Reactivity and Reflection in ADR Practice

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General Approach

We are interrupting or preventing costly conflict-sustaining interactions ……. and encouraging new, more fruitful ways of talking and relating.

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A Core Premise

Every conversational structure **invites** some kinds of speaking and listening -

and **discourages** other kinds.

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So We Ask
(ourselves and participants)…

- What is a given conversational structure **likely to restrain?**

- What is a given conversational structure **likely to bring forward**?

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And more to the point-

- What will restrain and help people to manage their **reactivity**?

- What will invite and support people to be **reflective.**

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A Core Practice

We seek answers to these questions in **collaboration** with participants.

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A Core Process: Action-Reflection Cycle

Reflect on and clarify

INTENTION/PURPOSE

ACTION

Inquire about

EFFECTS/IMPACT

LEARNING

Reflect on what we've learned

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In the Action Reflection Cycle we are……

Attending to the **gap** between **intention** and **impact.**

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A helpful principle -

You are the expert on the intention of your words.

I am the expert on their impact.

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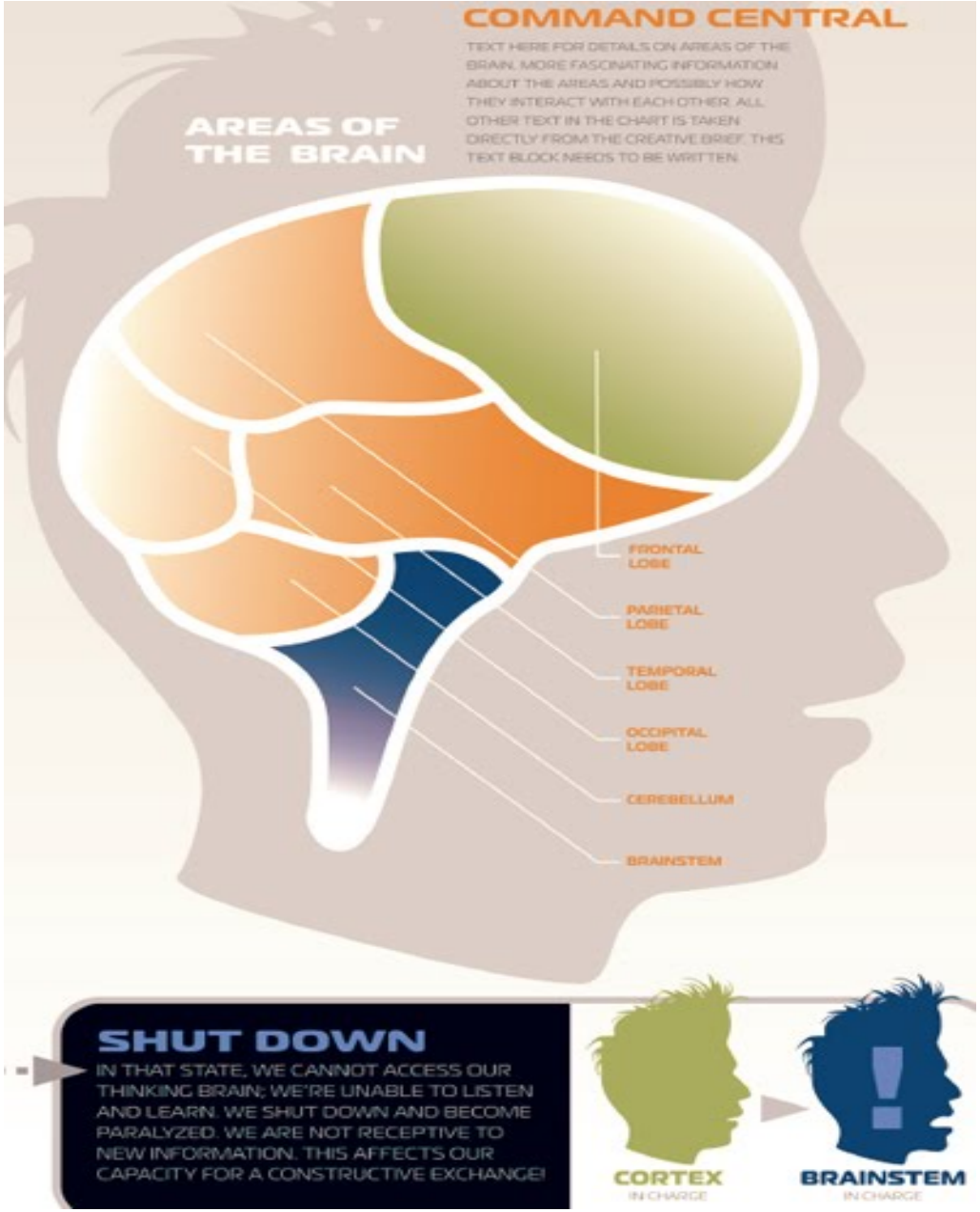

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Hot Button Language

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Questions to discourage the "same old, same old."

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Preparation Questions

- What strengths would you say you bring to this meeting? Where do you think you'll need to stretch yourself?

OR

- In order to participate as your best self in this meeting what will you want to bring forward and what, in yourself, will you want to restrain [hold back]?

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Appreciative questions

(Appreciative Inquiry)

- Think of a time when has this team pulled together to achieve something. What supported that, what made it possible?
- Have you faced something like this before, and resolved it to your satisfaction? What made that possible?
- When you've gone through change in other spheres of your life (you marry, you move, etc) what has your experience taught you is important about how to deal well with it?

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Questions to shift perspective

- Is there someone you deeply respect whose wisdom might be helpful right now? How would they see this situation? What advice might they give you?
- What do you think the other person/group doesn't understand about you or your situation? How could you help them develop greater understanding?

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Questions to Expand Perspective

- You’ve each mentioned that you care a great deal about completing this project. What makes it important to you? What are you hoping for?

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Supporting Structures

- Pauses – Time to think before anyone starts to speak. Breaks and time outs.
- Paper so people can jot notes.
- Pass rule – Lets people think about whether they are ready to speak.
- Inviting people to consult and speak from their own experience, beliefs, values, hopes.
- Ground rules.

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References and Resources from the Public Conversations Project

See the resources page for a list of articles and guides at www.publicconversations.org

Fostering Dialogue Across Divides: A Nuts and Bolts Guide from the Public Conversations Project

"The Enemy Within: Why We're Hard Wired for Conflict" Dr. Corky Becker (Fall PCP Newsletter)

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