

# Conflict to Clarity: A Difficult Conversations Workshop

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AMCTO Zone 7  
Facilitated by: Suhaib Ibrahim



**AMCTO**  
THE MUNICIPAL EXPERTS

**bernardicentre**  
Training & Transformation



**Suhaib Ibrahim**

Lawyer & Workplace  
Investigator



# Session Overview

Courageous  
Conversations



De-Escalation  
Tips

# ~~Difficult~~ Courageous Conversations





Start with  
you



Make it  
safe



Get to the  
needs



Navigate  
the  
hazards



Get to a  
resolution



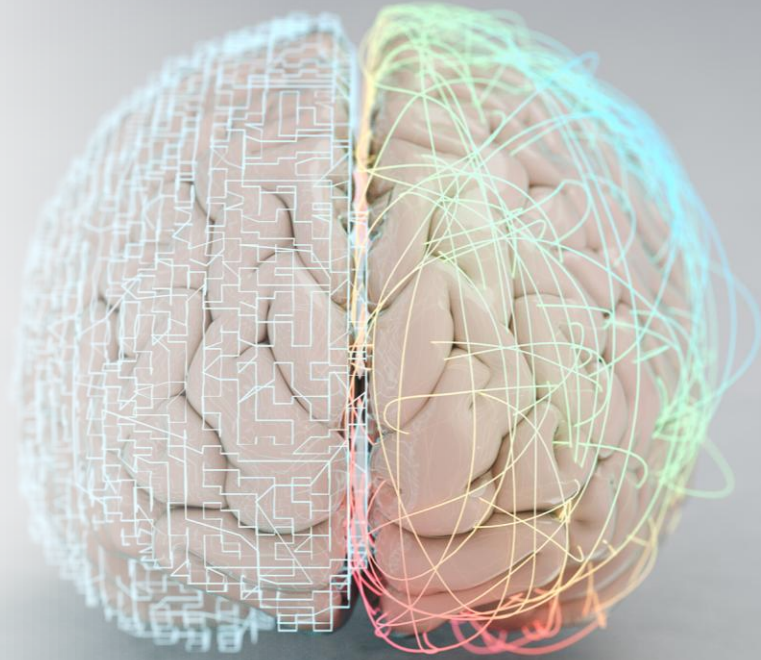
Start With You





what is your **intention?**

are you in  
the right  
frame of  
mind?





what **assumptions**  
am I making?



avoid “they’re just” thinking

fundamental attribution error



differences in  
perception



the reality gap







Make it Safe





psychological PPE



```
graph TD; A[your PPE] --> B[set boundaries]; A --> C[be open minded]; A --> D[be prepared];
```

