Activity: Difficult Conversation Role-Play



Objective: To provide participants with a safe, practical opportunity to practice the initial, often most challenging, steps of initiating and framing a difficult conversation about an integrity issue using the learned framework.

Setup:

1. In pairs. One person takes the role of 'Manager,' the other 'Employee.'
2. Working through the assigned Scenrio:
   - *Scenario A:* The Manager needs to talk to an employee who was observed giving a significant, unauthorised discount to a customer who appeared to be a personal friend. Policy requires manager approval for discounts over 10%.
   - *Scenario B:* The Manager needs to address a team member who frequently complains loudly and negatively about specific customers in the staff breakroom, sometimes when other customers might potentially overhear. This violates the policy on professional conduct and customer confidentiality.
   - *Scenario C:* Manager needs to discuss an employee's repeated failure to follow a critical safety procedure (e.g., not wearing required cut-resistant gloves when using box cutters), despite previous informal reminders.
   - *Scenario D:* The Manager needs to address an employee who, during a team presentation, presented data compiled entirely by a colleague as their own work, without giving credit.

Task (5-7 minutes per role-play):

1. The participant playing the 'Manager' initiates the conversation with the 'Employee.'
2. Focus specifically on practising **Steps 2 (Setting the Stage), 3 (Initiate & Describe), and the beginning of Step 4 (Inviting Their Perspective)** from the framework table. The goal is to practice:
   - Choosing an appropriate (simulated) setting/opening.
   - Calmly stating the purpose using "I" statements.
   - Clearly and factually describing the observed behaviour and its impact.
   - Asking an open-ended question to invite the employee's perspective.
3. The 'Employee' should respond naturally to the manager's approach.
4. After 5-7 minutes, pause the role-play.

Debrief (5-10 minutes):

1. **In Pairs (2-3 mins):**
   - 'Manager': What felt effective? What was challenging? Did you stick to behaviour and impact? Did you use "I" statements?

- 'Employee': How did the manager's approach make you feel (e.g., attacked, understood, confused)? Was the issue clear? Did you feel invited to share your perspective?

2. **Small Groups or Large Group (Optional - 5-7 mins):**
   - Share key learnings. What opening phrases worked well?
   - What were common challenges (e.g., staying calm, avoiding accusations, describing behaviour objectively)?
   - How did using the framework help (or where did participants deviate)?