

Jessica: Hello, welcome. We've seen a lot of people pop in. I hope everyone enjoyed the keynote. We've got about 100 people on the call. It's very exciting. Thank you all for coming. Just check. You're all here in this session, Turning Conflict into Collaboration. I'm Jessica Velez, and I'll be one of your presenters today with my colleague, Danielle.

Danielle: I am Daniel Vota. Sorry, good afternoon, everyone.

Jessica: And before we get started, we just want to thank everyone on the cadre team, on the conference team who's helping do the interpretation, getting our Zoom set up, helping with all the logistics, we really appreciate it. So we can put on a really good session for everyone today. All right, Danielle.

Danielle: Yeah, so my name is Danielle Vota. I work at the University of Delaware's conflict resolution program. We run a program called SPARC and it's mediation for special education related disputes. So we also do IEP meeting facilitation, and we handle all those mediation requests through State complaints or due process complaints or people who just outright request mediation. We also design customized trainings around conflict resolution, one of which we're delivering today as a webinar. And then we have a lot of free resources for just general topics around conflict resolution, how to deal with difficult conversations, those kinds of things, then we also have a lot of specific resources around how to run and facilitate IEP meetings. We have checklists for how to do virtual IEP meetings, how to create agendas, roles for meeting. So please check out our website and get a lot of the free resources that we have out there.

Jessica: And I'm Jessica Velez. And when I submitted this proposal to this session, I was also working at the conflict resolution program at the University of Delaware. And now I've relocated jobs and physical locations. I'm now in Hawaii, and I work for Mapping Change. And I do conflict coaching, and I work on collaborative meeting design, online workshops. So extending past special education, but that is where I've gotten my start. I was the coordinator of the program, and did workshops for educators and parents, and I facilitated IEP meetings and mediated special education disputes. So it's really exciting to be here with you guys today, and we hope that you guys get something out of this workshop.

Danielle: Yeah, so our virtual meeting expectations, I think we're all used to at this point of over a year of doing Zoom, if you're able to keep your camera on, especially if we go into any breakout room and you're kind of interacting with others. If you can stay on mute when you're not speaking if you're expecting to have like a lot of background noise, and if you can share any questions that you have in the chat, we'll make sure to get to those questions. Our agenda for today is that we're going to present on the collaborative problem solving process. And it's also an opportunity to practice some new skills. We're actually going to have some jam boards that we're going to use so that we can actually apply some of these skills that we're teaching you as a part of this the process. And then we're hoping that you're going to be able to leave with some practical tools that you can use and put into use tomorrow.

Jessica: Maybe we'll challenge you to put them into use today. But if you need time for- tomorrow's fine. Alright, then we'll get started. I think last time I just saw we have about over 100 people in this session. And that's not surprising, because conflict is everywhere, everywhere today. So it's in our homes. It's in our social media feeds, it's at our workplaces. And it's especially in these high impact situations where the decisions that are made are affecting our kids and they're really important decisions. And so the first thing that I just want to talk about is when we get into conflict, a lot of times our first thought is that the person is the problem. You know, what's happening is, you know, because of them or it's because of what they think or how they feel. And so the first thing I always like to talk about is that our differences are our biggest asset when we're problem solving, when we're in a conflict. The things that are different between us are really what's going to make for a really good inclusive solution. So when we find ourselves in high stress situations with someone, it's really important to take a moment and reflect on what your expectations are in the situation, what we're perceiving as normal or appropriate, what we believe is professional, what we believe is good or bad, what we believe is the right solution versus the wrong solution. Just thinking about where those ideas come from, and what unconscious biases, what assumptions do we have? And how is that influencing how we're perceiving the person we're in a conflict with? The solution that they believe is the best or the way that they're communicating with us.