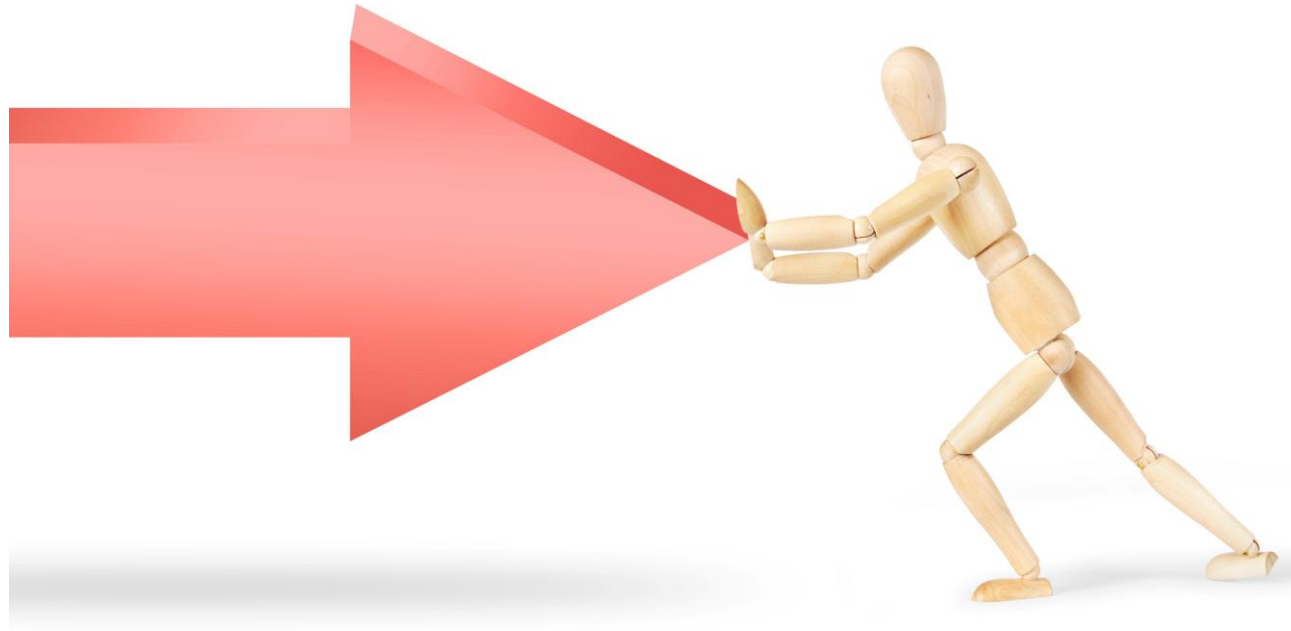
your PPE

set boundaries

be open minded

be prepared

expect  
resistance



The most important thing you can  
do is **listen** to what people are  
saying... even when they are  
saying it badly



to be **courageous**  
means to be  
**vulnerable**



their PPE

```
graph TD; A[their PPE] --> B[feeling heard and validated]; A --> C[saving face]; A --> D[not blaming or shaming]
```

feeling heard and validated

saving face

not blaming or shaming

first...build trust

You don't seem to  
be yourself.

How best can I  
support you?

I have noticed...

I'm here if you need  
any support

Is there anything  
you need me  
to know?

