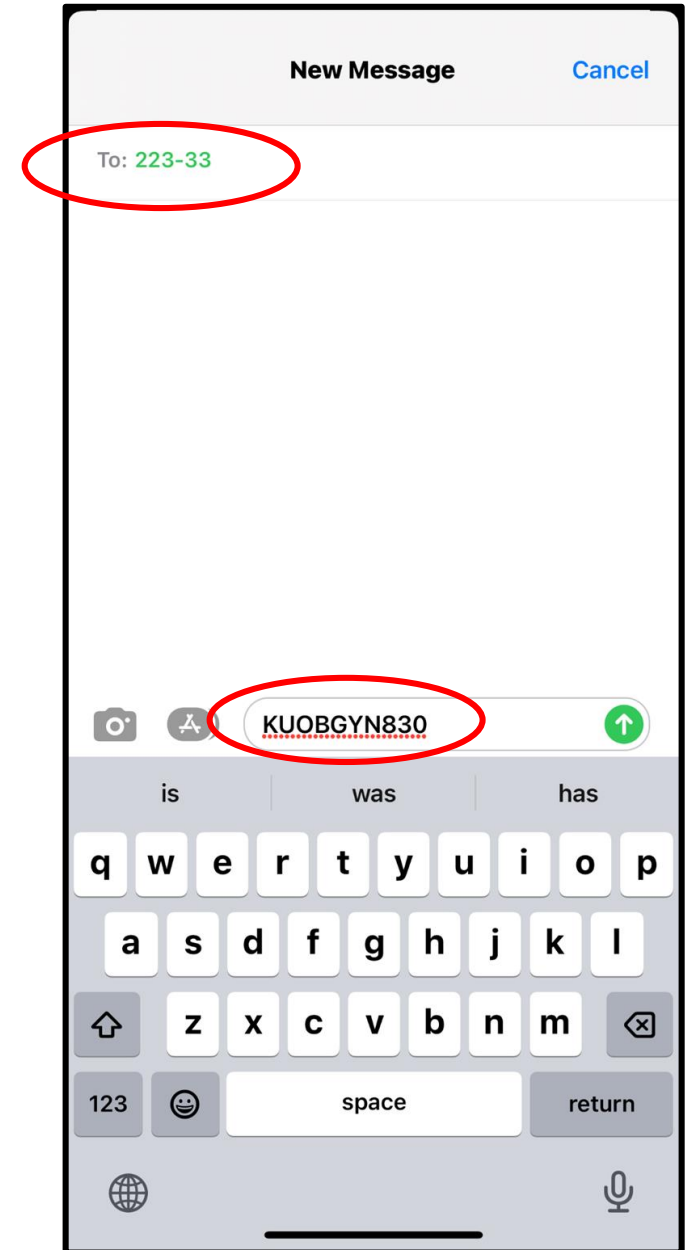
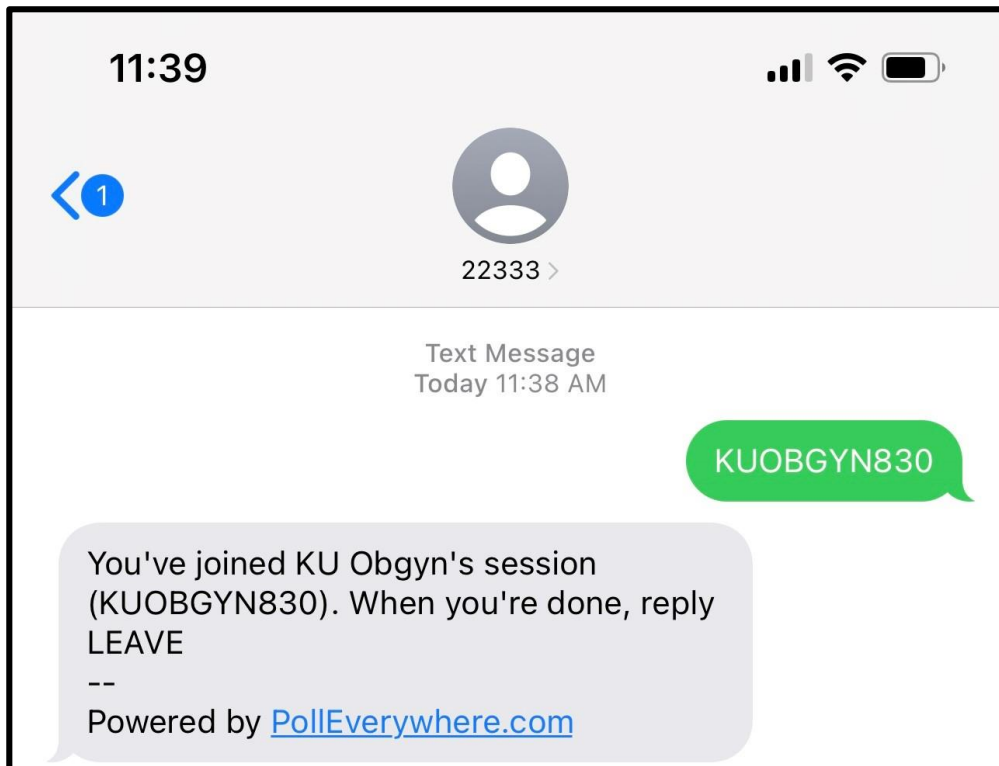


