



❖ 3Chairs Process for Difficult Conversations

Foundation Setting

- How are you doing today, separate from the conversation? How's your mood?
- How are you feeling about having the conversation? What are your hopes & intentions?
- Do you agree to the process? Any other requests to create safety, e.g. confidentiality?

Phase I – Understanding Without Agreement – *What is important to each of us*

- Person A and Person B take turns as speaker and listener with self-connection awareness and elements of empathy, and with the intention to understand without seeking agreement. After each speaks, the other, if they are willing, reflects back understanding (*without agreeing or disagreeing*), and the speaker clarifies the accuracy of the reflection.
- If someone is in the 3rd chair, the role is awareness and presence, and supporting A and B to as needed to track the 3 phases of the process.

Phase II – Clarifying Needs – *What we all want as human beings*

- Person A and B take turns inquiring about the most important needs from Phase I. One way to do this is for each person to say what they heard or guess are the most important needs *for the other*, checking and clarifying the accuracy with the person. [For this step you can use the list of Universal Human Needs/Values for support.]
- If someone is in the 3rd chair, they can help A and B as needed to clarify the needs.

Phase III – Requests & Agreements – *Working together to meet our needs*

- Person A and B take turns brainstorming and generating ideas/requests for specific action to contribute to what would meet the needs of both.
- Then make and confirm agreements:
 - Main agreement – Action step(s), experimental, maybe small
 - Supporting agreements – ways to help keep main agreement(s)
 - Restoring agreement – what will you do if the main agreement(s) is not kept?
- If someone is in the 3rd chair, they can help as needed making and clarifying requests and agreements.