outline available  
supports



ensure  
confidentially





# Get To Their Needs



email is a brilliant way  
to **miscommunicate**  
how you feel

and **misinterpret** what  
other people mean



# The Meeting



outline organizational  
needs and impact

resist the temptation to  
immediately insist on  
**your** strategy

watch your **BUTS**

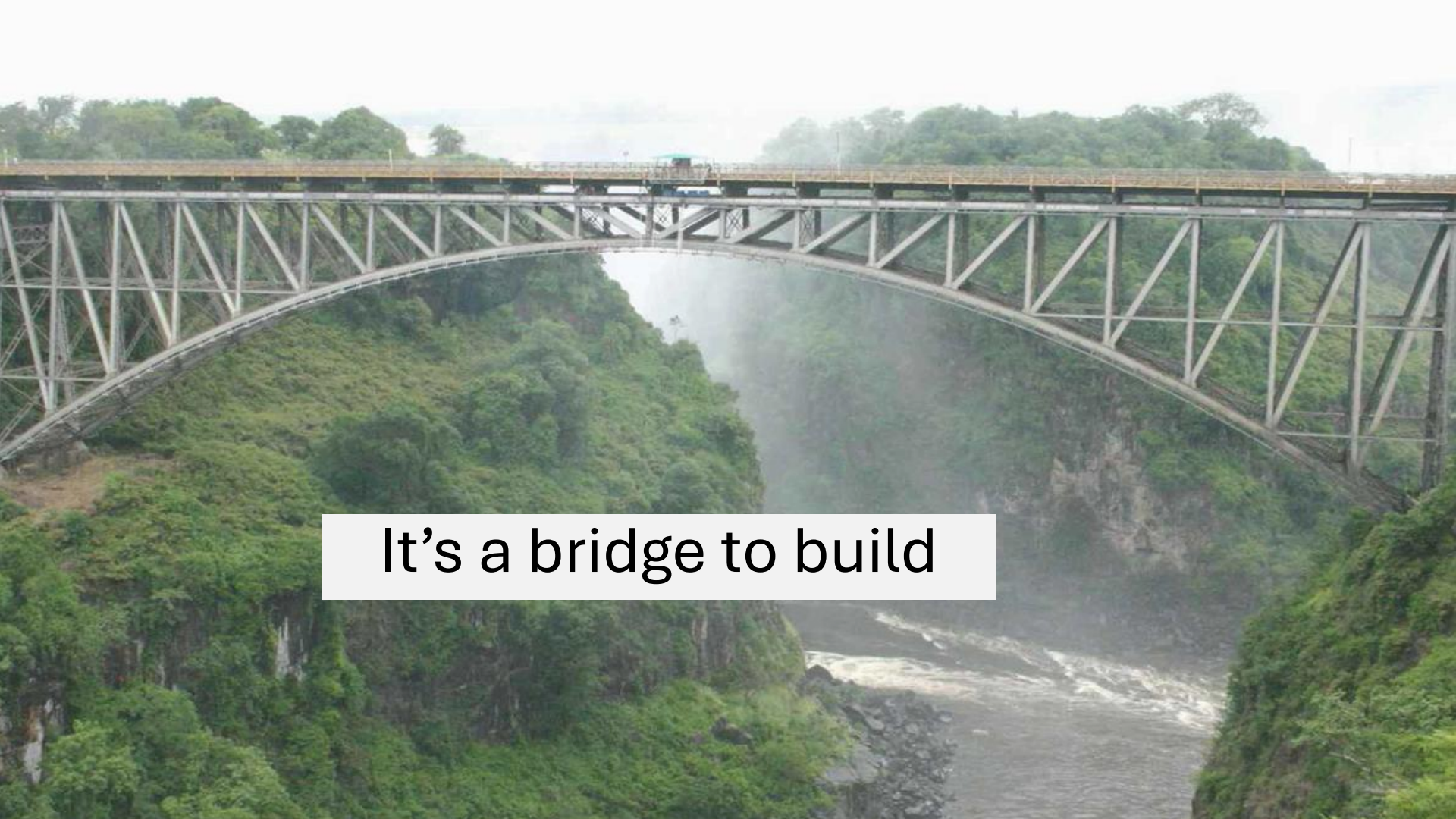


# Navigate Hazards



A large, intense fire with bright orange and yellow flames, partially obscuring a dark structure. The fire is the central focus, with a white text box overlaid on it.

It's not a fire to put out



It's a bridge to build



how do you navigate hazards?

