



BEST CARE EAP



# We Need to Talk:

*How to Have*

**CRUCIAL**

# CONVERSATIONS



**Presented by:  
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**[www.BestCareEAP.org](http://www.BestCareEAP.org)**



# Today's Objectives<sup>+</sup>

- ⚙️ Define what makes a conversation crucial
- ⚙️ Discuss why these conversations can often be ineffective
- ⚙️ Reframe our mindset for more productive dialogue
- ⚙️ Learn to speak up when it matters most for improved relationships & results





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*What Makes a  
Conversation Difficult?*





# What Makes a Conversation + “Difficult”?

A discussion between two or more people where:

The stakes are high.

Opinions differ.

Emotions run strong.

The outcome significantly impacts their lives or there is a significant risk of negative consequences.

+

# Top Contributors to Difficult Conversations

✓ Differing Perceptions

✓ Assuming Intent

✓ Feelings

+

✓ Blame

+

# Differing *Perceptions*

- We have different **information** about the same issue, event, or decision.
- We have different **interpretations** of our information.
- Our interpretations come from different **life experiences**.



# Assuming *Intent*

- It is common to assume another's intentions by the impact of their actions.
- Unless they **state** their intentions, we cannot **know** their intentions..
- We may not even realize we are making assumptions.



# Power of *Feelings*

- Our feelings can affect our ability to think, problem solve, and communicate.
- Feelings may be at the heart of a conflict hiding behind surface-level disagreements.
- Unexpressed feelings can manifest in sarcasm, impatience, & negative behaviors.





# Placing *Blame*

- “Who is wrong? Who made the mistake? Who needs to apologize?”
- Blame prevents learning, accountability, and effective conflict resolution.
- Blame focuses on judgments and excuses counterproductive behaviors.



+  
+  
“The single biggest  
problem in  
communication is  
the illusion that it  
has taken place.”  
+