So just starting there and saying, so the person that I'm having this conflict with isn't the problem, they're actually the person who's going to help me get through this, the problem is the problem. And separating those two things is going to really help us have a better approach to conflict in general just getting started, and not being so afraid of it. So some of the things that I would just have you consider is how your experiences, how your values, how your education level, how your cultural identity, all of these things affect your perception of a situation, how they affect what you believe, how they affect how you're interacting with others. And just putting that into perspective and saying, it's really different. We're all different. And so let's take all of this information and use it to our benefit. And then my third soapbox item, before we get started into collaborative problem solving, is just recognizing that life is emotional. I love this quote that says we are not thinking machines that feel, rather we are feeling machines that think. And I just think it's so important to remember, because a lot of times when we're in professional situations, we think we shouldn't have emotions. We think that, you know, professional is, you know, stoic and in white western culture anyway, that's how we feel. So just remembering that life is emotional, there is nothing more emotional than like the future of a child and their well being. And so once you can say that emotions are going to be there that they're important, that they're showing us that something is really important to us. Like, this is a really important matter and that's why I'm getting worked up. Or this must mean so much to Danielle, if I'm seeing so much emotion, just helps us put that into perspective, rather than it being a barrier to us communicating with others. There's a link to the PowerPoint in the chat, I'm seeing some people ask about it. So if you are looking for that, it's in there.

Okay, so collaborative problem solving. Collaboration is a process that you use with someone else when there's a really important goal you want to achieve. And the person you're achieving that goal with, the relationship with them matters. It doesn't mean matters or as important as in like they're your spouse, but it's important that you maintain that relationship with that person, that you both need a solution that works for both of you, it doesn't- it's not possible, or it's not going to be beneficial to have one person win or one person lose. And both people going into this process want to be doing it. They're both open to a unique solution. They might not know what it's going to be yet, and there might be take some time to get there, but this process is for two people or more. We'll talk about it with two people to simplify it, but two people or more, who really want to engage in this process together and are making that commitment to communicate. The way that we're going to talk about it today is it being four steps. It's ACBD. So step one is airing all of your concerns where you give space for all the perspectives in the room, where everyone gets to say how they're feeling, how they came to their conclusion, what's going on for them. Step two, the C is clarifying, clarifying the problem, kind of what I'm talking about with coming away from it's about that person and it's about the emotions and making it really about the problem that needs to be solved, getting to the core of that conflict.

Step three is brainstorming solutions. That's the B, and it's coming up with many unique and creative ideas that are going to address all of the needs of the people involved, that it's really getting to the we found the core of the issue and now we're coming up with ideas that will address that core issue. And then finally, step four would be the D in ACBD, and that's developing the agreement. So it's of all the options we created, which one is going to work best? And let's make sure we're really clear about what it is and how we'll evaluate ourselves and come back together to ensure that there's success because, you know, your first option might not be the one that works, but you're setting yourself up for success in the future. So this is what we'll be talking about today. And we hope we'll have some opportunity for people to test out some of these skills. But it takes a lot more than an hour to really get into this. So hopefully, you'll at least walk away with something you could put into use tomorrow.

Danielle: So the step one is airing all concerns, and airing all concerns is most importantly about it's an opportunity for everyone to share and to feel heard. And the reason that this is so important is because often, it's not that people are looking to be agreed with, they're just looking to be understood, right? They're looking to be validated, to be heard. So how we start with the airing all concern is that the first person is going to briefly share their perspective on the situation. And then the second person, they're actively listening without interrupting that first person. And then they're going to summarize what they've heard back to the first person. And this is really important for several reasons. One, it's allowing the person to get everything out, right? What they've been experiencing, where they're coming from, and what they feel is the most important. And then as that second person is listening, they're then going to summarize back to that person what they heard. So then they're confirming to the person, "I hear you, I understood what you were saying" If when they're summarizing back, that person says, "Well, no, actually, I meant this" And maybe it could be the first time that this person is hearing what they're thinking and saying said back to them, right? And when we hear our own words said back to us, we process it in a different way. And we might say, "Well, no, actually, I meant that, or yes, that is actually how I meant, what I was trying to get across"

