



**AHA Team Training**

# Mastering Difficult Conversations: Practical Strategies for Success

February 11, 2026



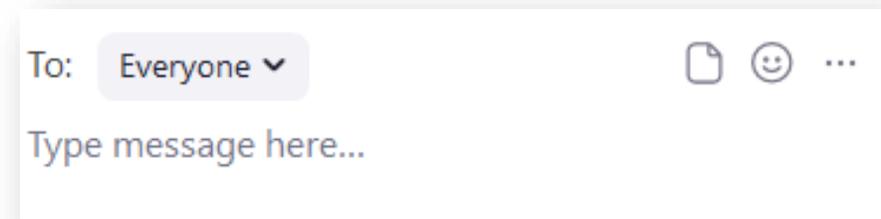
AHA CENTER FOR HEALTH

**INNOVATION**

# Rules of Engagement

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- **Audio for the webinar can be accessed in two ways: 1) through your computer speakers or 2) dialing in by phone – *listen only mode***
- **Q&A session will be held at the end of the presentation**
  - Written questions are encouraged throughout the presentation
  - To submit a question, type it into the Chat Area and send it at any time
- **Other notable Zoom features:**
  - This session is being recorded, the chat will not be included in the recording
  - Utilize the chat throughout the webinar. To chat everyone, make sure your chat reflects the picture below:



# Continuing Education Credit

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To receive 1.0 CE credit hour for this webinar, you must:

- **Create a Duke OneLink account.** You only need to create an account once – you may use it for all future webinars. Instructions will be chatted in and/or you may find them in your registration confirmation email.
  - Step 1: Register for a OneLink account
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- Text **SAYYOQ** to (919) 213-8033 – 24-hour window to claim credit (window ends at 1 pm ET tomorrow)

*CE Disclosure: The speaker for this webinar has no relevant financial relationships to disclose.*

In support of improving patient care, the Duke University Health System Department of Clinical Education and Professional Development is accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), to provide continuing education for the health care team.



# Upcoming Team Training Courses & Workshops

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- **TeamSTEPPS Essentials – Virtual**
  - June 10 – June 24
- **TeamSTEPPS Master Training – In-Person**
  - March 19-20 – UCLA
  - April 15-16 – Chicago
  - April 20-21 – Northwell Health
  - May 12-13 – Tulane
  - July 30-31 – UCLA
- **TeamSTEPPS Sustainment – Virtual**
  - Preparing for TeamSTEPPS Essentials – April 7
  - The People of TeamSTEPPS Implementation – July 8
  - Strategies for Long-Term Sustainability – October 20

# Upcoming Team Training Webinars

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## Webinars

- March 11 – Secrets of a Therapist (Part 2): Modern Therapeutic Models to Move Teams from Overwhelm to Alignment – [Register!](#)

Interested in speaking at an upcoming webinar? [Complete our speaker interest form!](#)

Contact us at [teamtraining@aha.org](mailto:teamtraining@aha.org) with questions.