– *George Bernard Shaw*



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**We Need to Talk:**

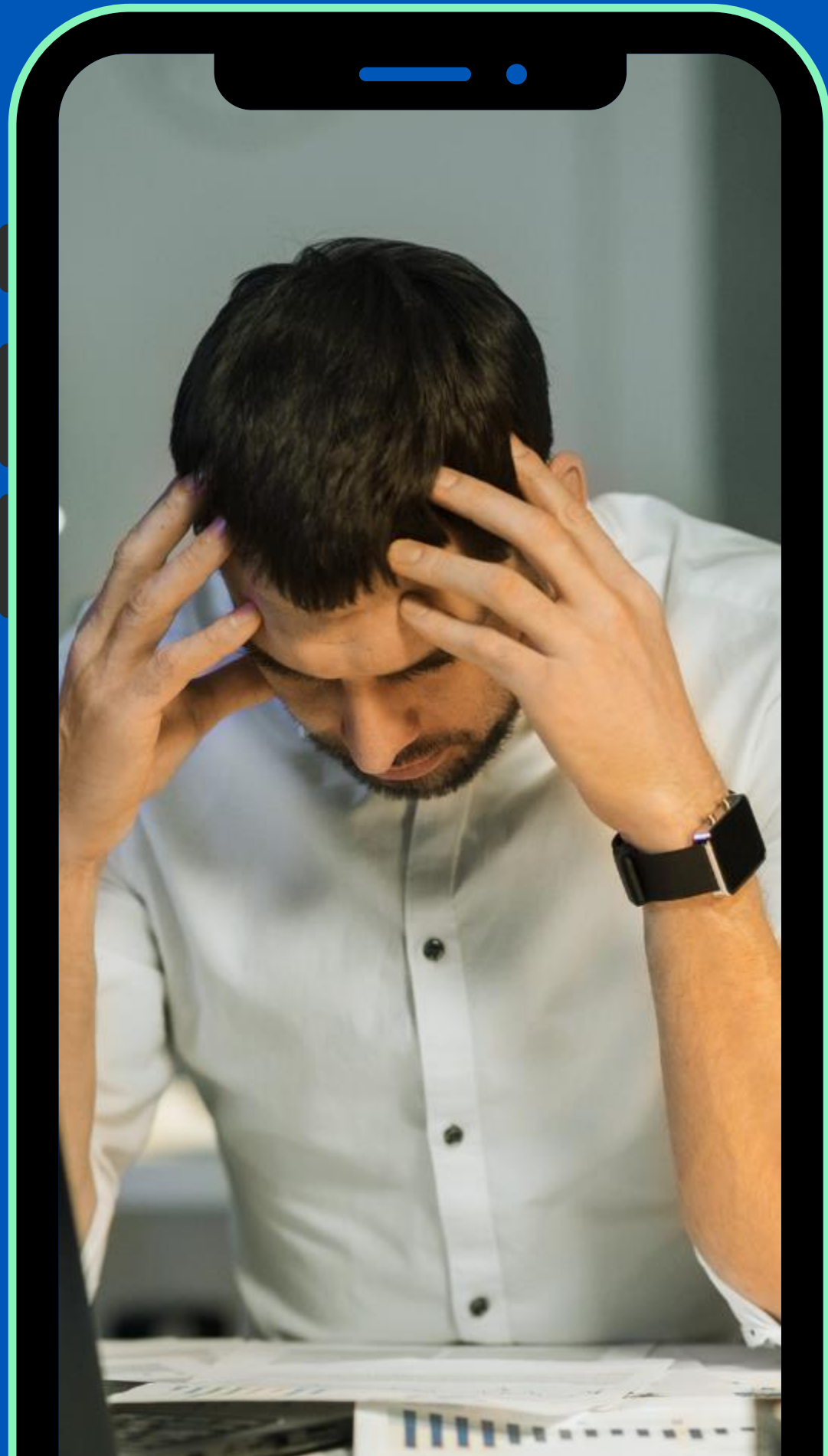
*How to Have*

**CRUCIAL**

**CONVERSATIONS**

*Is it Time for a Difficult  
Conversation?*





# + Performance Gaps & Concerns

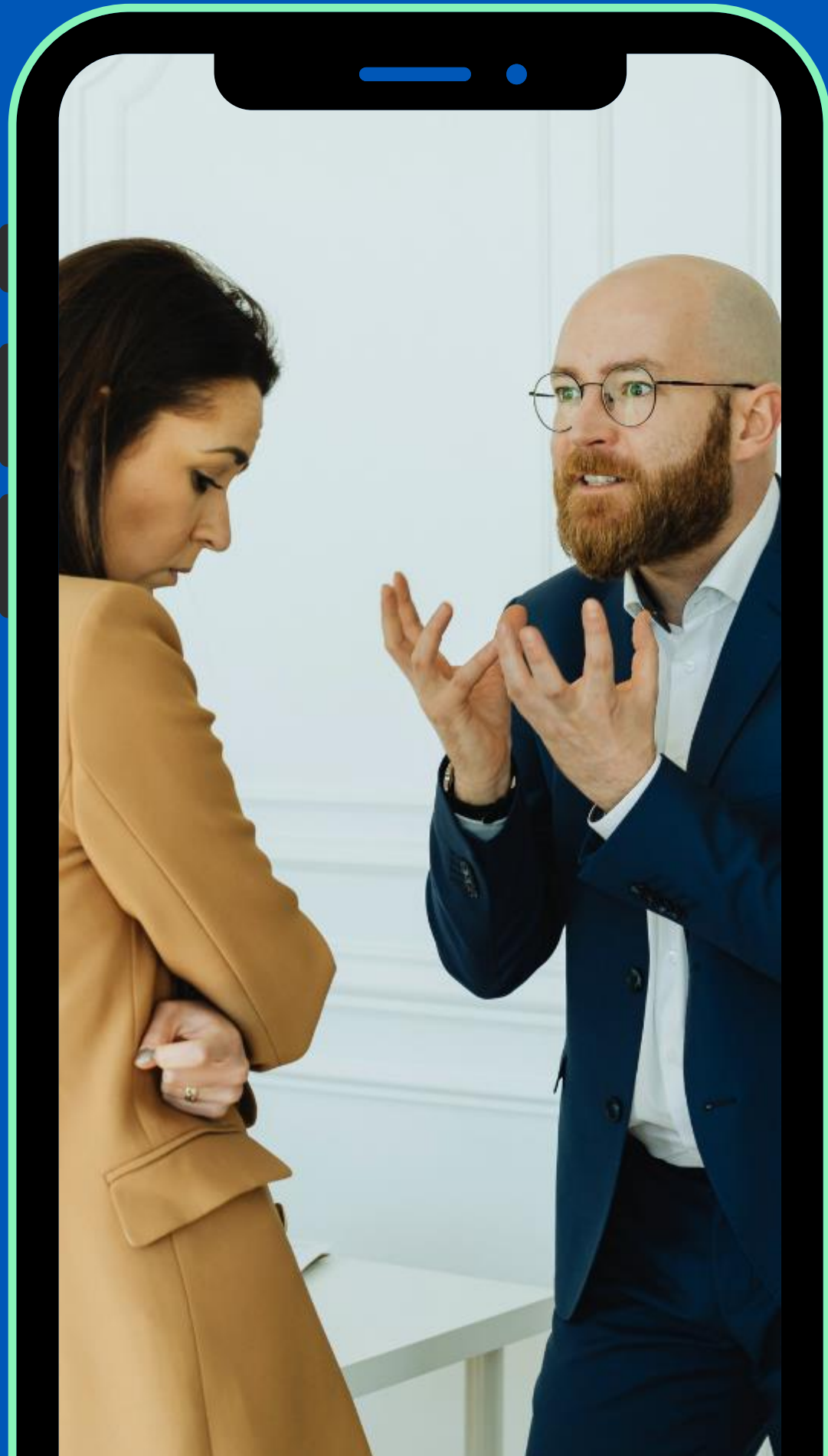
- Time & Place
- Come Prepared
- Provide Specific Examples





# Interpersonal *Conflicts*

- Think About the Goal
- Gather Your Thoughts
- Consider All Perspectives
- Practice!





# + Unproductive *Complaining*

- Be Specific
- Clearly Define the Issue
- Anticipate Potential Reactions
- Prepare & Center Yourself+



+  
**Your Own**  
*Thoughts & Feelings*

- Clearly Identify Your Feelings
- Open a Dialogue
- Find a Positive Way Forward





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*The Framework*





# + Three Options *to Respond*



+  
✓ Avoid

✓ Perform Poorly

✓ Perform Effectively  
+



