

Presented by Grace Stewart, Accord

From Silos to The Gold Standard: Strengthening MDT & SART Collaboration for Forensic Medical Professionals



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Agenda

1. The Roots - How did we get here?
2. The Challenge - What makes this model hard?
3. The Why? & Is it working?
4. Voices from the Field
5. Common Dysfunctions of Multi-Disciplinary Teams
6. Next Steps



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Thank you feels too small for what you carry.

You meet people on some of the hardest days of their lives—when shock, fear, and pain are still fresh—and you show up with steadiness, compassion, and dignity. In moments where everything feels out of control, you create a space that is safe, respectful, and centered on the survivor’s voice. That matters more than words can fully express.

The work you do requires not only clinical skill, but deep emotional strength. You hold stories that are heavy. You witness injustice up close. And yet, you continue to show up with gentleness and care, offering not just expertise, but humanity.

Please remember: what you do changes outcomes. It restores a sense of control. It preserves truth. It reminds survivors that they are not alone and that what happened to them matters.

If the weight of this work ever feels overwhelming, know that your presence—your calm voice, your careful hands, your unwavering respect—has already made a difference in ways you may never fully see.

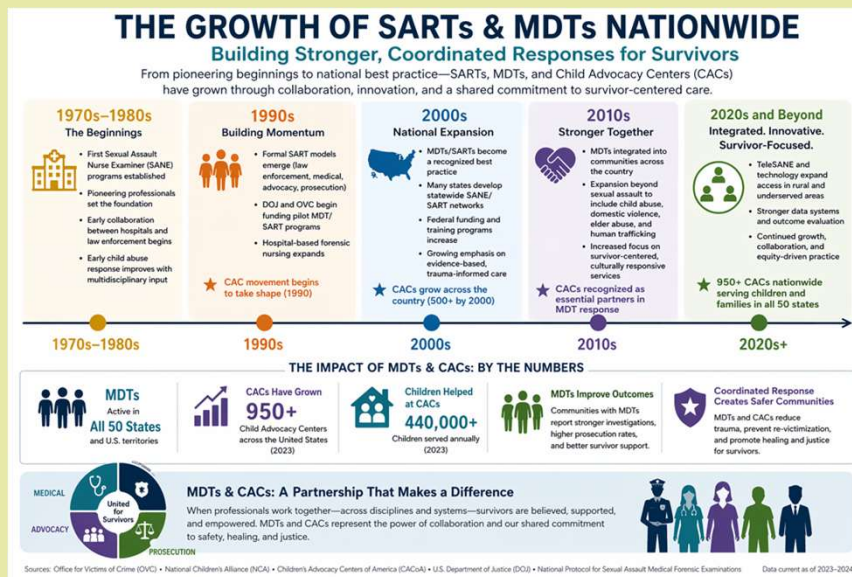
You are seen. You are needed. And you are deeply appreciated.

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The Roots – Who are these guys?

