Slide 1

HOW TO BECOME COMFORTABLE AND
CONFIDENT IN THE FACE OF CONFLICT

MODULE 7: I-MESSAGES

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iMessages

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Purpose

- Tells the other person how you think and feel about an issue without blaming or demanding the other person change
- Helps you to say what is true for you, while treating the other person with respect
- Increases self-esteem in the other by taking ownership of your part of the problem
- Engages the other in problem-resolution

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iMessage Process

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☐ Step 1   **Describe in neutral terms what you are reacting to ...**

☐ Step 2   **Explain your feelings without attacking...**

☐ Step 3   **Explain your interests and why you feel the way you do...**

☐ Step 4   **Ask for help in solving the problem...** Invite collaboration.

☐ Step 5   **Listen to the other person's response.**

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iMessage example

I'll use the example of the consultant who is frustrated that the person he's working with doesn't move at the same pace. After some support thinking about the potential impacts of refusing to work with the person anymore (loss of professional reputation, being seen as a person who doesn't follow through on commitments) and to identify his interests, which helped him to shift away from the position he intially took, he's ready to draft an i-message to ask the other person to collaborate to solve the problem.

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iMessage example

Step 1   When a facebook memory popped up the other day, and I realized we've been working on this idea together for more than two years,

Step 2   I felt frustrated.

Step 3   I took some time to think about why and realize that it's incredibly important to me to feel like I'm making progress and innovating, and that engaging people in ideas I'm working on gives me energy. Because we haven't moved to a stage of engaging others, I'm feeling stuck and not as excited about the work. I want to be excited because I think it's a great idea that I'd love to see happen.

Step 4   I have a sense we have different needs regarding how we work and I'd really like to hear what yours are around this project, and talk about how we could come up with a plan that meets both our needs. Can we do that?

Step 5   Listen

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Your needs in addressing conflict

Take some time to think about what your needs are in addressing conflict. Are you someone who needs time to reflect before you speak or make decisions? Are there communication agreements you need to have in place with the other person in for the conversation to be productive and respectful?

There are times you have to negotiate the process before you negotiate the solution to the problem.

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Your needs in addressing conflict

☐ Think about how to share your needs in ways the other person can hear it. (Hint: talk about the why not the how)

☐ Create an iMessage (or two or three) to share your needs in ways the other person can hear them.

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iMessage example

Step 1 I notice sometimes when we problem solve together, I get flustered and can't think of what I want to say until after we've finished our conversation and I've already agreed to something before I have a chance to really think about it.

Step 2 I feel annoyed at myself when I do that…

Step 3 because it's important to me that I'm someone who can be counted on, and I don't want to frustrate you or for you to think I'm just changing my mind if I bring it up again. I really want us to problem solve in a way that means we can follow though on a plan with confidence that it meets both our needs.

Step 4 Can we talk about what would help us both feel like we can bring our best communication to this discussion?

Step 5 Listen

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Homework

- Create two iMessages – one to invite the other to have the conversation about the problem you've identified and the second to open up negotiation about what that conversation will look like (ie to negotiate the process).

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