# **Conflict** + + *Avoidance*

Hurting Feelings

Reactions

Our Own Emotions

Damaging Relationships

Worst-Case Scenarios +



+ Perform +  
+ *Poorly*

Fear of Conflict

---

Social Anxiety

---

Emotional Dysregulation

---

Lack of Preparation

---

Poor Communication Skills +

---



# Perform <sup>+</sup> *Effectively* <sup>+</sup>

**BEFORE** the Conversation

Gather the Facts

---

Understand All Perspectives

---

Plan Your Talking Points

---

Choose Time & Place

---





# Perform <sup>+</sup> Effectively <sup>+</sup>

**DURING** the Conversation

Practice Active Listening

---

Calm, Respectful Communication

---

Use "I" Statements

---

Focus on Solutions

---

Control Your Responses

---





+ **Perform** +  
*Effectively*  
+ **AFTER** the Conversation

Follow Up

---

Document Key Points

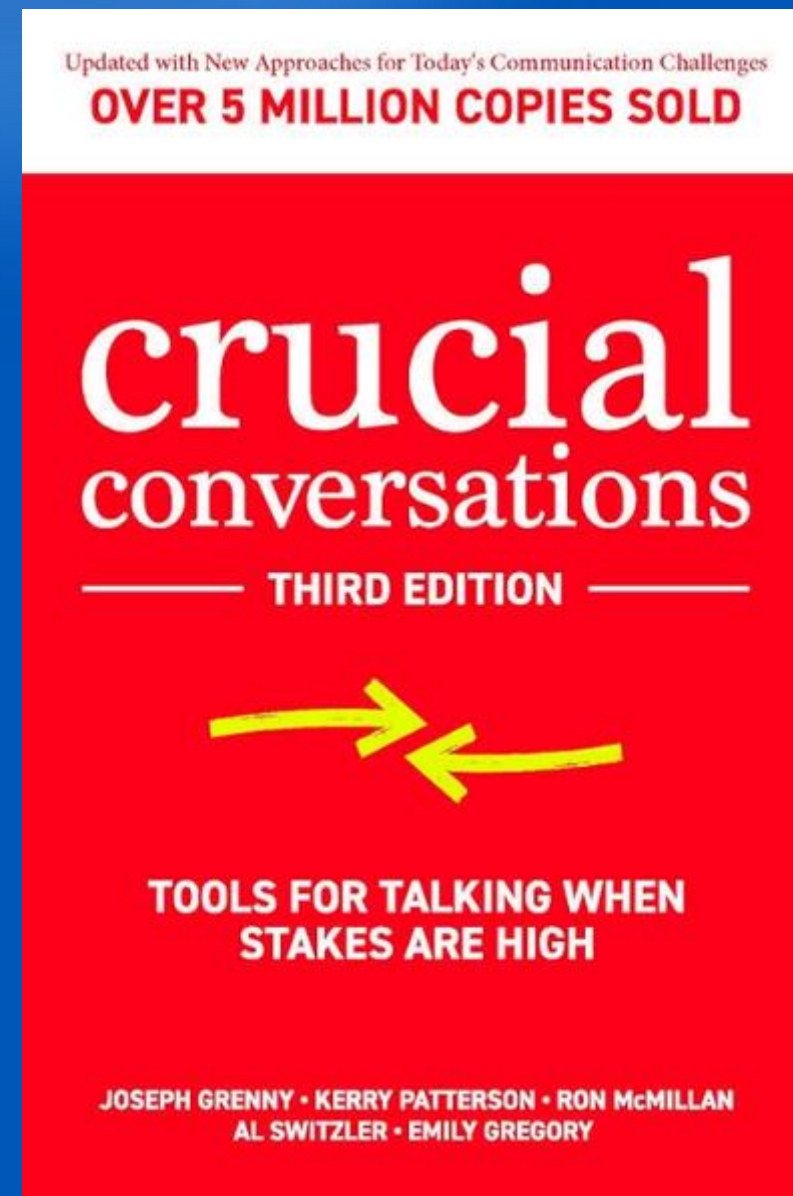
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Determine Action Steps