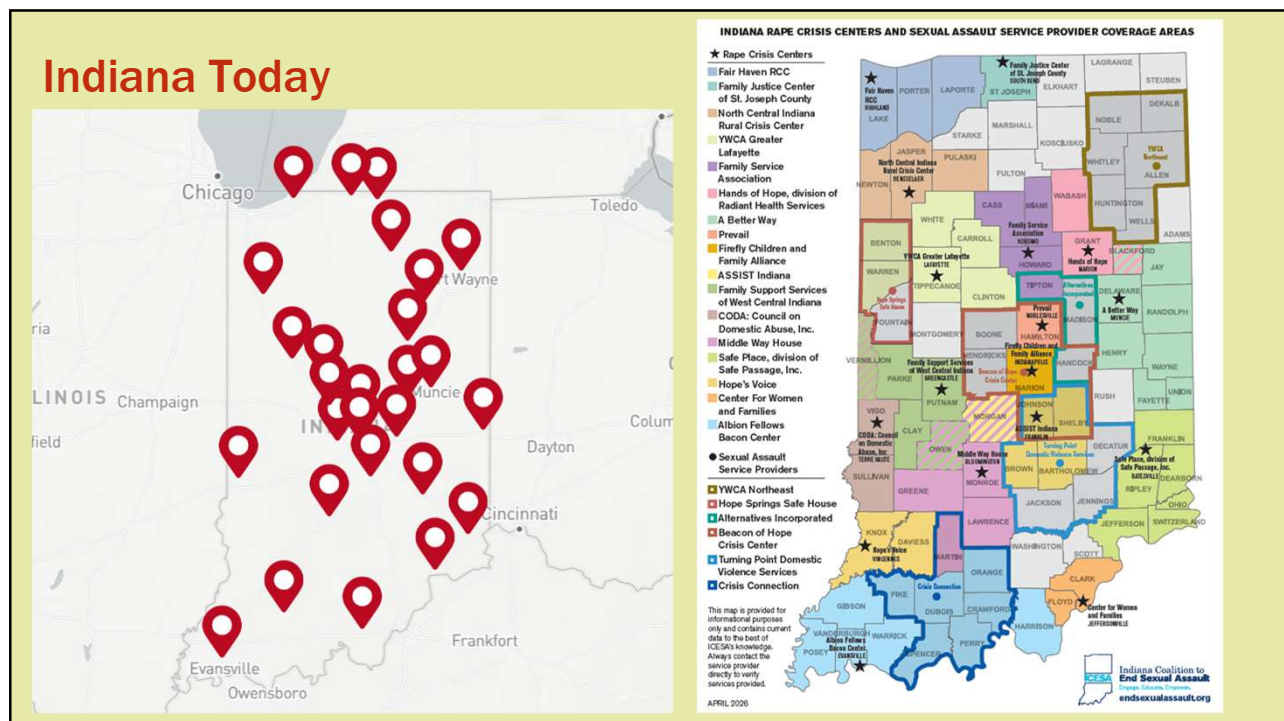


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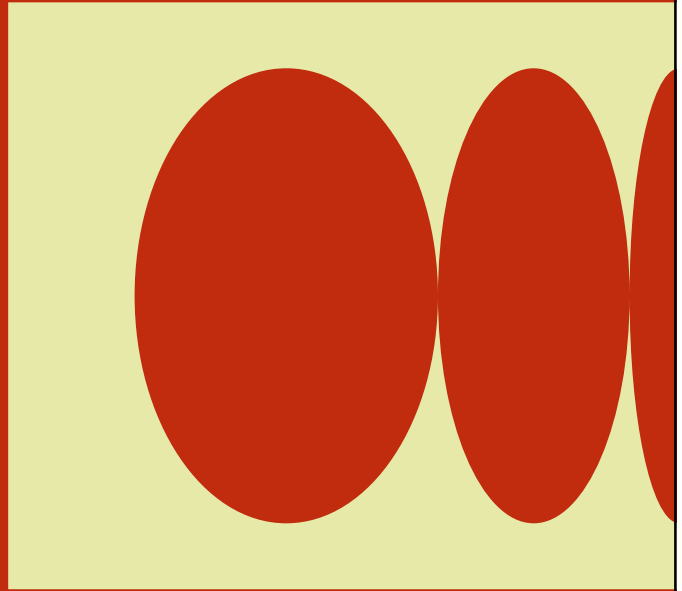
A long way to go and a short time to get there...

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The Challenge - What makes this model hard?



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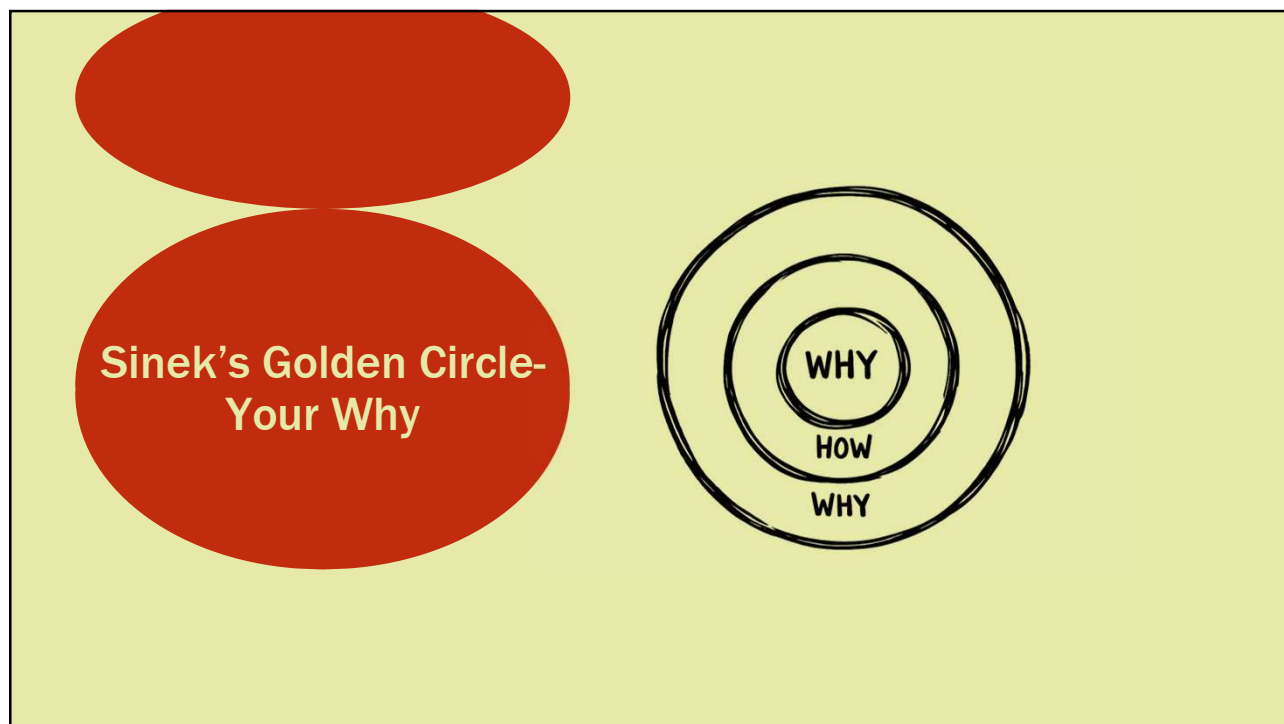
Our Model

