

# Managing ourselves and others through discomfort and stress

## How to prime for, manage through and recover from challenging conversations

How many times recently have you had a *difficult conversation* about something that *seriously impacts* the life of the person you're speaking with? How hard is it, for yourself and for those you manage and lead, to deal with emotions such as *anxiety, anger* and *loss* when the only thing you have physical contact with is a video screen? For many of us, this is a daily occurrence which leaves us feeling depleted and worried and, for some, it's accompanied by feelings of *guilt* or *inadequacy*.

As human beings, we're neurobiologically wired for *certainty, safety, security* and *belonging* – this wiring is designed to remind us that our very survival depends on it.

Contrast this with the environment leaders are forced to operate in today, which often demands daily interactions involving *difficult decisions, uncomfortable conversations* and *emotional upheaval*. This would be hard enough when these interactions take place face to face, but in a virtual environment

it becomes much more difficult because the normal social rituals and conventions are absent. This leaves us feeling *vulnerable* and triggers the natural stress response in ourselves and others.

Unless we learn how to process this stress, we hold onto it and it can result in us *catastrophising, ruminating, worrying, judging, procrastinating, numbing*, or *avoiding* and '*just working even harder*'.

*Paradoxically, managing ourselves and others through the discomfort and stress of these interactions does not depend solely on our ability to hold a 'difficult conversation' – rather we need to learn how to manage the emotions and vulnerability before, during and after the conversation itself, and to do this effectively in a virtual environment.*

Drawing on more than fifteen years' worth of research by Dr. Brené Brown, this programme helps leaders and managers to:

- Learn how to prime for, manage through and recover from challenging conversations
- Support others to deal with stress and emotions more effectively in a virtual environment
- Develop a deep insight into how people process stress, uncertainty and vulnerability
- Learn how to improve tolerance for discomfort in healthy adaptive way

**Dr Brené Brown's 15 years' of research defines vulnerability as the feelings we experience when 'emotionally exposed, uncertain or facing risk'.**

In today's world leaders are increasingly required to dig deep into courage to have difficult conversations, make complex decisions and lead others, whilst feeling increasingly vulnerable themselves, leading to a slow but certain '**stacking**' of stress. Learning how to manage that vulnerability and stress is a skill which is different from dealing with the stressors themselves (such as having the difficult conversation in the first place).

For more information, send an email to [info@designed4success.co.uk](mailto:info@designed4success.co.uk) or call us on +44 (131) 357 0369