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# Crucial *Conversations*



**Opposing  
Opinions**

**High  
Stakes**

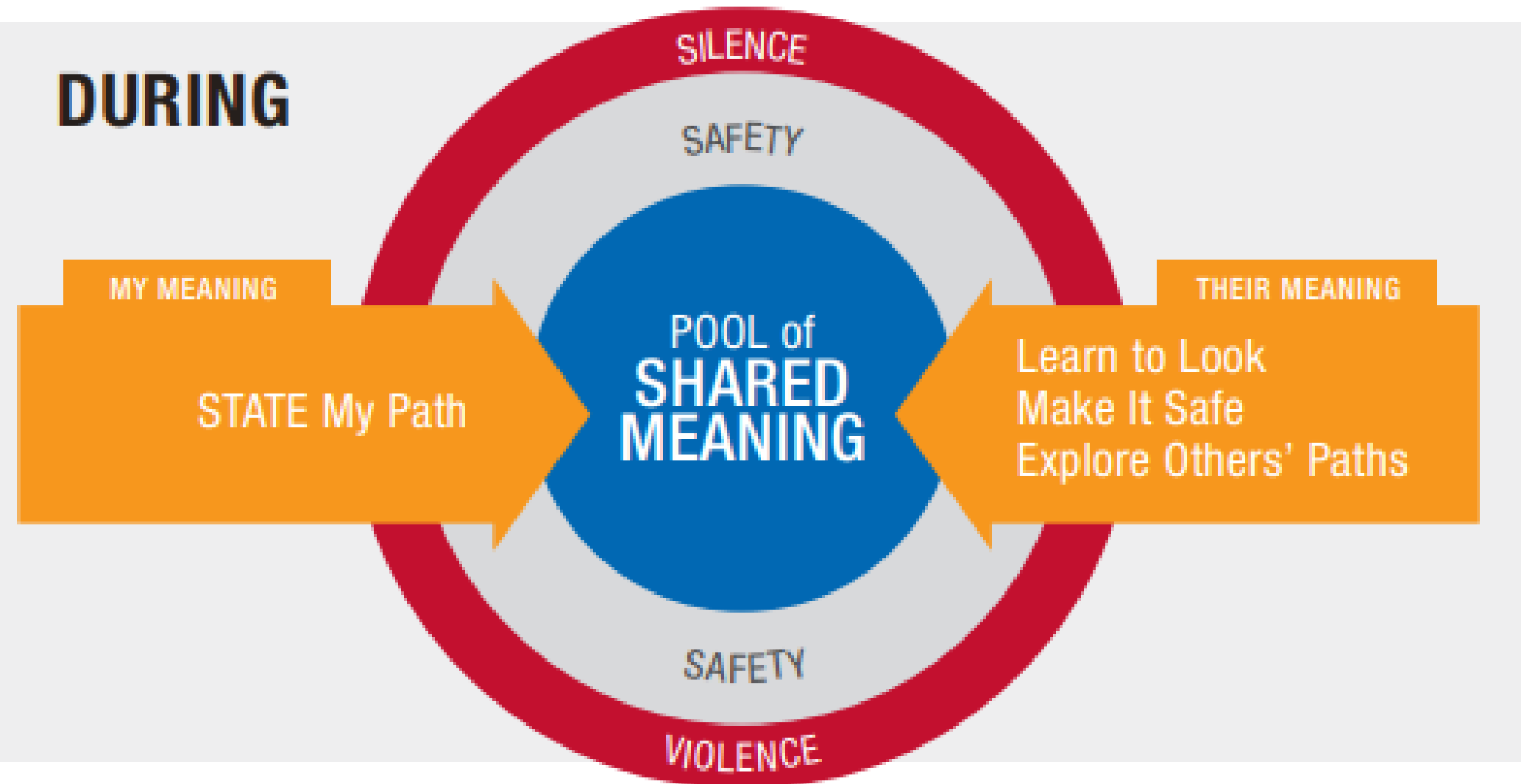
**Strong  
Emotions**

# BEFORE

## WORK ON ME FIRST

Get Unstuck  
Start with Heart  
Master My Stories

# DURING



# AFTER

## MOVE TO ACTION

Who does What by When  
Follow up





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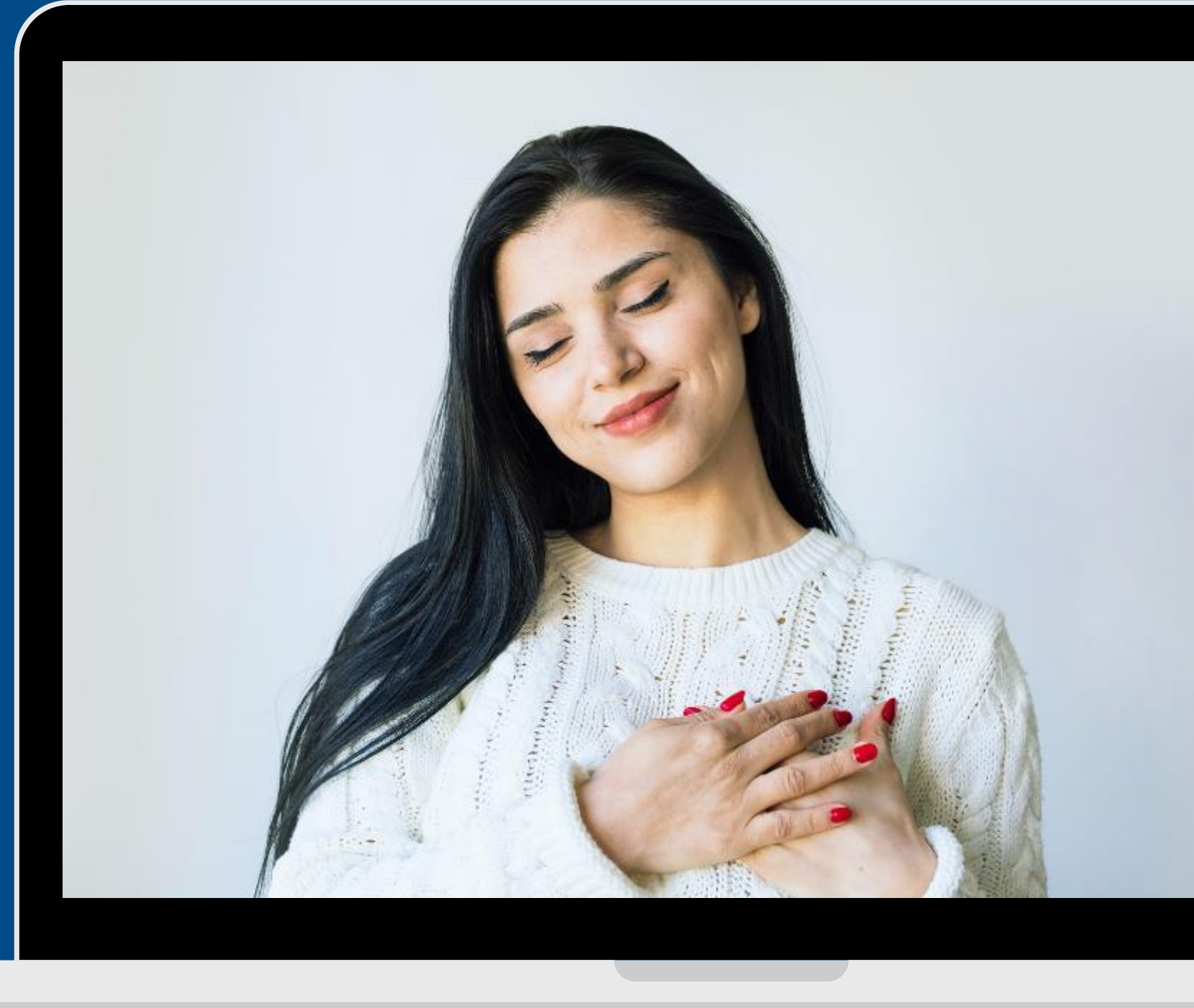
**CONVERSATIONS**