Inherent Challenges

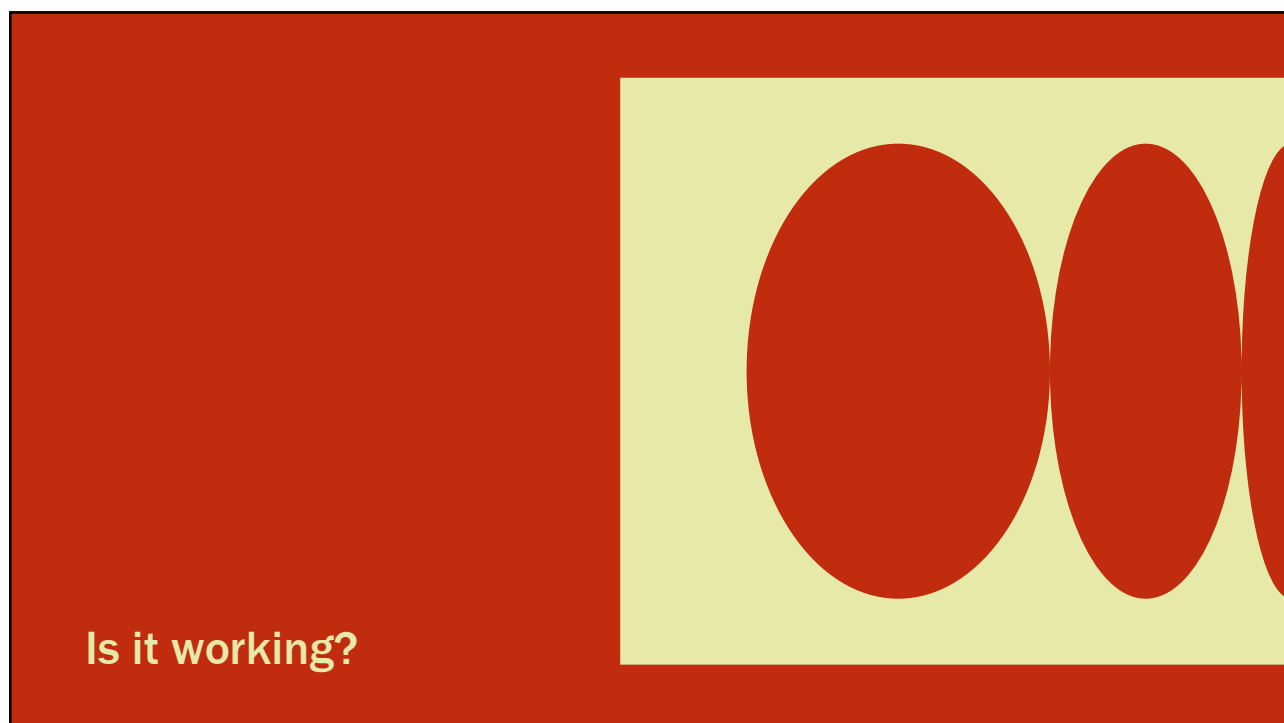
- Chaotic or absent facilitation/leadership
- Turnover
- Irregular attendance
- Tension between agencies
- Lack of clarity around the work and discussion
- Discussions dominated by one person or agency
- Burnout
- Conflict between individuals
- Attitudes towards survivors/families
- Over-focus on investigative/ court wins
- What else?