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Bridging Communication in Your Program: Navigating Difficult Conversations

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The University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita

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Disclosures

We have no conflicts of interest or disclosures.

Learning Objectives

1

Learn key components for preparing to have a difficult conversation.

2

Learn how to start a difficult conversation and how to manage emotions within those conversations.

3

Understand that your truth may not be their truth and working through listening to each other's feelings in these situations.



Overview



What's the Problem?



How to Navigate a Challenging Conversation



Tips



The Scenario



Practice

What's the
Problem?

What are some topics/examples of difficult or challenging conversations?

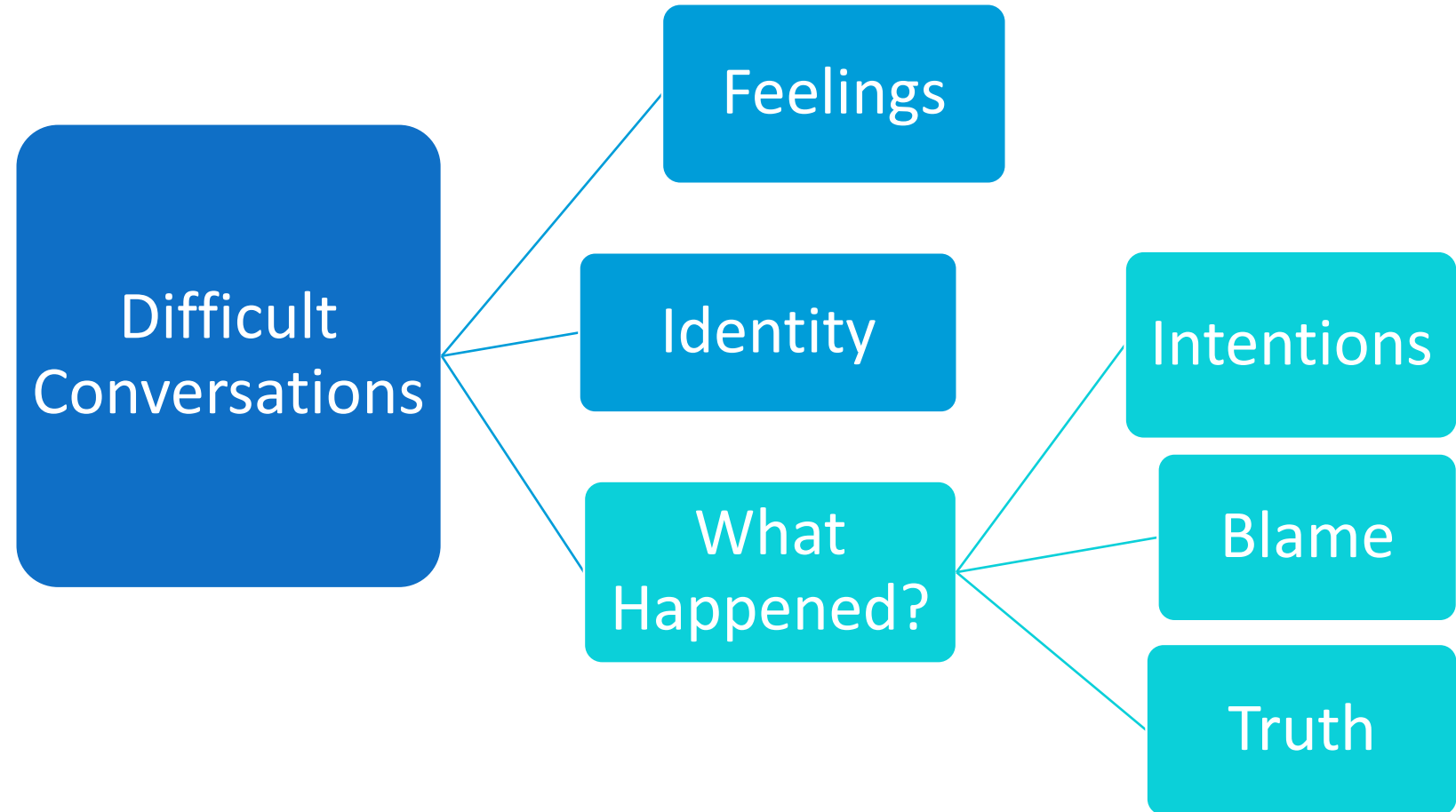
What are some topics/examples of difficult or challenging conversations?