And then that second person is going to get the same opportunity. Or then they're going to share, you know, what they've been experiencing from their side, what they care about, what they want, what they're hoping to get out of the situation, and then that first person is going to share back. And that, you know, this is a process that you- you don't spring this on people, right? Like you kind of explain and you go into this voluntarily, and you'll say like, "Oh, this is how we're going to try to address and collaborate on this problem. And these are the steps that we're going to kind of use. So if you're going to use this with a team or a group of a person or another person, you're going to be explaining this process to them and how it works. And so that's the first part of this first step is airing all concerns. And the other thing I would like to add to that is whenever people come to us with problems or how they're feeling, it's not necessarily everything that they're saying that first time that they have everything figured out in their head, right? A lot of times, whenever we're expressing ourselves, it takes hearing the feedback from another person, having someone summarize us for us to get to fully how we're feeling and what we're looking to get out of a situation, what our needs are, what our wants are. So just be patient with people and give that time for things to come out and have that conversation and realize that that is actually part of the process of airing all the concerns. And so how do you listen to the concerns? What are some things that you're looking to listen for when you're in the Listening role? You're listening to understand the speaker's point of view, and you're trying to gather these four things while you're listening. What happened? So the facts. How do they feel? What do they want? And what do they need? So facts, feelings, wants and needs. That's what you're really trying to be able to answer and what you're going to be summarizing whenever you're saying it back to them.

All right, so now we're going to watch a video. I want you to pay attention to how they're communicating together in this video.

Jessica: Sorry, the screenshare is not happening for me right now. Okay, is everyone's seeing it?

Danielle: It's coming up. Yeah, there we go. [video playing]. Oh, I love that video so much. So, you know, one of the takeaways that we want you to gather from that video other than it just being a nice little icebreaker and being funny is that, you know, what he was doing wrong is that he wasn't letting her just air her concerns and listening, right? He was interrupting her and trying to jump all the way to the end of solving the problem. And that it's actually so important to the process, especially if you're trying to collaborate to get to the point where you can actually think about a myriad of solutions, and then come up with one that's win-win is that for a lot of people, they're not able to get to that point until they have vented some of their feelings and they feel heard- right?- about what they've experienced, what they're going through, what they want, other feeling, right? So you can't skip that step. Even if you feel like you know what the solution is, and you just want to like quickly get to the end, let's like, all right, let's wrap this up, like you can't skip this step because the other people aren't ready to be at the solution yet. So you have to let them air their concerns.

Next slide. Okay, so great. When we're active listening, there are some things that not to do, right? Don't interrupt, don't judge or criticize, give advice or suggestions. You're not there to like, bring up your own experiences, and, you know, kind of trump what they're saying, and like, "Oh, I really know what that's like" And then go on a 15 minute tangent about something that what they said reminded you of, and that you're- also don't like make assumptions or sitting there planning your response. So what does that mean? It doesn't mean to say something without thinking, it just means that you're not distracting yourself while you're listening to the other person focusing more of your brainpower on what you're going to say back to the person rather than listening to them. So you really want to try to actively listen as much as possible during this step. And so how do we share our concerns? You know, you pause for a second to recognize what you're feeling and why. And then you're going to use an I-statement. So this is when it's your time to share how you're feeling. This is a way that you can organize your thoughts and how to express it to another person, so that they're going to hear you and also, it'll be easier for them to summarize back to you. And you're going to focus on what happened, how do you feel? What do you want? What are you asking for? What's your desired outcome? And why do you want it? What is the reasoning behind it? And there's a couple tips that you can use that you really want to focus on the present situation, even if this conflict, you know, involves months, years, whoever knows how long of past situations that are going on, try to put that aside for the thinking of the end goal in mind, and to speak only from your perspective when you're sharing your concern.

Don't, you know, talk about, oh, well, then this person's doing this and that and that... speak about your own perspective. And then also tell them what you want using laundered language. So this is a term that we use and basically what it means is, you know, when you're upset and maybe how you would vent to like your mom, your sister, your best friend, your husband, your wife, you know, that you more want to share your concerns in a way that is professional, right? That you're taking some of that inflammatory, maybe words or actions that are out of that, so that the person can actually hear what you want. Because most of communication a lot is tone, and body language. So if you don't, you know, do something to control your tone and your body language, then the person might not actually hear what you want them to hear, they might not understand where you're coming from. And so here's an example of an I-statement, and we're going to get to practice this together. So this first part in the italics, this might be something that like, right, that if you were just venting, like this is the first thing that comes to your mind, "Like, man, these meetings are a circus, you're just bringing more people in so that my opinion will be out voted" And maybe that's like what your raw feeling is really feeling. But if you say that, it's not going to be as helpful as if you formulated this I-statement and said, "You know, I feel stressed when there are more than six people in our meetings, because I don't know when it's my turn to speak" Right? So getting more clear on what it is, why it's bothering you, what you want, and why you want it.