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Campbell, R., Greeson, M. R.,
Bybee, D., & Fehler-Cabral, G.
(2012).

*Adolescent sexual assault victims
and the legal system: Building
community relationships to
improve prosecution rates.*

Adolescent sexual assault victims and the legal system

- Improved interagency
collaboration
- Better case progression
- More positive victim
experiences

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Campbell, R., Patterson, D., &
Lichty, L. F. (2005).

*The effectiveness of Sexual
Assault Response Teams (SARTs):
A review of empirical research.
Trauma, Violence, & Abuse.*

Effectiveness of SARTs: Review

- Increased evidence
collection quality
- More law enforcement
engagement
- Reduced secondary
victimization

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Greeson, M. R., & Campbell, R. (2013).

Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs): Coordinating services for survivors. Violence Against Women.

SART coordination study

- Team trust & communication critical
- Clear roles improve outcomes
- Leadership matters

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Patterson, D., & Tringali, B. (2015).

Understanding the role and impact of SARTs in community response to sexual assault. Journal of Interpersonal Violence.

Impact of SARTs

- Faster response times
- Increased access to SANE exams
- Better coordination

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Nwogu, N. N., Agrawal, L., Chambers, S., Buagas, A. B., Daniele, R. M., & Singleton, J. K. (2016).

Effectiveness of Child Advocacy Centers and the multidisciplinary team approach on prosecution rates and caregiver satisfaction in child sexual abuse cases. JBI Database of Systematic Reviews and Implementation Reports, 13(12), 93–129.

Effectiveness of Child Advocacy Centers and MDTs

- Increased caregiver satisfaction
- Improved prosecution outcomes
- Better coordinated investigations

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Herbert, J. L., & Bromfield, L. (2016).

Evidence for the efficacy of the Child Advocacy Center model: A systematic review. Child Abuse & Neglect.

CAC model systematic review

- Strong evidence for system/process improvement
- Limited evidence for long-term child outcomes
- Focus on justice & service delivery

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McGuier, E. A., et al. (2024).

Team functioning and performance in Child Advocacy Center multidisciplinary teams. Child Maltreatment.

CAC effectiveness synthesis

- Reduces system trauma through coordination
- Improves investigative processes
- Limited rigorous outcome studies

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Voices from the Field...

“We were working in silos, and I saw the need for a multidisciplinary approach to effectively care for the children. Caring for child abuse victims has become my ministry. If I can relieve even a small amount of the effects of trauma for these children, then it is a successful day. I hope that my care is a step toward resiliency for my patients.”

Dr. Joan Philips

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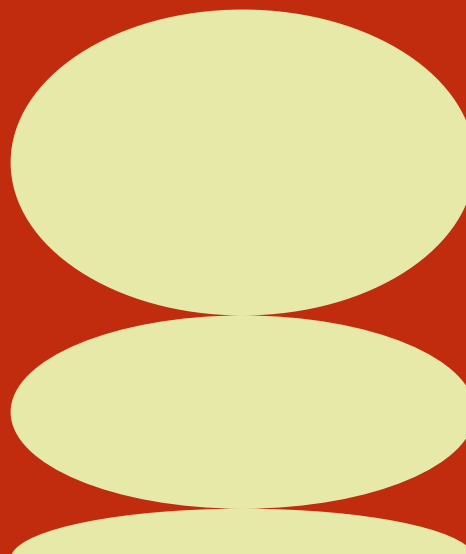
Meredith Pheasant, MSN, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, is a Forensic Nurse Examiner (FNE) Coordinator for WVU Medicine's Ruby Memorial and WVU Medicine Children's Hospitals



Dr. Joan Philips, MD is a pediatrician with Vandalia Health in Charleston, WV and former president of AAP WV Chapter.

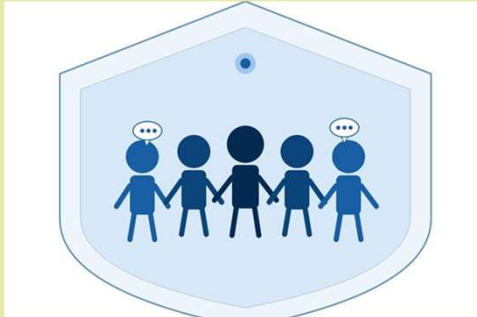
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Common Dysfunctions of Multi-Disciplinary Teams



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Absence of Psychological Safety



“A shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking.” - Amy Edmondson

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How do you build psychological safety?