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Why do we avoid challenging conversations and why would this be bad for the workplace?

- 53% of Americans have left a job due to workplace culture, specifically their relationship with their manager.²
- 80% of workers are avoiding at least one difficult conversation at work.¹



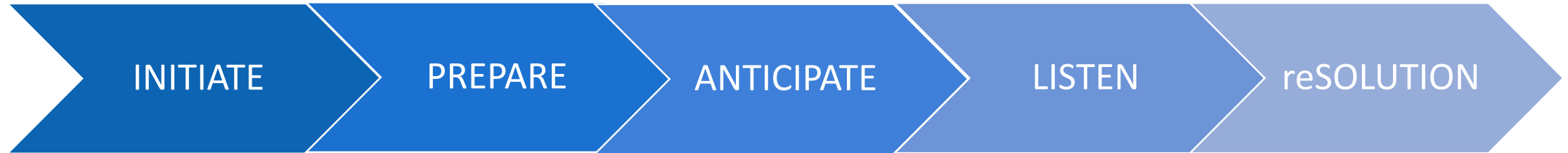


Change Your Mindset: Negative to Opportunity

- *It is about facing your own discomfort and dedicating yourself to the conversation that needs to happen.*
- Don't frame it in a binary way (win-lose): Try to think of it as a normal, but meaningful conversation.

How to Navigate a Challenging Conversation

Framework: IPALS



- Is a conversation worth having?

- Players
- Setting
- Problem
- Solution

- What do you think will happen?
- What emotions do you think you will feel?
- What will their reaction be?
- What responses can you anticipate?

- Focus on what the other person is saying.
- Ask open-ended questions.

- What commitments can be made?
- How will you follow up?
- Steps moving forward?

INITIATE: When is it appropriate or not appropriate to initiate a difficult conversation?

- Ask yourself a couple of questions:
 - What is the purpose of having the conversation?
 - What do you hope to accomplish?
 - What would you like for the ideal outcome to be?
 - What assumptions are you making about the other person?
 - What buttons of ***yours*** are being pushed and what *impact* does that have?
 - Are you being fair and consistent?



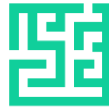
PREPARE: PS ... PS!



PLAYERS:
Determine who
needs to be
there.



SETTING: Where
and when?



PROBLEM: What
needs to be
addressed?