*Before: Work On Me First*



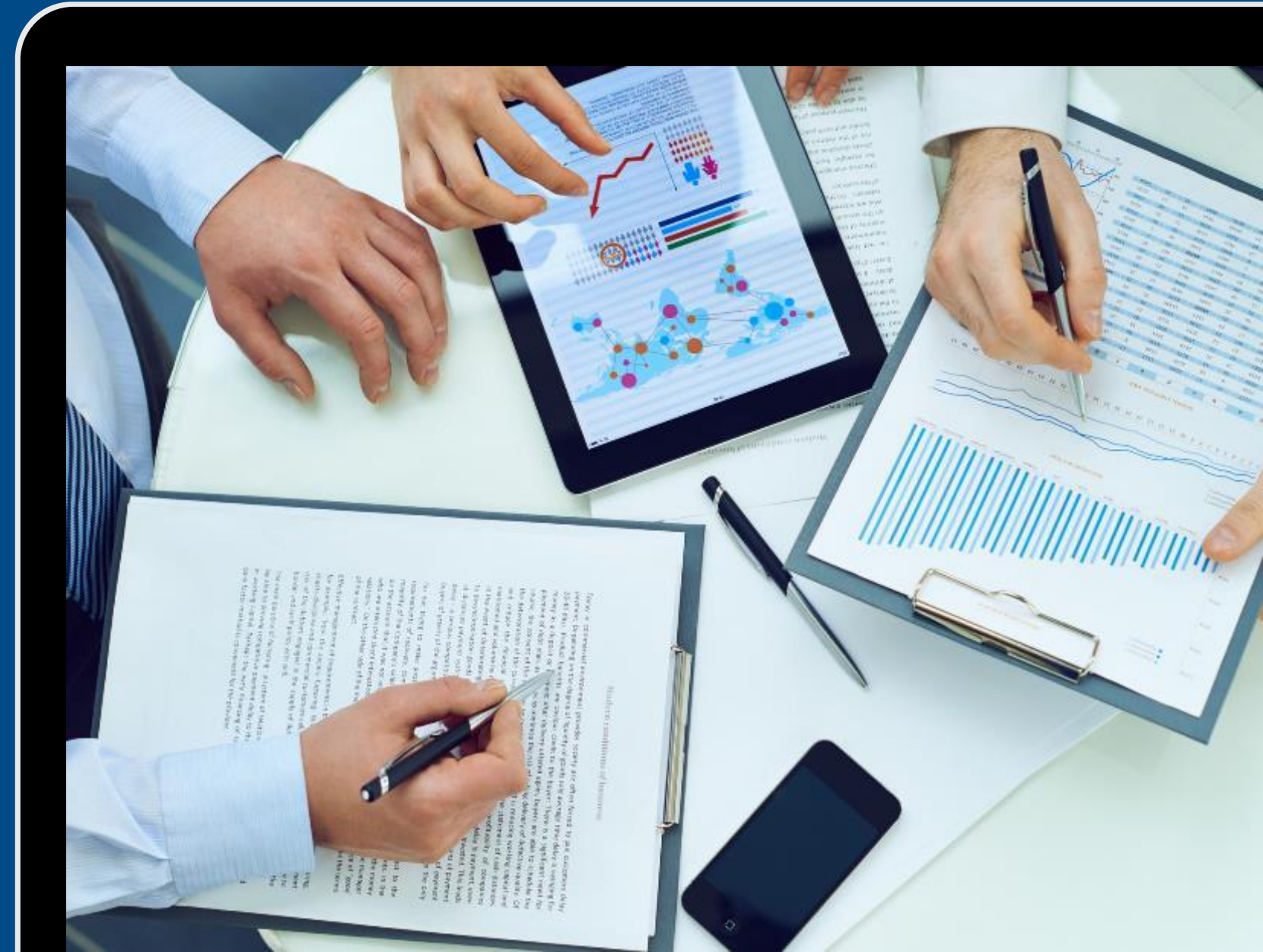
# Reframe Our *Mindset*

- Activating Event
- Beliefs & Interpretations
- Consequence
- Reclaiming Mantra



# Preparation *is Key*

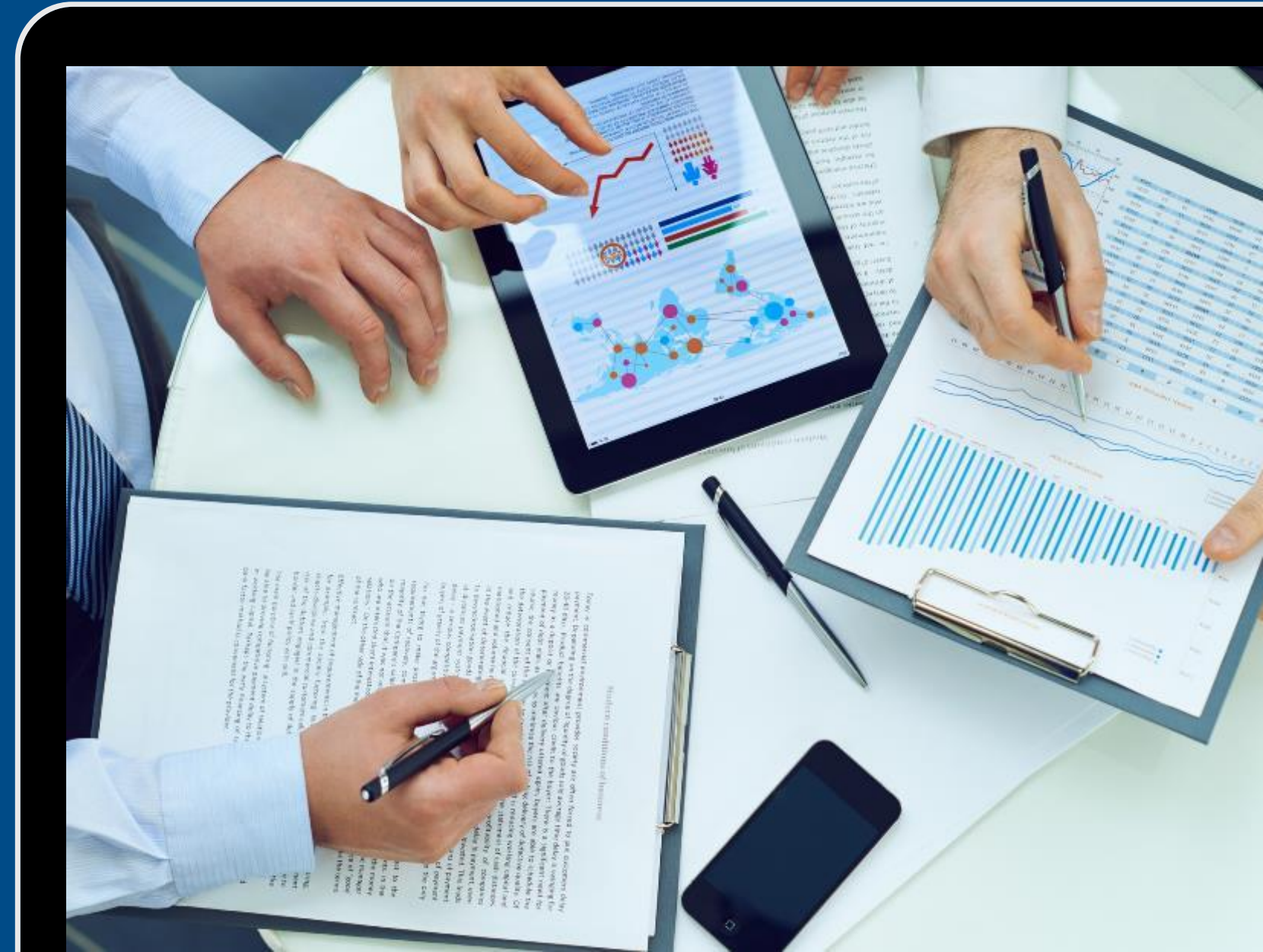
- The **What Happened** Conversation
- The **Feelings** Conversation
- The **Identity** Conversation



# What *Happened?*

Focus on the **FACTS!**

- Actions Taken
- Who was Involved
- Timeline of Events



# What *Happened?*

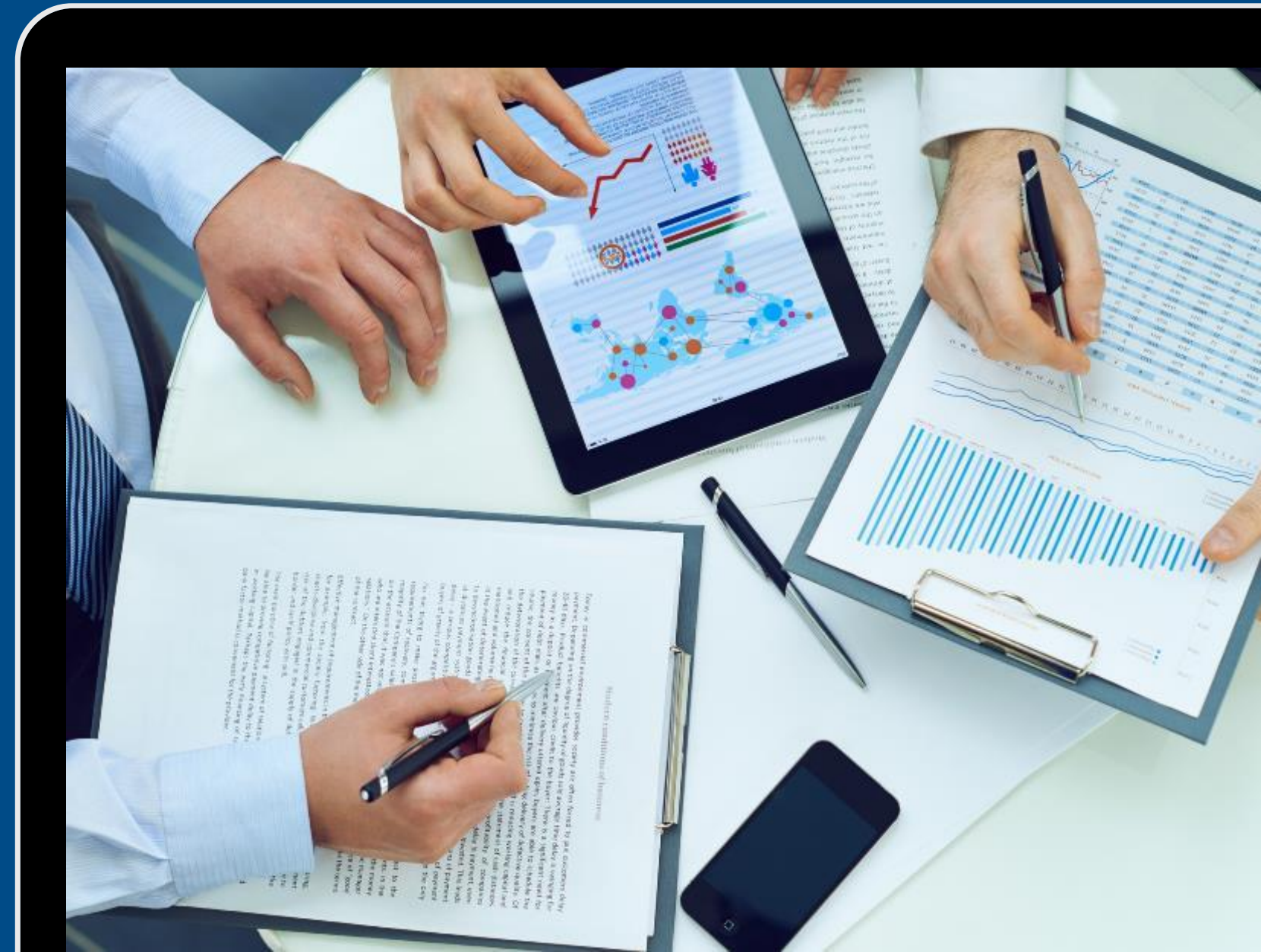


- How do you see the situation?
- Where does your story come from?
- What do you think you know about the other person's point of view?
- What impact has the situation had on you?
- What might their intentions have been?
- What have you each contributed to the problem?