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When in place, psychological safety allows team members to:

- Make mistakes without it being held against them personally. Team members are able to separate the mistake from the person.
- Challenge the status quo and speak up when something is wrong without it being held against them.
- Accept all ideas, questions and challenges as part of the team's learning process.
- Ask for help when needed without being made to feel less than, weak or incapable.
- Change their mind when new information and ideas are presented.
- Honor the decisions that will be best for the whole team and not just for them personally or for their discipline specifically.
- Assume best intentions from all members of the team.

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Psychologically Safe Working Environment

- Non-judgment
- Curiosity
- Solidarity – we're learning together
- Ask for specific help and appreciate another perspective
- Own assumptions and apologize
- Don't shoot the messenger

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Psychological Safety Inventory – Self (Y/N)

- If I make a mistake on this team, it is often held against me.
- Members of this team are able to bring up problems and tough issues.
- People on this team sometimes reject others for being different.
- It is safe to take a risk on this team.
- It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help.
- No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.
- Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized

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Psychological Safety Inventory – Most Vulnerable (Y/N)

- If I make a mistake on this team, it is often held against me.
- Members of this team can bring up problems and tough issues.
- People on this team sometimes reject others for being different.
- It is safe to take a risk on this team.
- It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help.
- No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.
- Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized

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Reflection

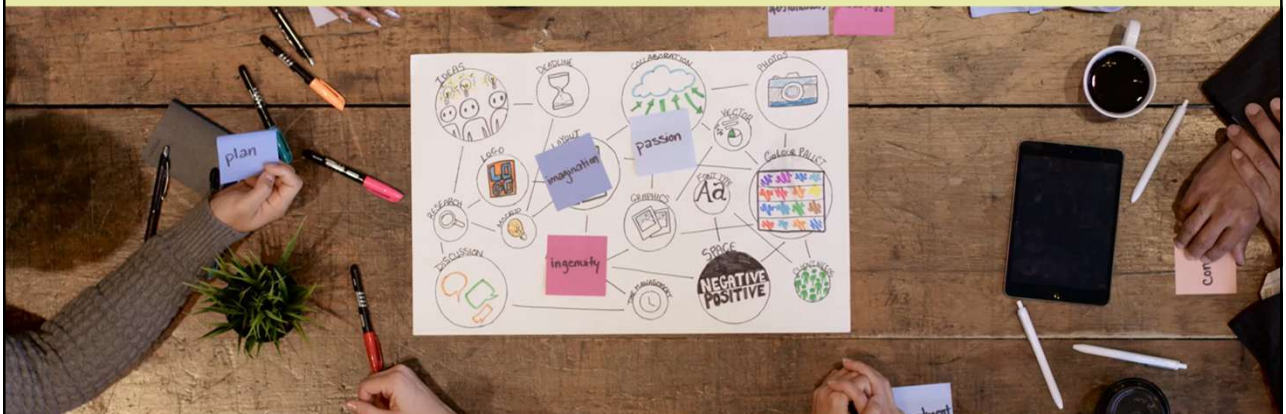
- Using the scales you just completed, focus on one statement that feels most important to you.
- Using as few words as possible, draw what strikes you as what is causing the issue or inhibiting solving it. (If everything is going well, draw about what you think is contributing to that.)



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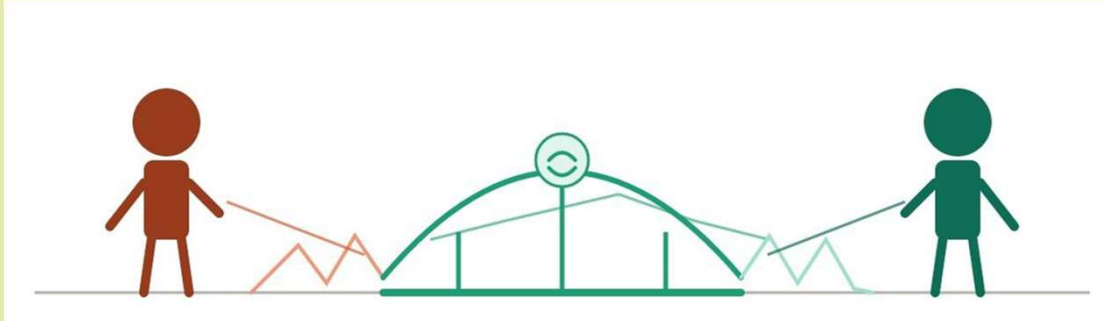
Peer Sharing - *confidentiality reminder