# Emotional

aggression

crying

playing the  
victim

# Threatening

grievances

harassment  
complaints

body  
language

# Disrespectful Behaviour

talking over  
you

positional

# Distractions

tangents

bringing up  
old issues



# Activity

Dealing With Hazards



don't have a  
“heard” attack

assume there is a  
solution you haven't  
uncovered yet



talk to their  
**best** self





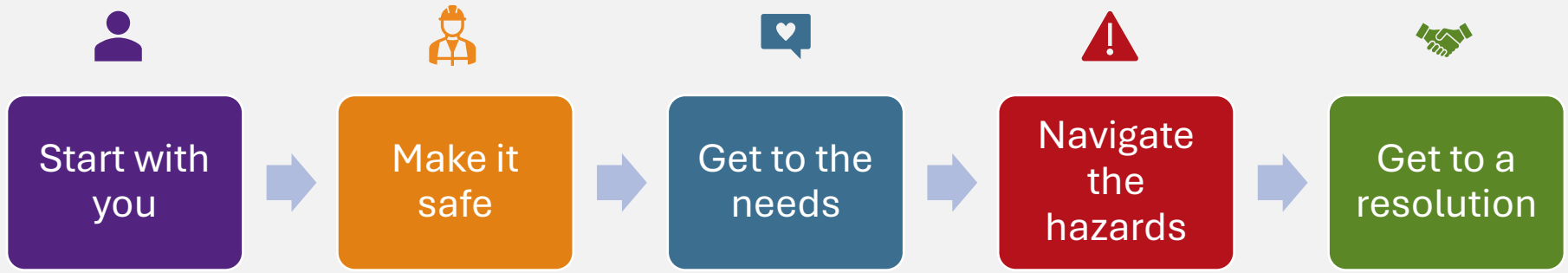
Get to a Resolution





**discuss** what to do if the  
resolution doesn't work

# To recap...

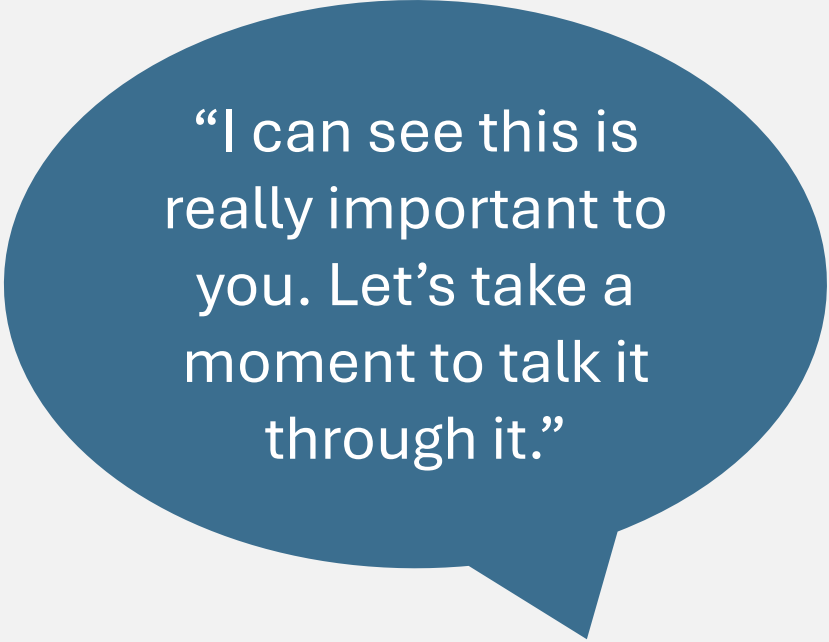


# De-Escalation Tips



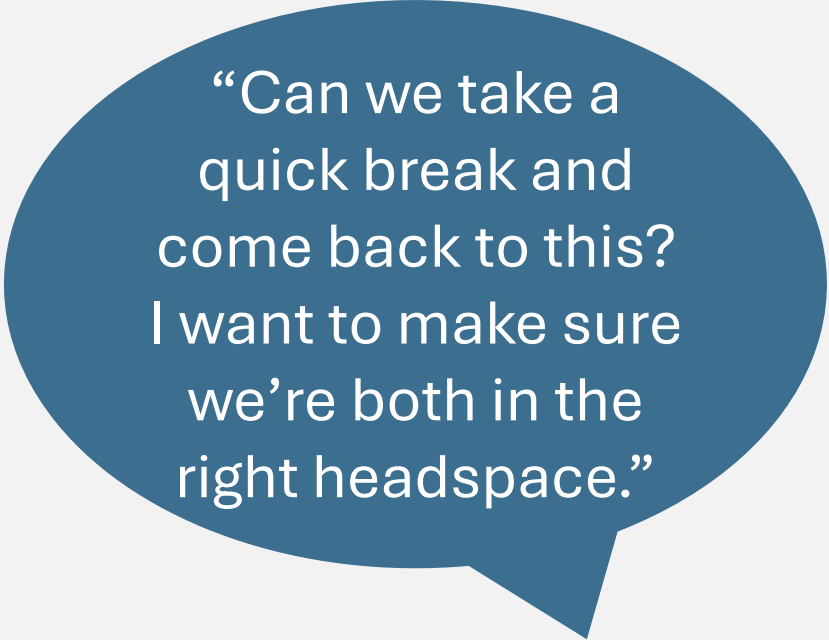
# What You Can Say

# Acknowledge Emotions



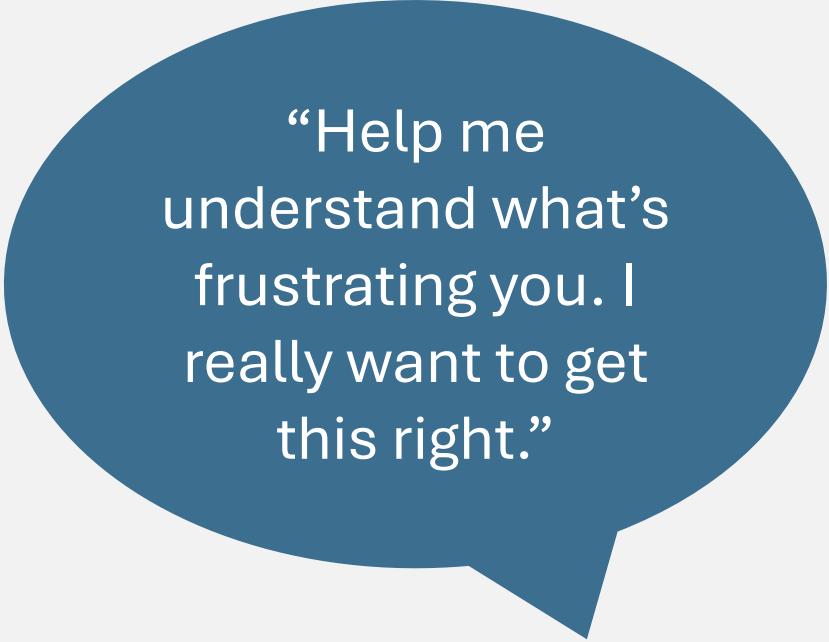
“I can see this is really important to you. Let’s take a moment to talk it through it.”