# Today's Presenter



**Cynthia Kane**  
*CEO/Founder & Author*  
Kane Intentional Communication Institute, LLC

# Objectives

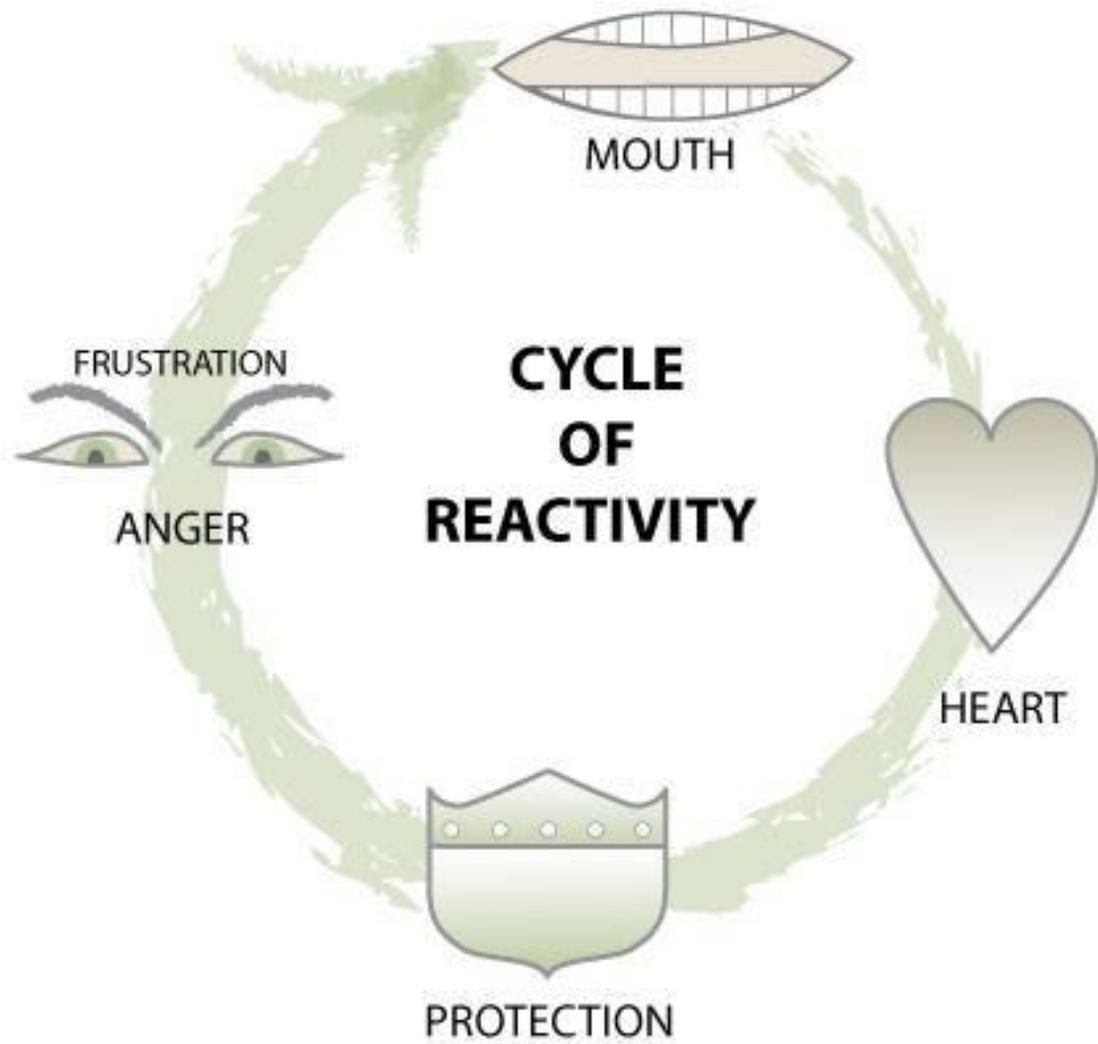
- Why difficult conversations escalate under pressure
- How the nervous system drives communication breakdown
- Practical pause practices to self-regulate in real time