# What am I *Feeling?*

- Acknowledge & Validate Emotions
- Use "I" Statements
- Avoid Simplifying Feelings



# What am I *Feeling?*

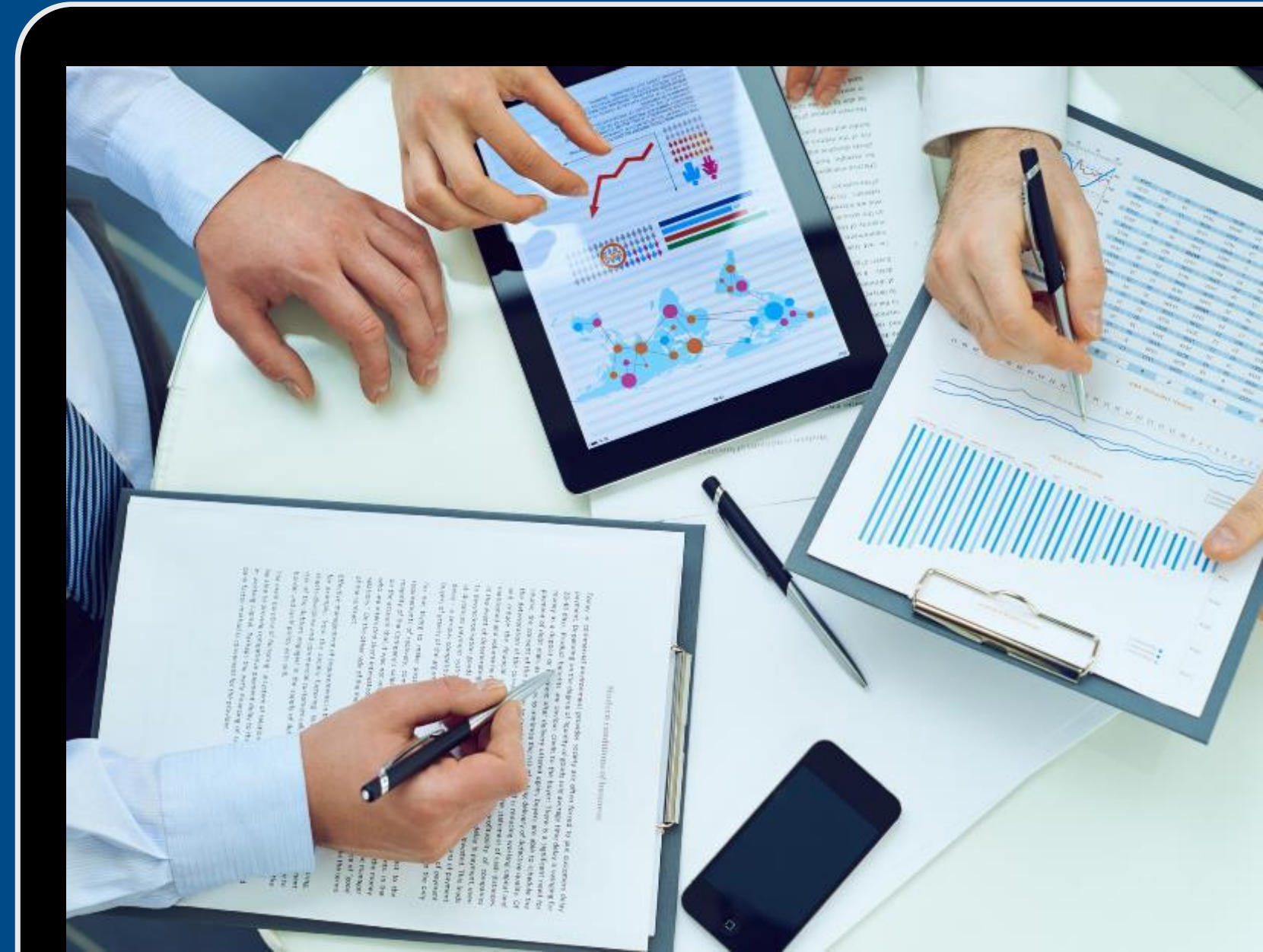


- What exact emotions am I experiencing?
- Are all of my feelings directly related to this situation, or am I projecting from somewhere else?
- How could my feelings be affecting my perception?
- How could my feelings be impacting how others perceive me?



# What is My Identity?

- Focus on Understanding
- Create a Safe Space
- Be Open to Change
- Learn from Mistakes
- Focus on the Future





# What is My *Identity?*



- How does this situation threaten you or have the potential to shake up your sense of identity?
- How do you see yourself?
- How do you want others to see you?
- What do you need to accept in order to be better grounded?