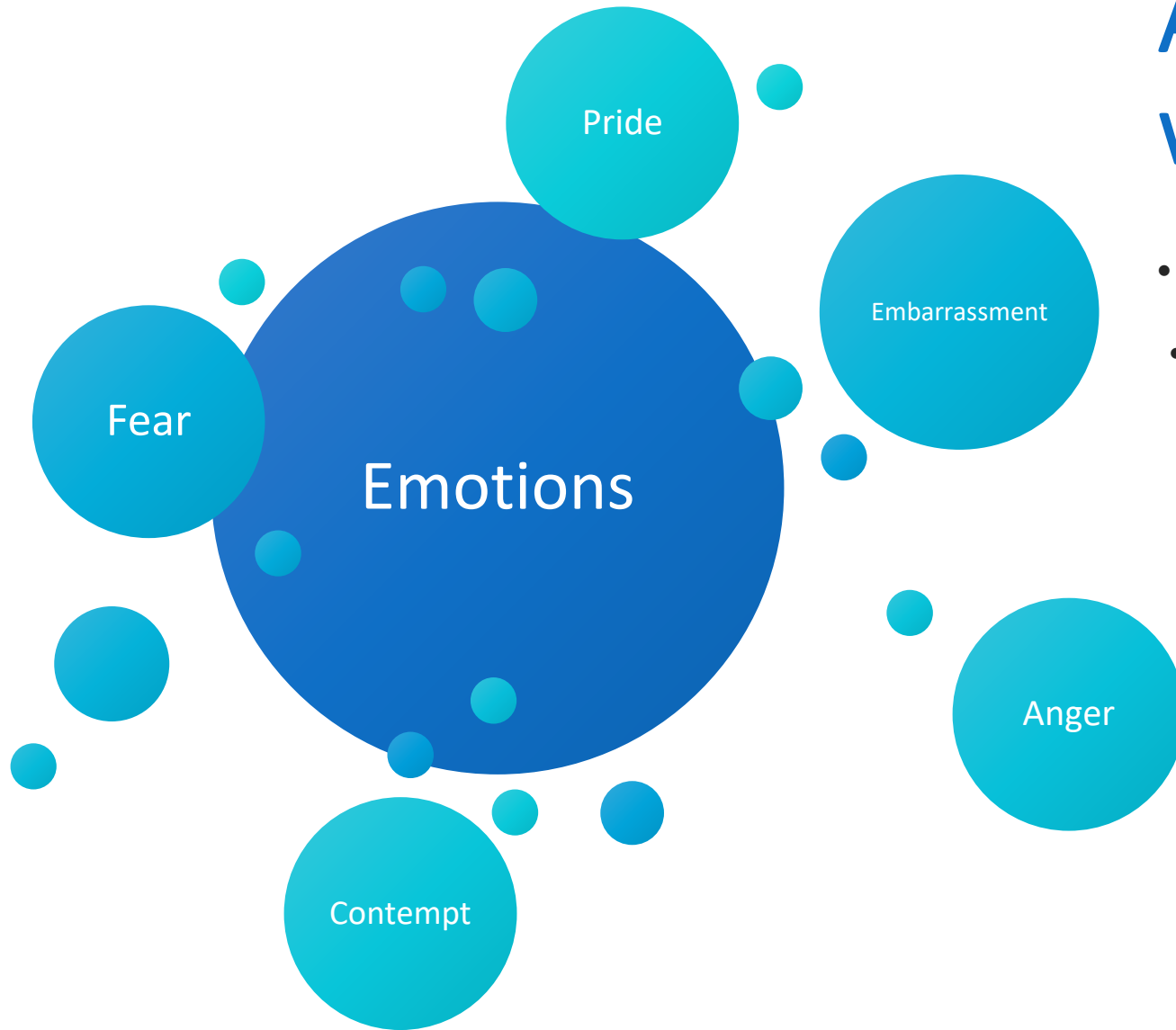
SOLUTION: You
might not have a
solution but
come to a
resolution.



Don't
exaggerate –
stick to specific
facts or
situations.



Be mindful of
the language
you choose to
use.



ANTICIPATE: Focus on what you can control

- **Your emotions**
- Anticipate their emotions
 - What happens if emotions run wild?

LISTEN: Reinforce your actions

- Listen! Listen! LISTEN.
- Your truth is not THE truth. Assume the best of others.
- Ask for their point of view.
- Use ACTIVE listening techniques.
- Make sure your actions reinforce what you are saying.
- Ask open-ended questions.

- Brainstorm together to reach a mutual solution.
- Find out more information if needed.
- Get more insight if needed.
- Offer to give something back.
- **Keep perspective: This conversation will probably be a blip in your professional career.**

**RE-SOLUTION: Don't be
afraid to compromise**

Aftermath and Processing

Share key points as soon as possible after meeting (preferably in writing when appropriate)

Thank you

Main message

Specific actions

Deliverables

Questions/ask
for feedback



DO SELF-CARE AFTER: Talk a walk, take a break

TIPS

Avoid Common Mistakes

- Softening or burying the message, remember the purpose.
- Don't backpedal when you shouldn't.
 - Okay to backpedal: Person discloses they are going through a divorce right now.
 - Not okay: Person cries or gets defensive.
- Failing to account for cultural, generational, or other differences or lack of awareness.
- Filling in uncomfortable silences.

Signs You Should Consider Seeking Help

- Evaluate yourself mentally and introspectively (are you being mature).
- Examples:
 - Being overly defensive
 - Refusing to listen
 - Attacking someone else or putting the blame elsewhere
 - Not understanding someone's perspective
- Taking part in difficult conversations is hard for both individuals, and so it requires a certain level of maturity from both individuals.
- Bring in others as needed: Counselors, HR, superiors, etc.

- *I have something I'd like to discuss with you that I think will help us work together more effectively.*
- *I'd like to talk about _____ with you, but first I'd like to get your point of view.*
- *I need your help with what just happened. Do you have a few minutes to talk?*
- *I think we have different perceptions about _____. I'd like to hear your thinking on this.*
- *Do you have a moment to talk about ____? I'd like to hear your thoughts.*
- *Can you help me understand ____?*
- **GOAL: Start the conversation so the other person is invited to share their feelings/thoughts.**

How to start off the conversation ...