So we're going to open up a jam board, and we're going to let you try out, making your own I-statement. And based on turning this statement that's in italics, "This is ridiculous. You're trying to cut out team members who disagree so you can get your way" So we're going to try to take that theme, that feeling, and launder it and transform it into an I-statement. So Jess is going to be sharing the link in the chat, and she'll be bringing it up on the screen. So just go in the chat, click on that link, and when you open it, you're going to go on the left hand side, and you can click like a sticky note. You're going to click the sticky note, drag it over and type your attempt and I-statement onto the board. So yes, see Jess is showing you right there. There's where you do the sticky note. Yeah, there you go. She saves it and then it pops on there. And if you need a reminder of how to do the I-statement, just click to the next slide at the top, Jess will show you how to do that. And you- that's the previous example.

Jessica: Oh, this is the wrong board.

Danielle: Oh, yep. Sorry.

Jessica: Sorry.

Danielle: Hold on a second. We're doing [inaudible]. So we just need to give you the other link real quick. Our bad.

Jessica: A lot to do here. Okay.

Danielle: There we go. So if everyone could click that second link, the one that's right next to 308. And then a little later on in the presentation, we'll do another jam board. Here we go. So it should look like this when you open it up.

Jessica: And if you're having trouble, you can feel free to use the chat and put your ideas there. And while you're coming up with ideas, I just want to add that it's not always easy to come up with an I-statement. A lot of times, we're not even sure what we're feeling and why we're feeling it. So it takes a lot of prep and you might have to practice a couple of times. And you might have to test it out on someone and say to them, "Hey, if I said this to you, how would that make you feel? Would you be able to listen? Would you be able to hear what I'm saying" And we're getting some good examples here. I feel like everyone's thoughts are valuable. I feel unheard when not all members of the team have an opportunity to share their thoughts. I feel my input is not important when I am not included in meetings. We got some good first rounds here. Trying to move them all around. Thank you all for participating. This is great. And you can all have access to this later. So if you want to come back and see some other people's examples, and it's really a process where you have to just kind of filter through until you feel like you have the statement that really is expressing what you needed to say.

Danielle: This is a fun exercise to do with like a team of people like if you- you have these slides now, if you wanted to kind of review this with your own team and try to do this, this is a great activity to try to practice together that you could come up with your own kind of statement that you want to launder and put it into an I-statement. So you could, you know, kind of replicate this for yourself with your own team members.

Jessica: So for the sake of time, I think we're going to come back. Feel free to keep working on that if you want but we're going to come back and share the statement we came up with and which is, "I'm worried when the meeting invitees are limited, because I value the different expertise that each person brings" So expressing how you're feeling, the really objective idea that the meeting invitees are limited. So it's not you're limiting us or you're asking us to stop inviting people. It's just the objective fact that the fact is we're limiting the number of invitees, the number is limited. So if you can imagine if someone said that to you, you might be able to hear that more than someone saying, "You're cutting down on members, or you're cutting out important people" So that's really the point of an I-statement is to keep people in a safe space where they're willing to hear you, and that they want to know more. Danielle, you have any final thoughts on sharing concerns?

Danielle: No, I think that's good. Thank you, everyone, for sharing in the jam board and giving your hand at trying it. Appreciate participating.