Close Your Eyes

Difficult Conversations > Regular Conversations

YOU'RE HUMAN

# Biology



Conversation = Fear



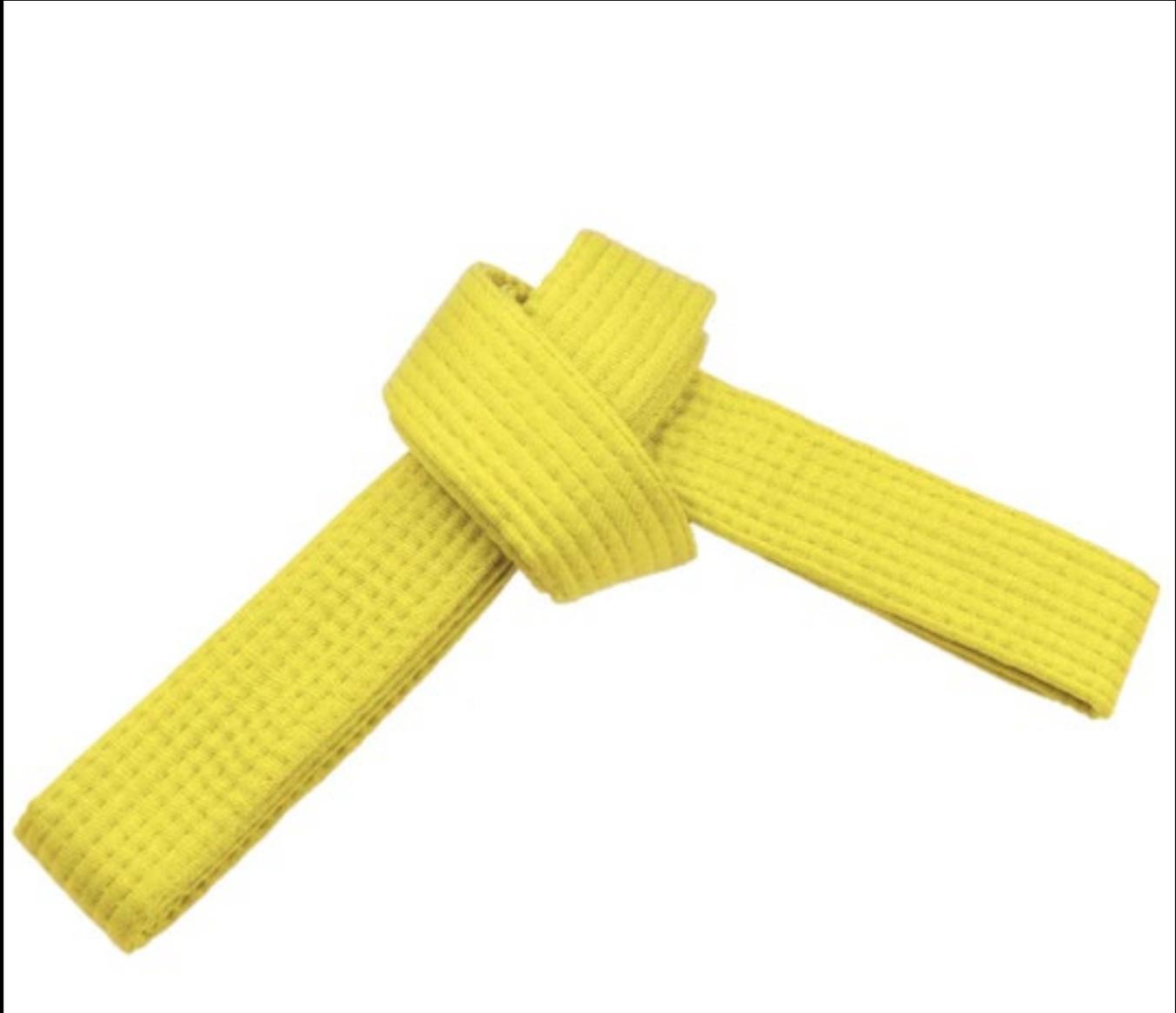
Internal Use

# SOFTEN

SOFTEN is a brief, embodied reset that allows clinicians to stay present without shutting down or escalating



Internal Use



Internal Use

**S** ENSATION

**O** WN YOUR INTERNAL DISCOMFORT

**F** OCUS ON THE PRESENT MOMENT

**T** AKE A BREATH

**E** YES TURN TOWARDS THE OTHER

**N** ECESSARY TO SAY

# Sensation



Your Cue

What sensation happens within you  
before you react?

Own Your Own Discomfort



Internal Use



Internal Use

Ear Pulling  
Finger Tapping  
Havening Technique

# Focus on the Present Moment



# Present moment is when we can be

- Kind
- Supportive
- Helpful

# Feet, Hands, Belly Identifying an Object Senses

# Take a Breath

Notice You're Breathing



Five Part Breathing  
Back Breathing  
Lengthen the Exhale

Eyes Turn Towards Another



Internal Use

WHY

Stance of Appreciation  
Metta  
Ask Yourself Questions

# Need to Say



Internal Use

WHY



Internal Use

Soften  
Change me into  
Reset

# Meditation

# What You Can Do Now

- Identify discomfort
- Use Sensation as a cue for a practice
- Choose a SOFTEN practice
- Pause during difficult conversations

What practice will you start  
with?

# Final Reminders

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- **Evaluation**

- Please complete the evaluation form that appears on your screen once the webinar ends

- **Continuing Education**

- Create a Duke OneLink account if you have not done so
  - Instructions can be downloaded from the Files pod or your registration confirmation email
- Text **SAYYOQ** to (919) 213-8033 within 24 hours



**Questions? Stay in Touch!**

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