- Share your picture and what it represents for you
- Listener can only ask questions (no advice giving)
- Share what is one step you can take towards action in this matter
- SWITCH people



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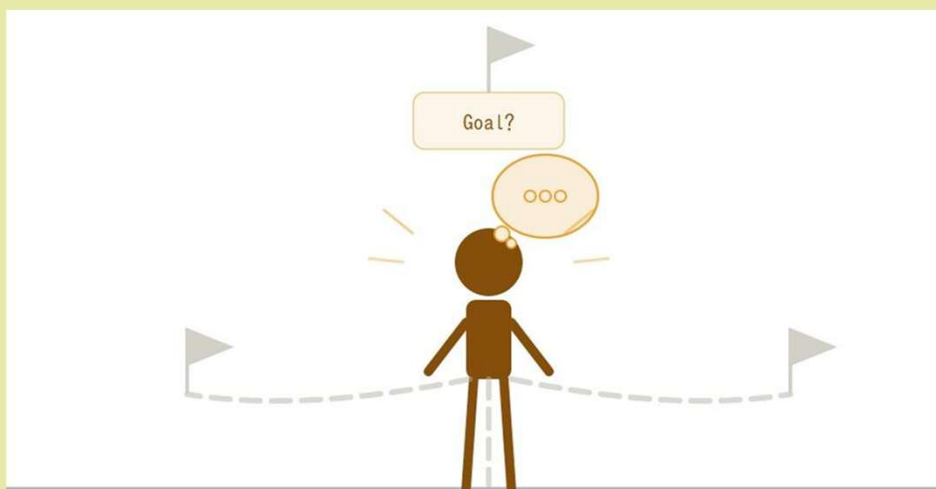
Mismanaged Conflict



“When conflicts are approached as opportunities, however painful, for growth and development, we can build mini models of what a better world might look like.” - Marie Dugan

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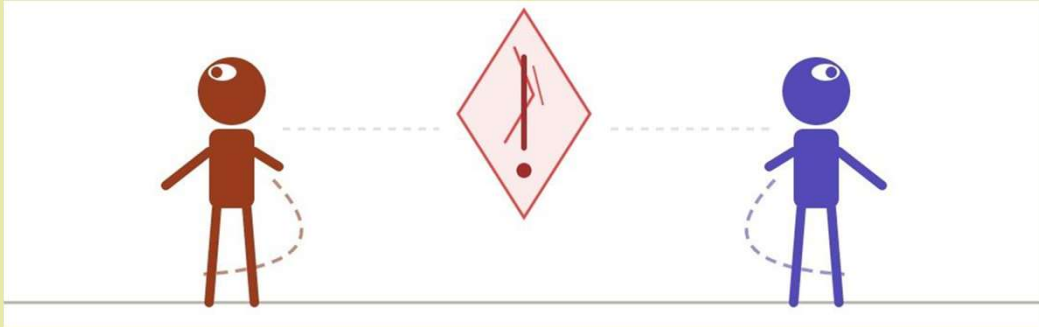
Lack of Commitment



“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” — African Proverb

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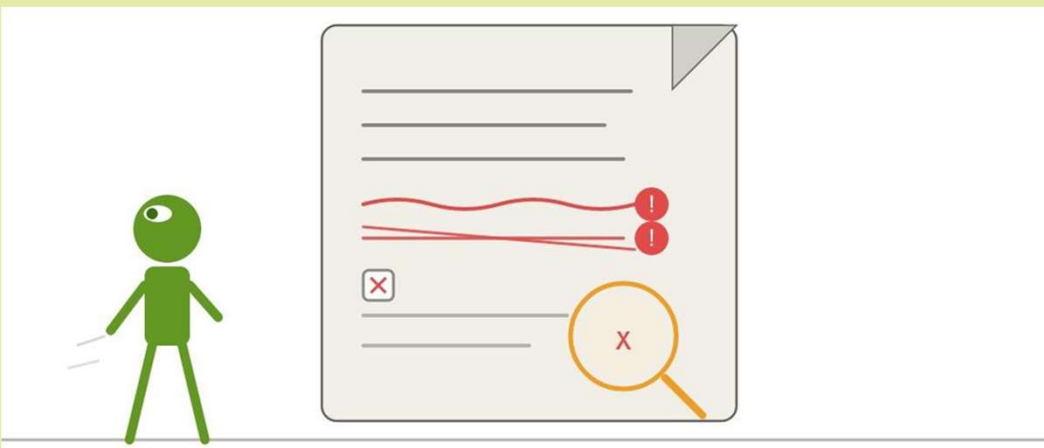
Avoidance of Accountability