Jessica: And we have a question in the chat. So do you recommend always identifying the emotion first? No, I think those four things are the important pieces, and you can mix them around however you want. So you could say something like, when the meeting attendees are limited, it worries me that we're not getting all of the different expertise. And I really value that, or I'm worried that the different expertise of people is going to be cut out if the meeting invitees are limited. So really, it's kind of however you naturally speak, you can- like I said, work it out, see what feels comfortable to you, and then test it out on people to see how it goes. Because it's going to come out the best if it's really comfortable for you. So everyone will have a different feeling, everyone's going to have a different reason about it, and know different way to communicate it. But just those four ideas, the facts, how you feel about those facts, what you want, and what you need. Thanks for that question. All right.

So once you've done that, you're going to want to move into clarifying this problem. So both people have shared a little bit about what they're feeling. And like I said, there are four important things I hope that will really be in this end, but what happened? How do they feel? What do they want? And what do they need? Then so once you are able to answer those questions, you're going to move from those wants to their needs. We'll talk about all of these things. And then you're going to ask a new question that you can all be on the same side of and that will help you get a really inclusive solution. Alright, so how do you do this? So like Danielle said, the first time we share, we might not share everything we want to unless you've done a really good job of preparing, you might have shared a great I-statement that answered all the questions. But chances are, as you're having that conversation, more information is coming out, you're having more thoughts and more feelings. And you just, like, more things come up. So to dive deeper to answer all those questions, you really want to ask powerful questions to each other. You want to be genuine when you're asking these, you don't want to lead them. And you want to make sure that they're leading you in the right direction, that they're focusing on the future, that they're positive that they're needs focused.

So here are just some examples. Someone shared how they felt, you know, I'm uncomfortable with how big these meetings are. Can you tell me more about what makes you uncomfortable in the meetings? Are you willing to share that? I'm wondering about the number of people who have been coming or I'm wondering about your experiences in meetings in the past. Do you mind sharing? Can you describe what a really productive meeting would look like for you? Can you describe what a really comfortable setting would feel like for you? Can you- when people have really set ideas about how to solve a solution, or really great question, if they're like, I just think the answer is this. I just think this is the answer. This is what we need to be doing. Just asking. So can you talk about how you came to that conclusion? Can you talk about what got you there? What are the things that led you to have that idea? Like, I'd love to hear it. And you have to actually want to hear it. So this is why Danielle and I said earlier like this process is voluntary participation, you know you're doing this, you know that you want to get to the same place together. So asking these questions and hearing their answers is really a genuine experience. And then you want to use your active listening, and when they've answered your question, you want to repeat back what you've heard and say, "Okay, so I heard you said, I'm understanding this, is that right?" And maybe it is and maybe they're like, "Well, now that I'm hearing you say it, maybe it's not quite that I'm uncomfortable. Maybe it's that I'm, you know, frustrated" I don't know, but you just kind of- you're helping them work through it and you're helping yourself understand it better.

What these questions are doing, and what the point of collaboration is, really, is to get from what we say we want, which is just the tip of the iceberg, to the why we want it and what we need. So the things that motivate us to have an idea to propose a solution is based on a lot of stuff that, you know, we don't always know off the top of our heads, like it might take someone asking us that question, or asking ourselves that question when we're preparing for this conversation. What am I believing about this situation? What values do I have that are motivating this? What am I really concerned or fearing might happen? Like What experiences have I had that are making me feel this way? And understanding all of that for yourself. And then asking questions that help other people share that for themselves to share what experiences they've had that led them to this conclusion, what they're believing about the situation, not to change it, but to understand it and see where your needs overlap. This is, when we're able to do this successfully, we're able to ask a new question that'll help us get on the same page. So we're going to continue to use this example of how many people are coming to a meeting, because I think we've all been in meetings everywhere in our lives that we're not quite sure are productive. So the person who wants a smaller meeting, when they've been asked to further explain, maybe they're saying, "You know, I believe that smaller groups give everyone an opportunity to speak and feel heard" That's what I believe about smaller meetings" And the person who has a bigger meeting says, "You know, I really value the diverse perspectives that come from a larger group" Like these are what's important"