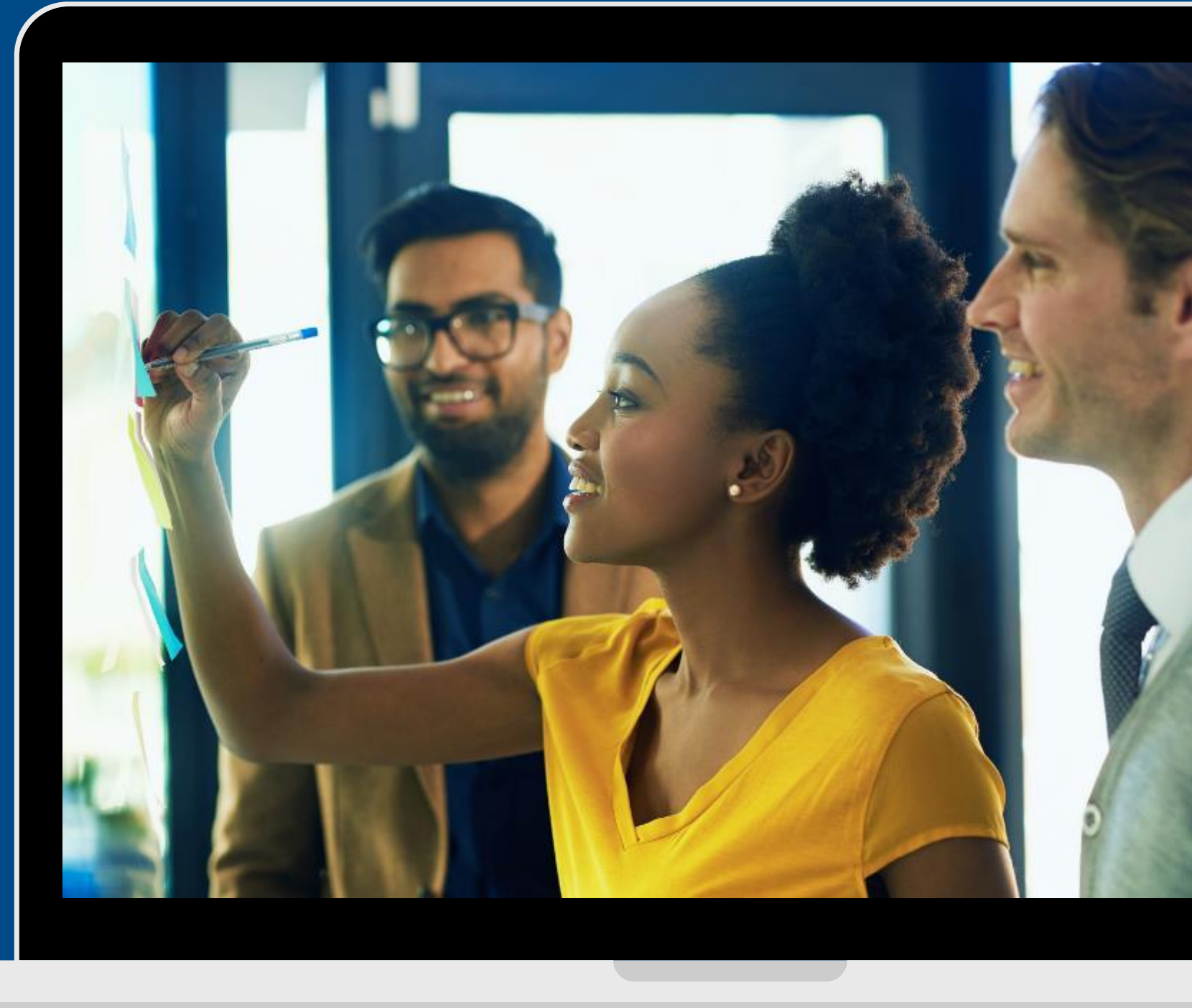
# Clarify Your *Purpose*

- Identify Goals & Intentions
- Consider the Other Perspectives
- Set Boundaries
- Be Open to Learning



# Check Your *Purpose*

- Avoid Misunderstandings
- Ensure Respectful Dialogue
- Promote Understanding
- Prevent Harm





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*During the Conversation*



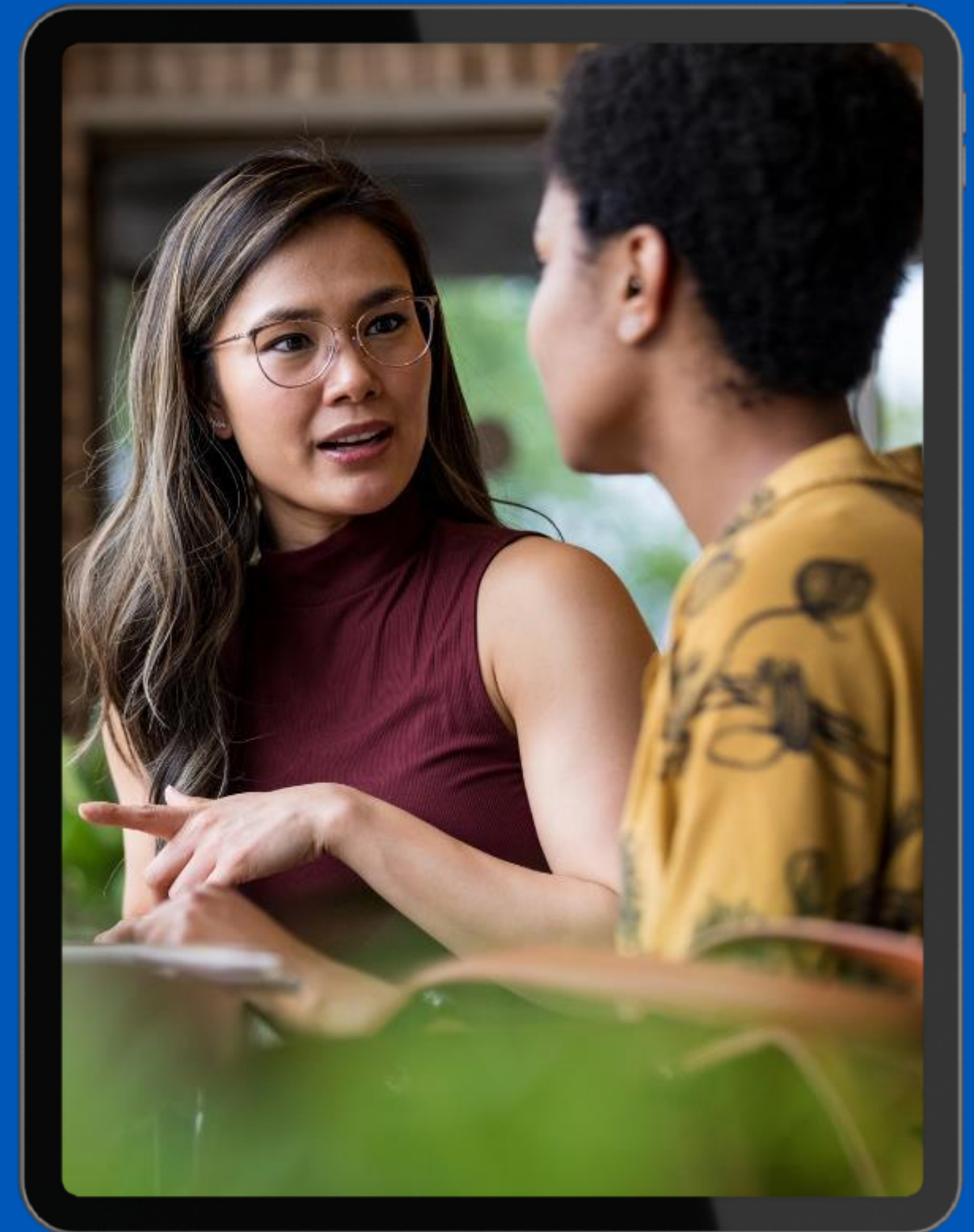
# Set the *Stage*

- Right Time & Place
- Approach from Neutral Perspective
- Describe the Problem
- Share the Purpose