- *This isn't an easy issue to bring up, but I know it's important to address for us to work together to meet our goals ...*
- *I know I should have brought this up sooner, but it's important so I'd like to discuss it with you now.*
- *I'm not going to say this perfectly, so please bear with me ...*
- *Let's make sure we're clear on where each of us is coming from ...*
- *Can I see if I'm understanding you? I hear you are saying XYZ ... do I have that right?*
- *Could you hold that idea for a second ... I want to finish before I lose my train of thought.*
- *This is a lot to process—could we take a 10-minute break and then pick up where we left off?*

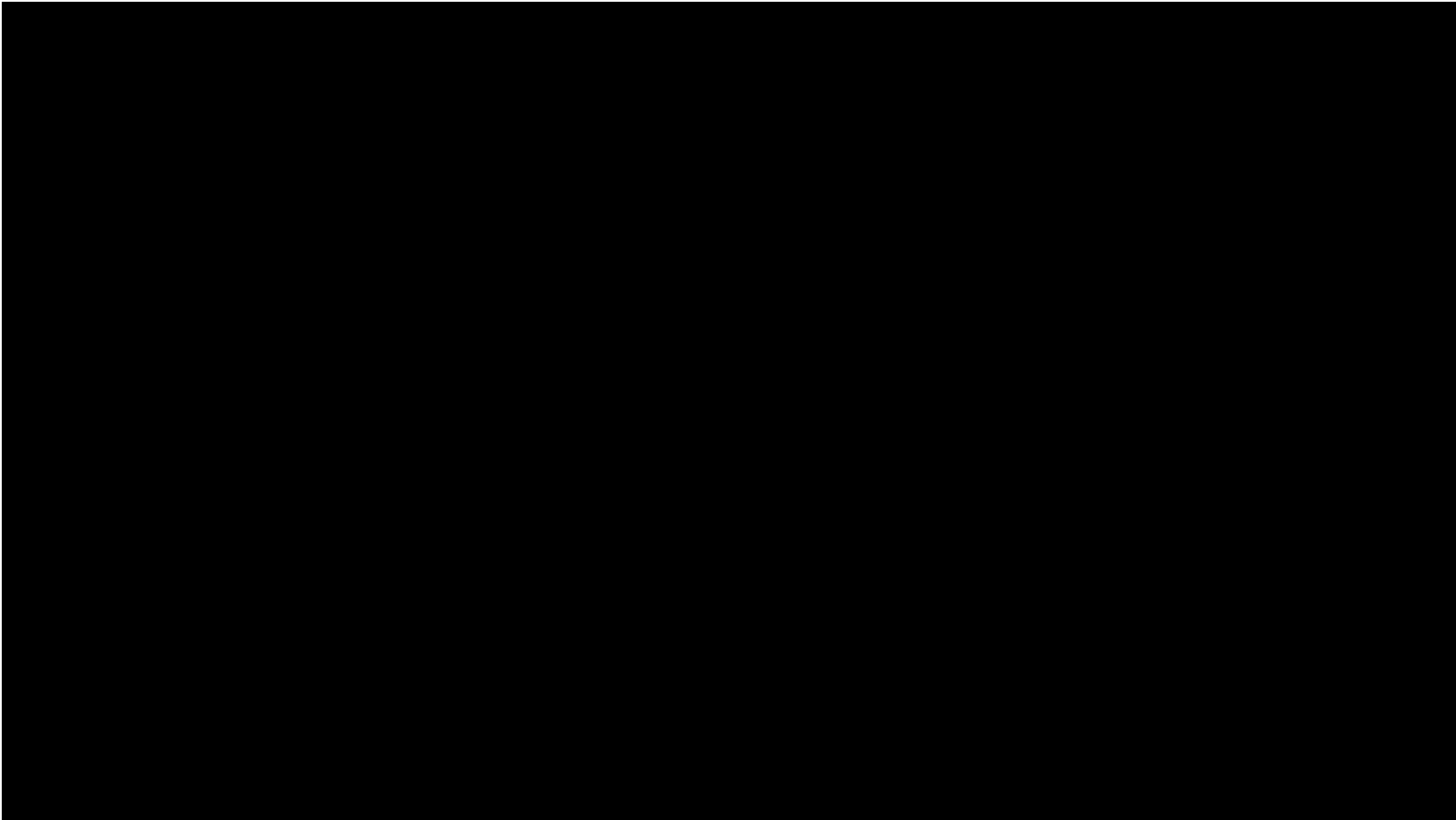
Other Phrases to Help Navigate Conversations

- *Thanks for bringing this up. It's something that is worth talking through together.*
- *This is an important issue, and I need some time to think it over. Could we schedule some time later today to discuss this in depth?*
- *I appreciate you bringing this to my attention, and I know it can be hard to bring up ...*
- *I'd like to better understand your perspective. Can you say more about what you see as the issue?*
- *Yes, I don't mind talking about it at all—let me know what you think.*

