think; now I'm interested in what others think, especially those who see it differently.





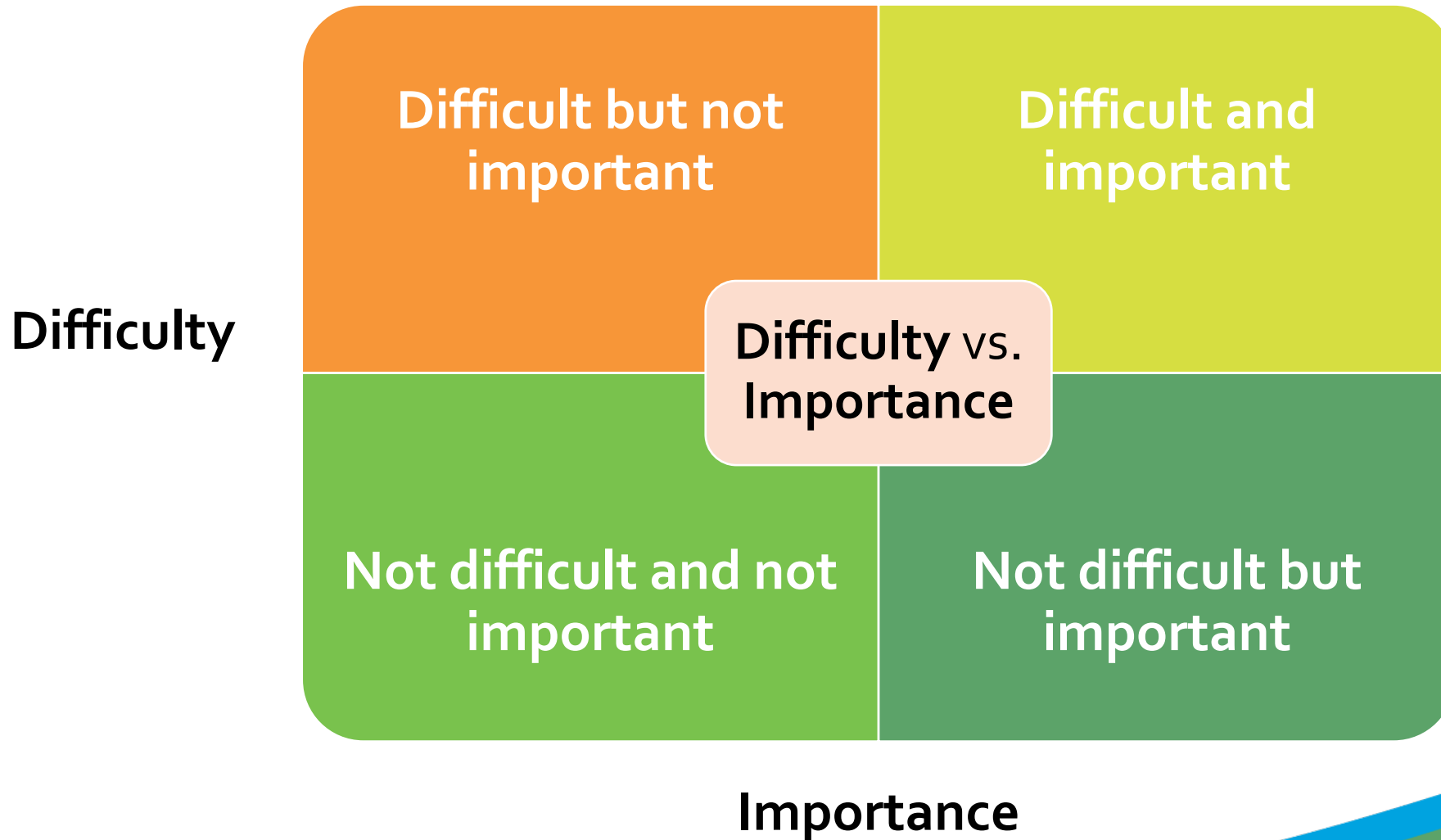
Questions to Ask

- Do you see it differently?
- Push back on me here, what do you think?
- What's your reaction to what I've said.
- What's your perspective on this?
- I've said what I think but now I'm interested in hearing what others think, especially those that disagree?





When to apply this skillset





Let's Practice!

- A new initiative is set to roll out within the next two months. Several members on the planning committee don't want to involve community members because of the tight timeframe but you feel differently.
- While observing the RFA process, you notice that there are areas where the organization can be more equitable; how do you communicate this to your funder?
- You have a recommendation for a group project that no one seems interested in learning about. How do you advocate your position?

PRACTICE
makes
PROGRESS,
NOT
PERFECT.



Practical Steps: *Personal*

Trigger
Journal

Teach to
loved ones

Role play
important
conversations

Give Notice to
others

Mindfulness
practice



Practical Steps: *Teamwork*

Decision
Making

Phone a
friend

Appoint a
monitor

Visual
Reminders



Honest differences are often
a healthy sign of progress.

Mahatma Gandhi



Reference

Weber, C. (2013). *Conversational capacity: The secret to building successful teams that perform when the pressure is on*. New York: McGraw-Hill.