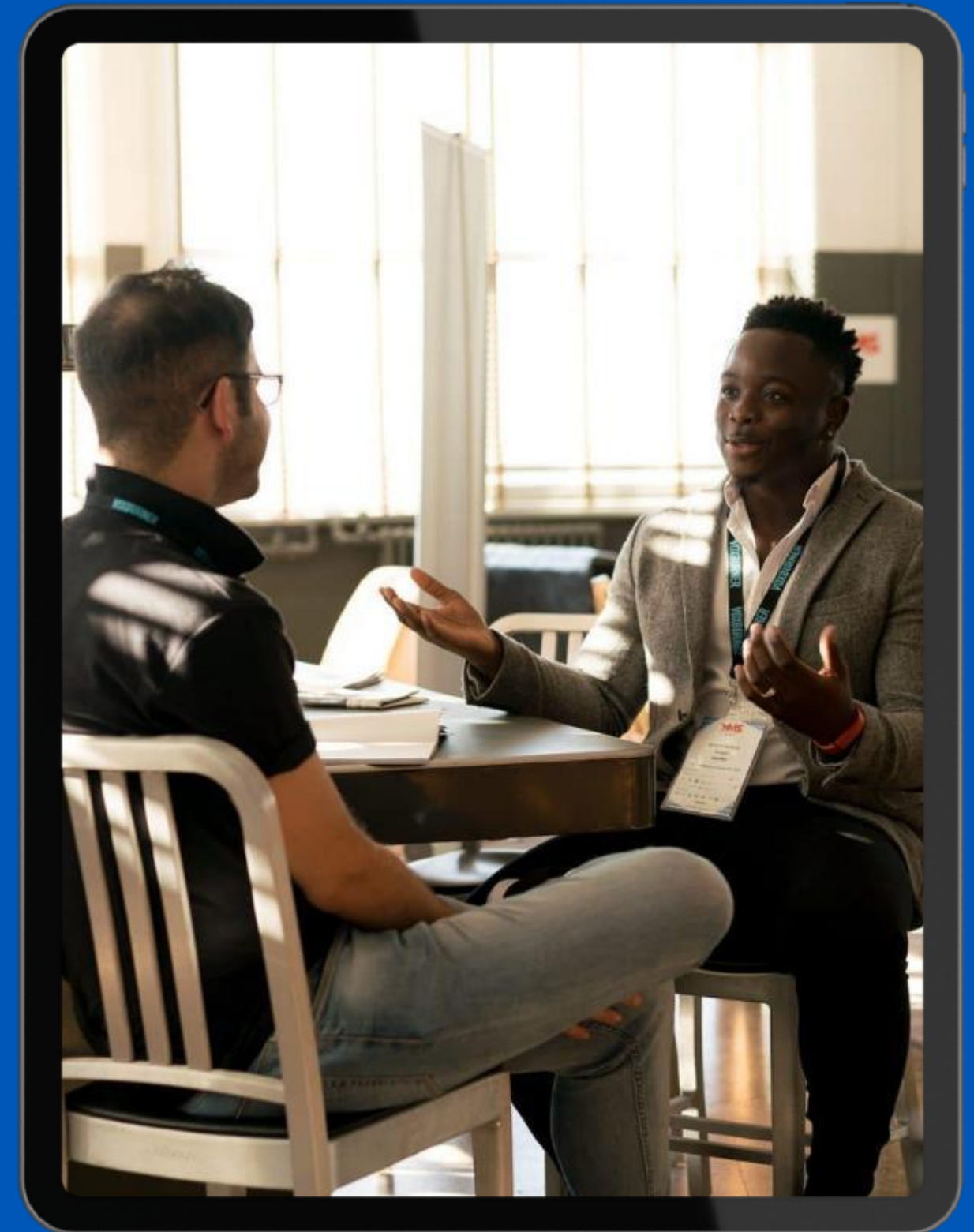
# Explore the *Stories*

- Actively Listen
- Put Yourself in Their Shoes
- Ask Questions!
- Silence is Okay
- Paraphrase to Clarify



# Problem Solve & *Move Forward*

- Discuss Various Options
- Two-Sided Communication
- Establish Future Communications





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*After the Conversation*





# Move to Action & Accountability

- Assign Responsibilities & Deadlines
- Establish Follow Up Expectations
- Change Takes Time & Patience!





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*Your Action Plan*



# Action *Plan*

## What Will You Do Moving Forward?

- Start?
- Stop?
- Continue?





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*Best Care EAP Can Help!*



# Best Care EAP<sup>+</sup> Can Help!

✓ Confidential counseling sessions: In person, via telehealth, or by phone.

✓ On demand webinars & articles for personal & professional growth.

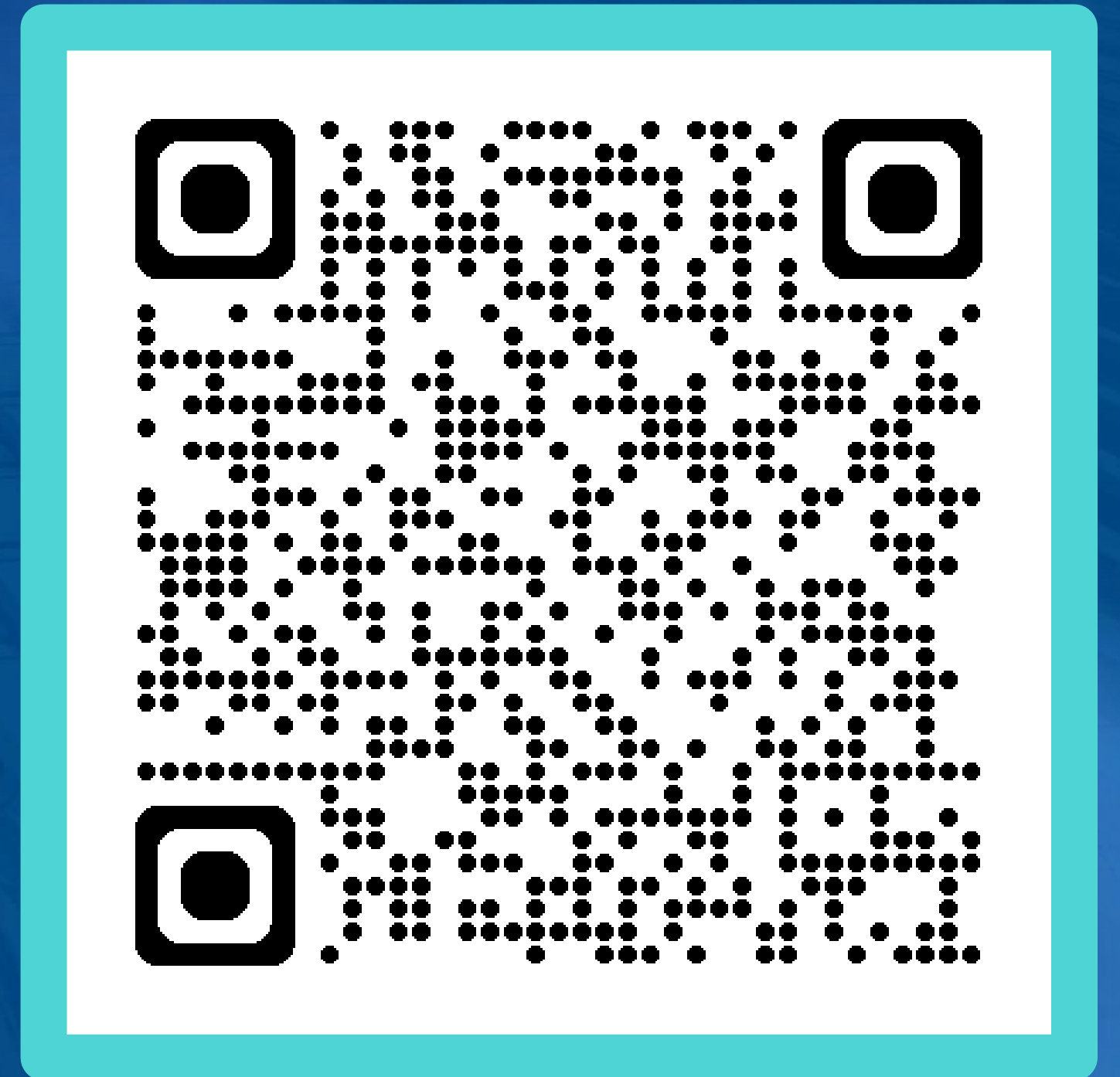
✓ Monthly live events including leadership training.

✓ Dependent family members have access to Best Care EAP services, too!

✓ **www.BestCareEAP.org**  
username: **bcCODEe** password: **CODE**



+  
**Thank You**  
*For Your  
Time!*  
+



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