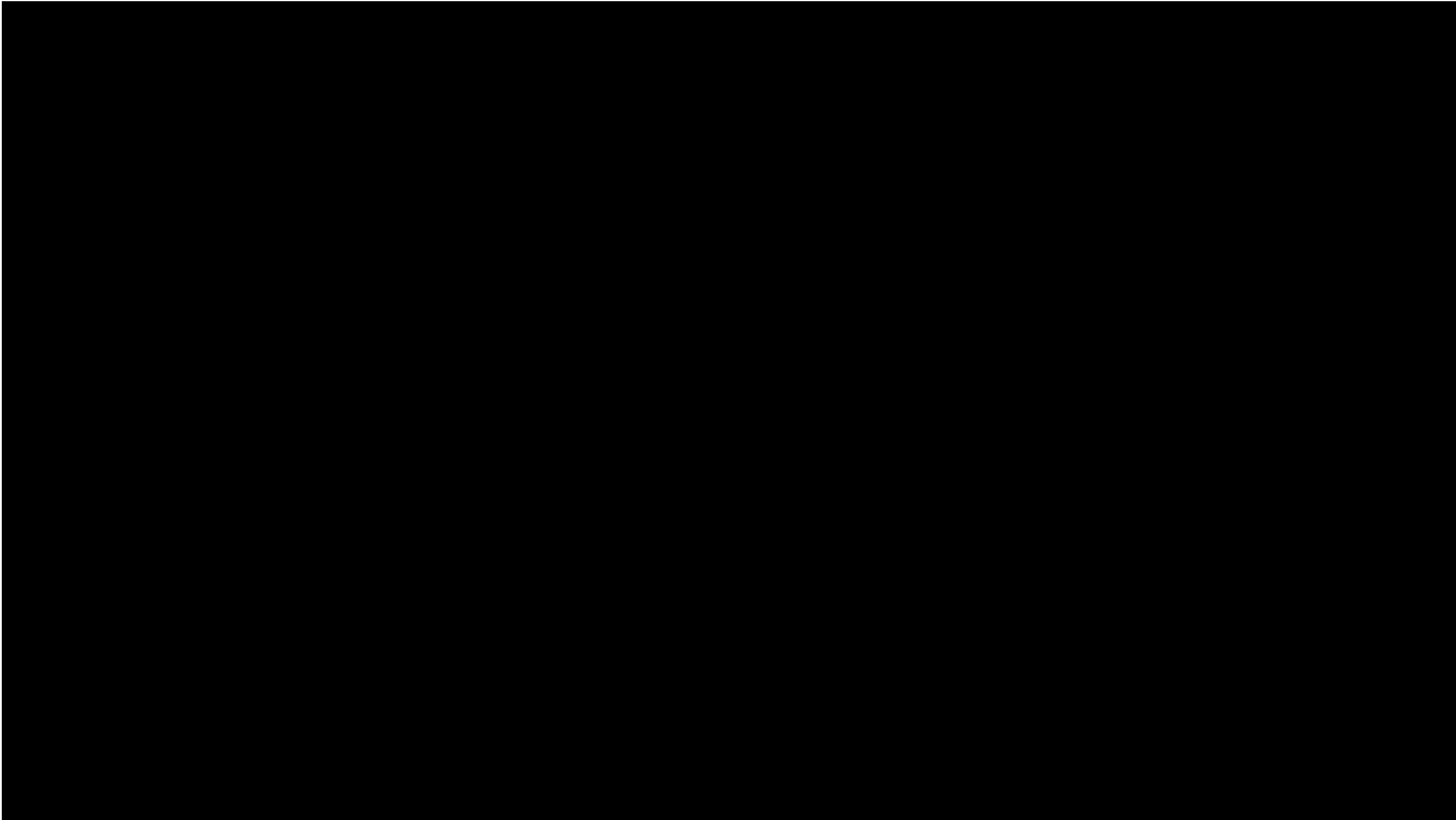
Phrases to Help Navigate Conversations - Receiving

THE SCENARIO: RECRUITING TEAM

The Scenario



The Hall Way



Play By Play: The Hall Way



- Is a conversation worth having?