"You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today." —
Abraham Lincoln

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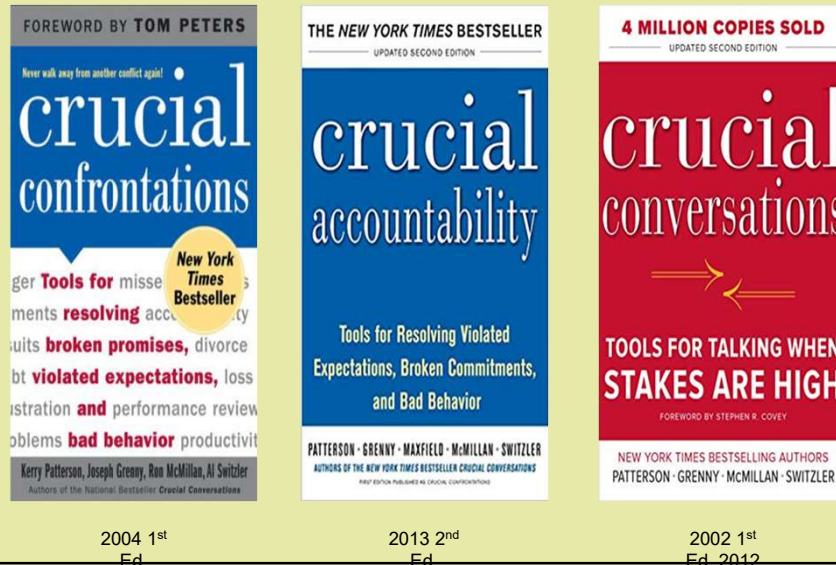
Inattention to Detail



"Simple inattention kills empathy, let alone compassion." *Daniel Goleman*

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Crucial Conversations - How do I start the conversation/help others start conversations?



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Crucial Conversations are...

Face-to-face accountability conversations:

- When someone has not lived up to an agreement
- You talk with them directly with respect
- The intention is to discover a shared plan

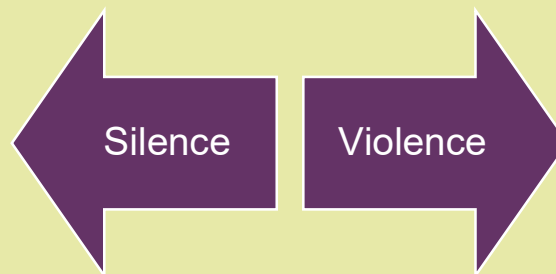
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They invite reflection in what is driving our behavior