So instead of us being I want big and I want small, you now can ask a question that you can be on the same page, which is this part. Sorry. Drafting a new question. So now instead of saying, should we have a small or large meeting, which gives us two possible solutions. We asked a question that's, how can we hold a meeting that brings in diverse perspectives, and everyone can feel heard? Everyone gets a chance to speak. Now, we have a question that answers both of our needs. If we answer this, you ask yourself, so if we answer this question, are you going to be satisfied? And am I going to be satisfied? And if the answer is yes, this is your new problem. And instead of being on opposite sides of the problem, saying bigger or smaller, you're now on the same side of the problem saying, all right, what are we going to do about this meeting to make it more inclusive, make it more productive and make it more diverse? Like, what are we going to do together to make this meeting feel like it satisfies both of our needs. So we're going to give you a chance to take a stab at this, same idea with the jam board. So in this case, we're going to talk about the length of the meeting, again, just keeping it really simple, because when you learn new skills, it's really hard to bring them to your most complex situation. So starting with someone who wants shorter meetings, they have experience that they stay focused, and people in longer meetings, they believe that more time helps accomplish more things, have more discussion, you know, whatever they're feeling. And there could be a lot of different needs, and you could have a lot of different ideas other than this one statement, but we're just trying to keep it simple. So take a stab at making a question and then just use that "and" conjunction, add these two ideas together. And I'll bring up the jam board so we can take a look at what people are saying. And again, if you need to just throw your idea in the chat, feel free to do that as well.

Danielle: Yeah, and if you need to remember or want to see the previous example, you can just hit the arrow on the top of the jam board there so you can see what the last example was to give yourself a little reminder. Oh, great. We already have several people posting in the chat. Or I'm sorry, in the jam board I mean.

Jessica: Okay, how can we stay focused and accomplish more during our meetings? That's a great one. What if we could schedule an hour meeting with an option to extend it? That's a little bit more giving a solution. How can we create a process that allows us to stay focused, but accomplish all the important aspects? That's a great question. How can we respect everyone's time and allow for our time constraints, but still get to the important issues? Yeah. So anything, you want to make sure you're just including both sides, and then when you're doing this with someone else, you're going to ask them, does this question solve your- if we answer this question, does it solve your needs? And does it solve my needs? Let's see. I see some stuff in the chat with anything. Okay.

Danielle: Yeah, they were just needing the link, and I guess that there's like a maximum number of people that can go into a jam board, I didn't realize that. So if anyone else who wants to type their example in the chat, then go ahead and type it in the chat.

Jessica: Thanks to everyone for teaching us a lesson. We didn't know that. We learn something new every day. Okay, and again, everyone has access to this. So if you want to come in later, and you want to look at these ideas, if you want to keep trying. Thanks, Joanna, for giving someone else a chance to get in. Yeah, I know that it's small to read. Yeah, this is...

Danielle: So can we maybe just read like a couple more of the examples.

Jessica: Sure.

Danielle: And then after the training, you know, you can go in there and like, read some more examples yourself or get some more ideas. Or you can also make- once the training is over, you can make a copy of the board if you wanted to like make a version of this and try it with your own team.

Jessica: All right. So again, thanks for participating. I'll just read one or two more, and then we can move on. And I want to make sure we get to the whole process. So what is the best way to make sure our meeting stays focused while being flexible to have all the time we need to accomplish important tasks? Awesome. Okay. So we'll just share that the question we came up with was, how can we structure our meetings so that we maintain focus and accomplish our goals? It's very similar to what a lot of you were writing. And again, as long as the people in this process are happy with the question, it's probably the right question. So there's no absolute right or wrong. But if you're- if both of you are looking at it, you're on the same page, and you both feel like answering that question will solve your problem, you're headed in the right direction.

Danielle: I think that's a great point, Jess, of like, reality testing your joint problem statement basically be like, Oh, does the- if it doesn't feel right, if you feel like answering your joint problem statement is still going to leave you kind of wanting or is not going to satisfy what you're really looking to get out of it, then that means you might need to go back to clarifying the problem. And maybe try again and try keep reworking that problem statement until you get to the point where you're like, "Yeah, this, I feel confident that this is both something that we would- I would feel satisfied if we came to a solution for this" Because it might not just be the first thing that somebody offers up, right? You're probably going to need to workshop it a little bit. Just like when we were making this presentation, and we were kind of role playing out the scenario, right? Like we rewrote several I-statements and several joint problem statements before we were like, "Yeah, that sounds pretty good" Like that's, I feel like this makes sense for the situation. So we just want to clarify that it might take a couple iterations to come up with that.