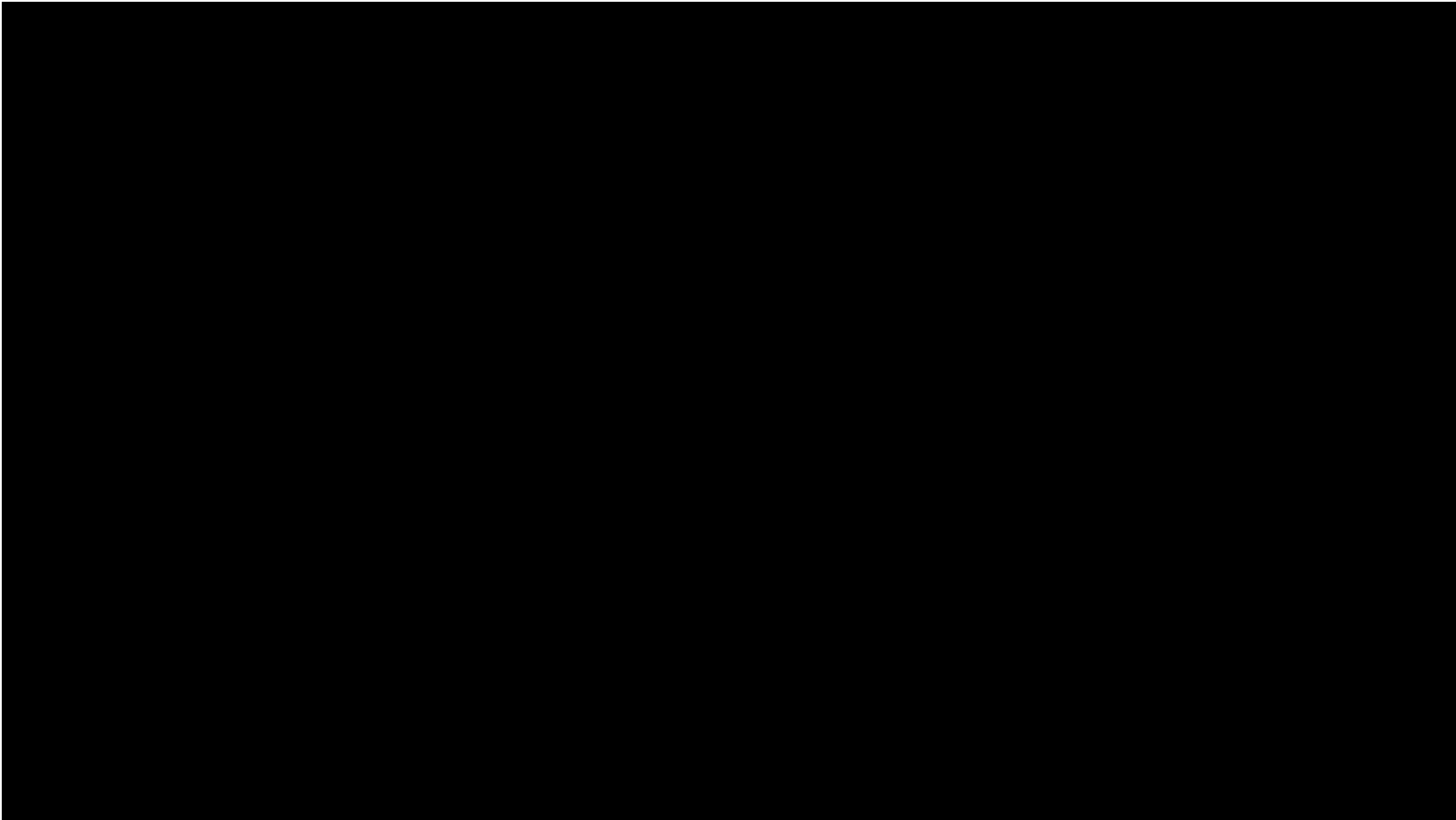
- Players
- Setting
- Problem
- Solution

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- What commitments can be made?
- How will you follow up?
- Steps moving forward?

The Cringe Way



Play By Play: The Cringe Way



- Is a conversation worth having?

