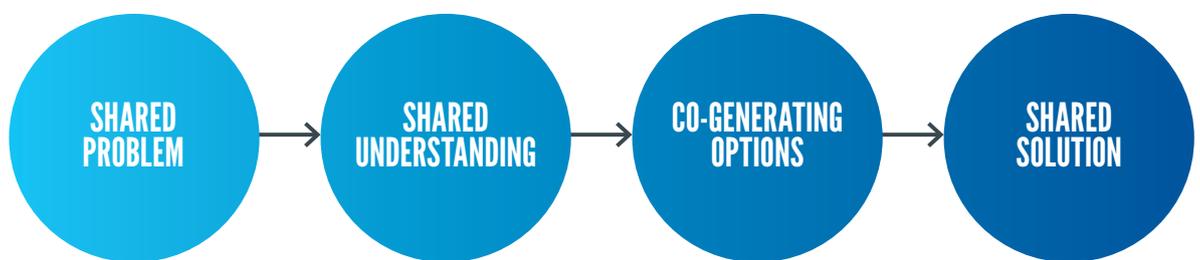




Most of us tend to be great problem-solvers. We have seen similar situations in the past and we know the course of action that we need to take.

Sometimes it can be frustrating when the person in front of us either can't see the logic of what we are suggesting, or can see the logic but still resists. Collaborative problem-solving requires us to be in dialogue mode, avoiding the pitfalls of debate, which can often lead to conflict.



As long as people involved in a difficult conversation regard themselves as separate from, or in opposition to, the other person, the debate will continue and potentially escalate into conflict. As soon as they realize that the issue or problem will be most satisfactorily resolved through collaboration, the dynamic shifts. Instead of being a situation of 'me against you', the dynamic becomes 'you and me against this problem'. When we realize that we share the problem, we are more likely to work together to resolve it.

#### RESPONDING IN THE MOMENT

With the right combination of questions in the right sequence, we can enable movement forward from identifying issues to strategies that overcome obstacles. The key is empowering the person or group to move from the known to the unknown.

#### THE PROCESS

##### 1. Listen

Listening is not just an information gathering exercise. When someone feels listened to they feel validated. Listening creates rapport and self-value because you are fulfilling a fundamental human need – attention.

##### 2. Acknowledge

Acknowledging the emotions surrounding a situation, allowing someone to air their feelings, demonstrates empathy and allows the person to move forward.

##### 3. Explore

The best way to explore a situation is to 'meet' it as if it was the first time. Be curious. It is good practice to confirm the facts and develop a shared understanding before moving to decision-making.

##### 4. Decide together

Deciding together (where possible) involves and empowers a person or group to take more responsibility for actions and their consequences.



**1**

**Listen**

Describe the situation... What was your reaction to that decision?  
Tell me more about... What happened? Describe step by step

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**2**

**Acknowledge**

What is the impact of this situation on you? Your people? How has this issue affected you?

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**3**

**Explore**

**Visionary:** What do you think should happen? If this was fixed, what would be happening?

**Change:** What would it take for this to happen? You mentioned ... How did these changes come about?

**Options:** What would be the consequences of doing this? What obstacles could there be?

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**4**

**Decide together**

What would it take for this to happen? Who do you need to involve? Let's agree on action steps  
(specific and with timeframes)

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