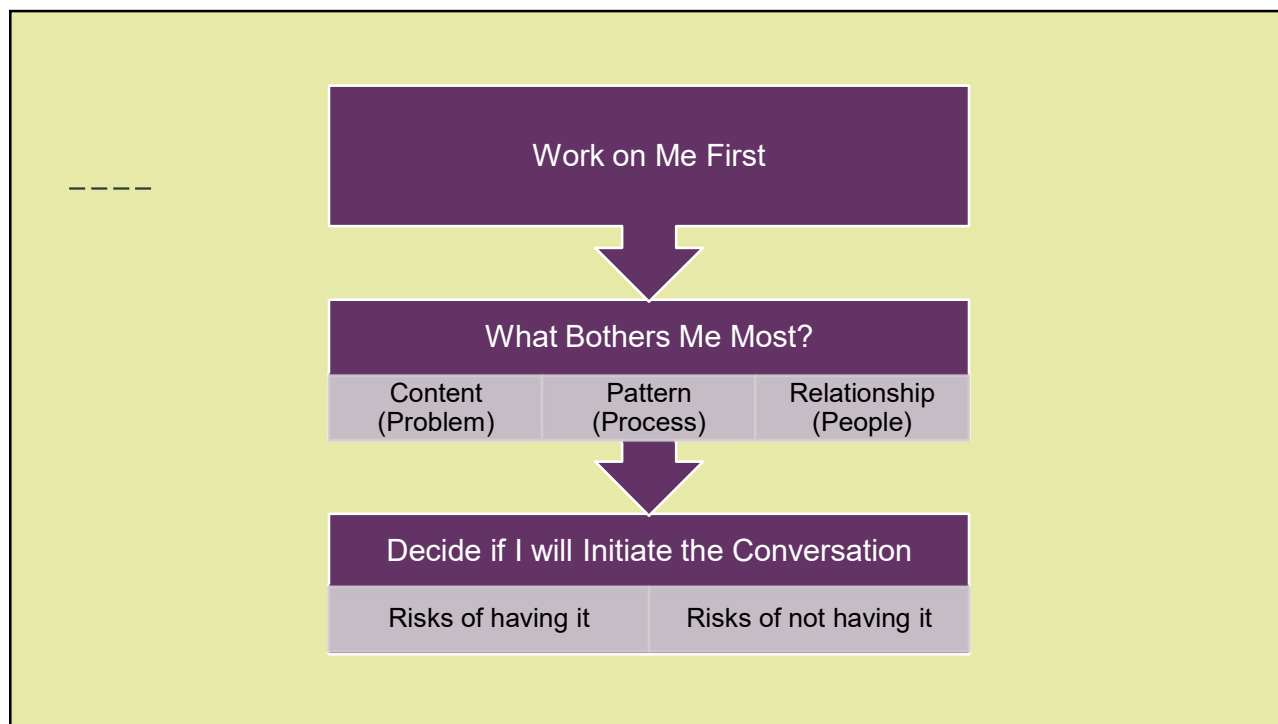


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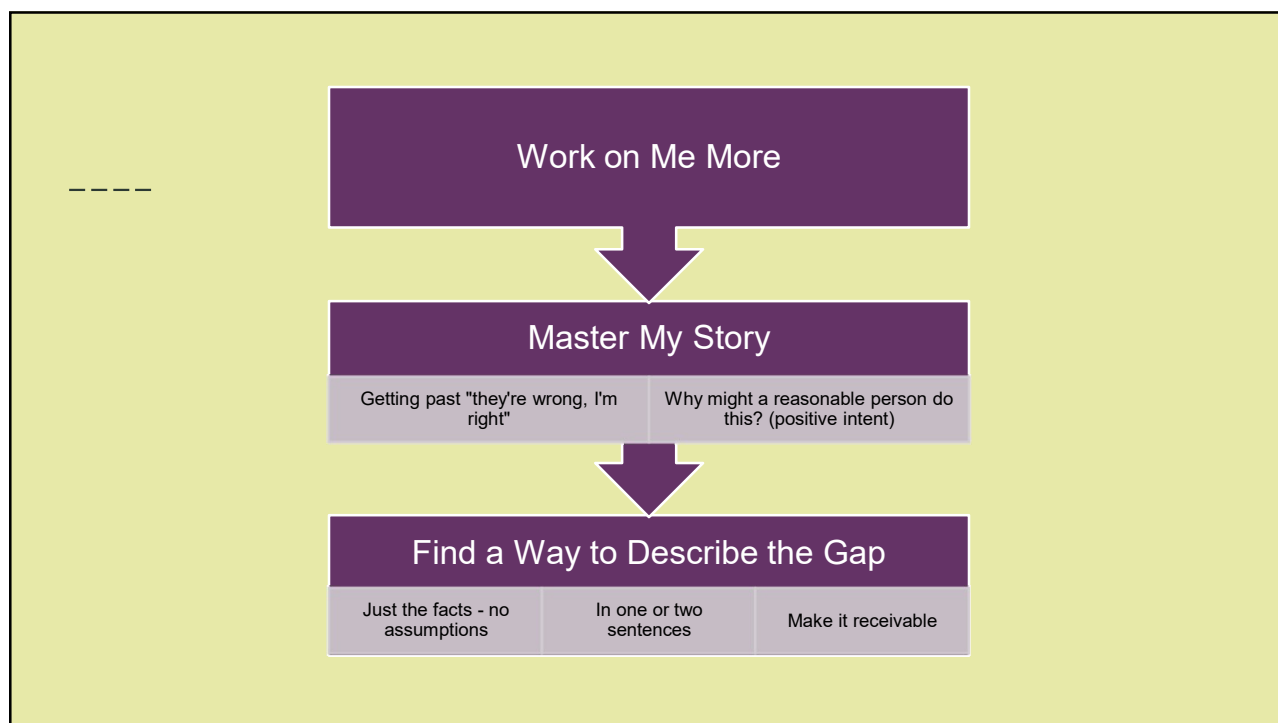
They assist us as we move away from dangerous traps



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Considerations

What could make it safe to have this conversation successfully?

What's my opening line?

What will I ask for?

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Deciding whether to speak up

- Recognize that I'm acting out of feelings
- Notice I'm telling myself that I'm helpless or powerless
- Realize that my conscience is nagging me to speak, claim my perspective

[Crucial Conversations WS](#)

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Q & A

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Stay in touch!

Grace Stewart, Accord

grace@accord.llc

304-704-7943

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