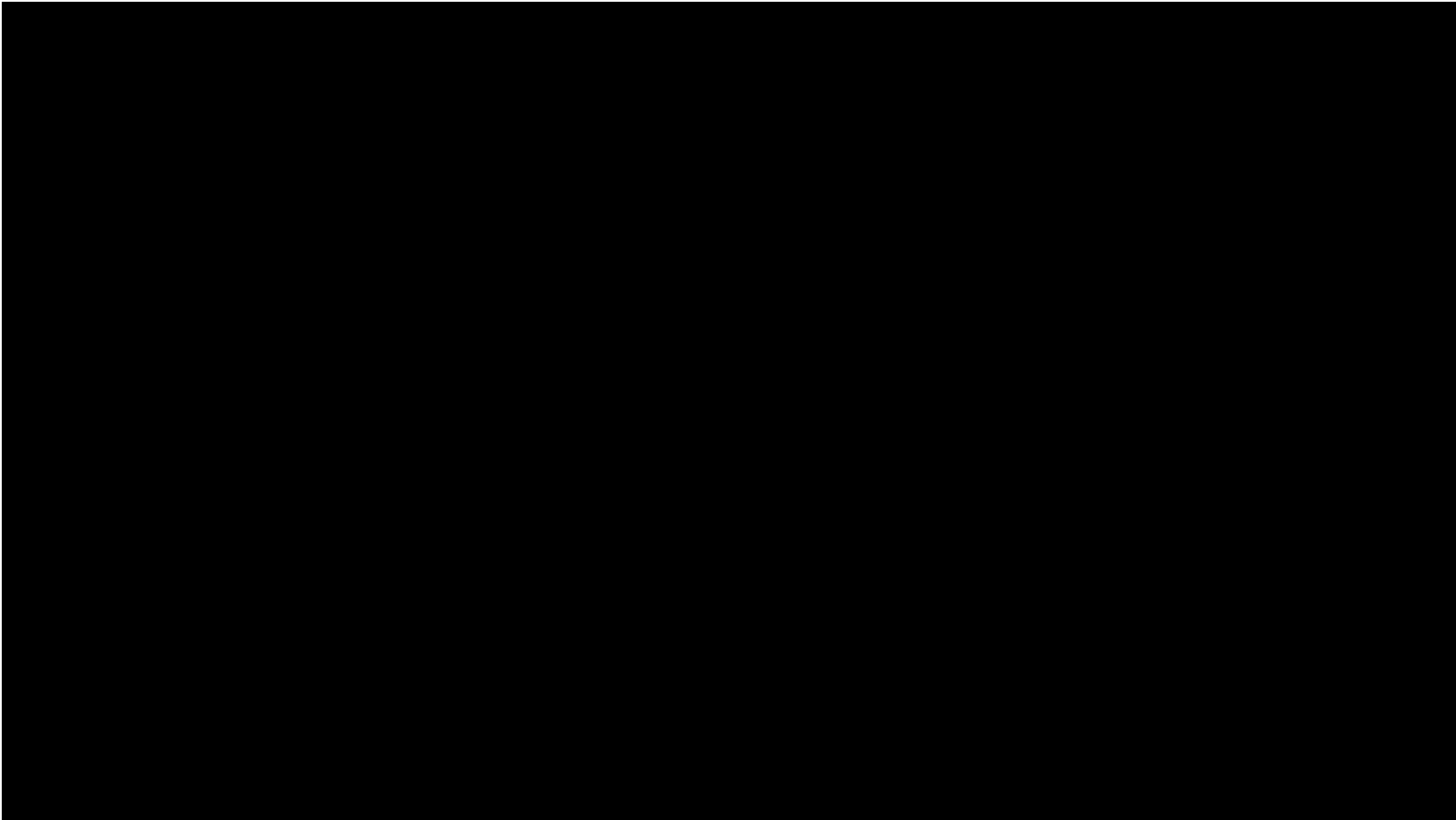
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The Ideal Way



Play By Play: The Ideal Way



- Is a conversation worth having?

- Players
- Setting
- Problem
- Solution

- What do you think will happen?
- What emotions do you think you will feel?
- What will their reaction be?
- What responses can you anticipate?

- Focus on what the other person is saying.
- Ask open-ended questions.

- What commitments can be made?
- How will you follow up?
- Steps moving forward?

Practice!

One way to stay prepared is to practice.



Scenario: BOUNDARIES

You have a program director who frequently calls and texts you after hours and on the weekends asking for updates on things you're working on. Preparation for CCC meetings, evaluation completion percentages, recruiting meal ideas, budgets, etc. NOTE: These are all non-emergent administrative questions.

Practice: BOUNDARIES



- Is a conversation worth having?

- Players
- Setting
- Problem
- Solution

Practice PS-PS: BOUNDARIES

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <u>PLAYERS</u> | <u>SETTING</u> |
| <u>PROBLEM</u> | <u>re-SOLUTION</u> |



Scenario: BOUNDARIES

You have a program director who frequently calls and texts you after hours and on the weekends asking for updates on things you're working on. Preparation for CCC meetings, evaluation completion percentages, recruiting meal ideas, budgets, etc. NOTE: These are all non-emergent administrative questions.

Split into two groups: Half of the room present the “ideal way” and half will do a “wrong” way.

Practice: BOUNDARIES



- Is a conversation worth having?

- Players
- Setting
- Problem
- Solution

- What do you think will happen?
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Takeaways

- Identify if a conversation is worth having and what challenges it brings.
- Prepare for a challenging conversation.
 - Players
 - Setting
 - Problem
 - Re-Solution
- Practice!
- Normalize difficult conversations.

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