# Pause & Redirect



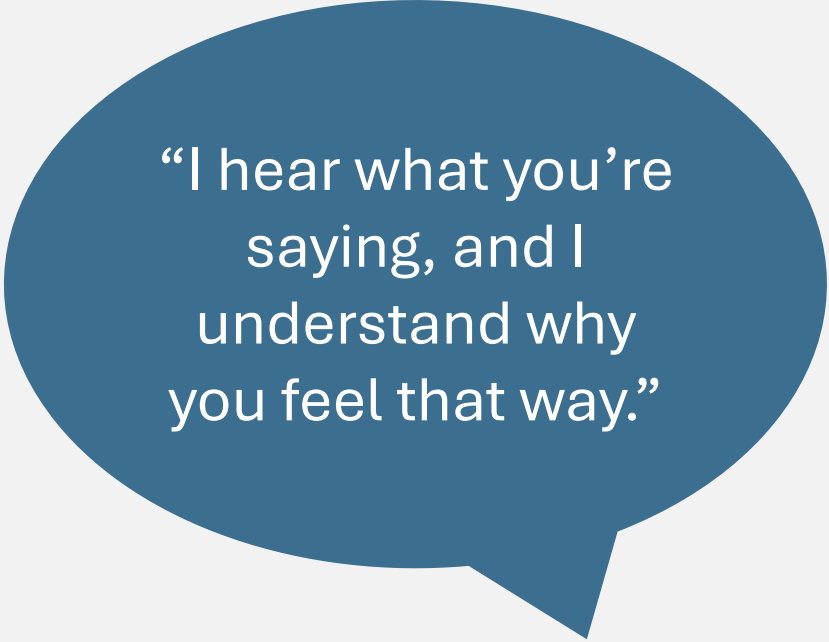
“Can we take a quick break and come back to this? I want to make sure we’re both in the right headspace.”

# Seek Understanding



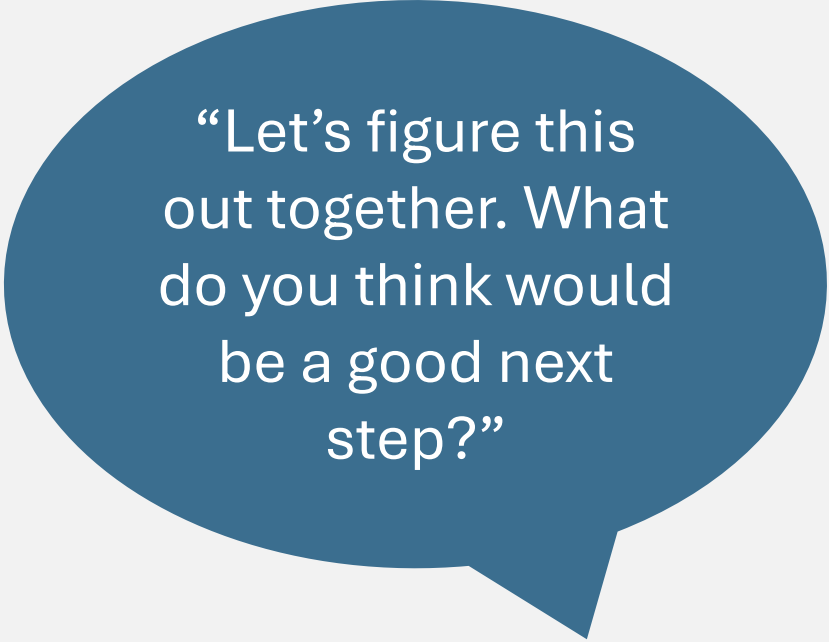
“Help me understand what’s frustrating you. I really want to get this right.”

# **Validate Without Agreeing**




“I hear what you’re  
saying, and I  
understand why  
you feel that way.”

# Invite Collaboration



“Let’s figure this out together. What do you think would be a good next step?”

# Set Boundaries Respectfully

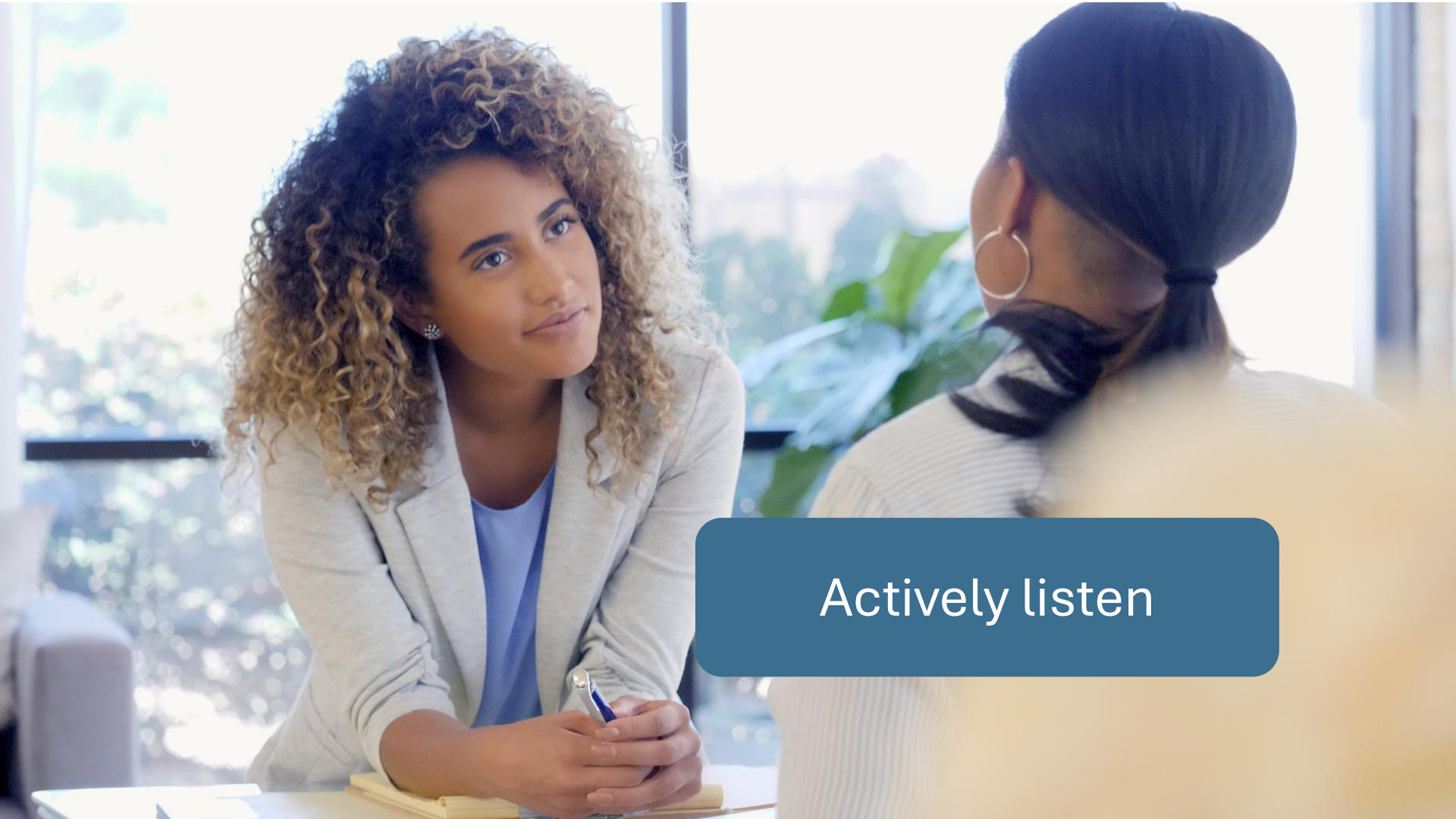


“I want to continue  
this conversation,  
but I think we  
should take a  
minute.”

# What You Can Do

A woman with dark, curly hair is shown in profile, looking intently at a laptop screen. She is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt under a tan, textured cardigan. The background is softly blurred, showing a window with light coming through and a warm, indoor environment. In the foreground, a white mug is partially visible on the right side.

Stay calm and neutral



Actively listen



Use “I” statement



Slow down the pace

# Questions?



**Suhaib Ibrahim**

Lawyer & Workplace Investigator