So the third step, this is my favorite step, this is what I think is fun, is brainstorming solutions. So I think we've all heard of brainstorming and done brainstorming in some, you know, capacity before. So there are some best practices that come around brainstorming, it's good to set a time limit, you know, keep it short. Otherwise, especially if you have some people that have the, you know, the dreamer type of personality, right? You could sit there for two hours just talking about maybe we could do this, and maybe we could do that. And what about this? And what about that? What about that? So if you kind of give yourself a window of time, it makes you be a little more practical in the solutions that you could come up with. So yeah, set a little time window, invite everyone to contribute as many ideas if possible in that time window. And, you know, set the tone in the environment where people feel comfortable to share ideas, even if it, you know, sounds a little wonky or a little crazy or something like that in the beginning, don't criticize any ideas while the list is being generated, and you can build off of previous ideas. So it's really good to record it like in a kind of public place, right? Whether or not if you're doing on a Zoom meeting, maybe you open a jam board with your team of hopefully less than 35 people so everyone gets to put a comment in, and you can brainstorm in a jam board. Or maybe you're just opening up a Word doc or a Google Doc, and you're kind of screen-sharing, and you're like the recorder as people are saying things. Or maybe you get to being a person, and you have a chalkboard, or you have one of those big- what are those called, Jess? Like the peel and stick papers-

Jessica: Flip chart.

Danielle: Flip chart, yeah, maybe you have a flip chart that you get to use, and you could use all different colored markers and make it fun, you know. And then when the time is ended, you're going to review the list, and quickly discuss the pros and cons of each suggestion. Right? So this is the part where you are going to kind of tactfully, you know, break down each idea and say, like, alright, well, is that a realistic solution? How would we actually implement that? What are the supplies that we would need to do that? What are the people we would need? You kind of start thinking about that to narrow down your solutions into something that you're going to be able to agree on? Anything else, Jess?

Jessica: Yeah, I would just add that, while you want to keep it short, you don't want to cut it off when the ideas start flowing, because chances are the really good juicy ideas are going to be the ones that you've chewed on a little bit. So the first ideas that are going to come up are probably what brought you to the table at the first place, it's probably going to be like, well, if- to make this, you know, for us to stay focused and to get our goals met, we could have less people in the meeting. And then someone else is going to say, "Yeah, well, we can also have more people in the meeting" And then someone's going to say, "Well, we could have a four-hour meeting" You know, there's going to be like the obvious ideas that kind of come up. And once you get those cleared out, then you're going to be able to come up with the more creative ones. Well, maybe we could have a facilitator come in and do this. Or maybe we can try a new structure of like round robin. And then you're going to say, "Oh, what if we have questions that go out beforehand and we collect answers?" "Oh, that's a good idea. And what if we do that, and this" So giving it time and space to kind of chew on the ideas, so think about it, the people who- especially if you're doing this with a large group, the people who normally talk a lot are going to be the ones to generate those first ideas, and then leave space for the quieter people, the more introspective, the ones who need a little bit more time to think, and make sure you get at least one idea from everyone, so you can be sure that everything's included. That's all I wanted to add, Danielle.

And then once you have your big list of ideas, you've got a lot of possible solutions, there's a couple things you want to do. So like Danielle said, you're going to reality test, you're going to evaluate those options. And you're going to say, all right, so the idea of an agenda, does that meet our needs? Maybe yes. Are we able to do that effectively? Do we have the time? Do we have the money? Do we have the buy-in? Do we have the commitment? Do we have the autonomy? You know, are we able to make the decision that we want to make? Are we able to implement the idea because sometimes you're in a structure, you're in an organization that doesn't let you, maybe you're, you know, if you're in a school day, there's only so much time or there's just like restraints that so you're just looking at it realistically, can we realistically put this into action? And if we are, and we do that, are we both going to get our needs met? So you'll want to do that for all the options, and you'll want to take those options and sometimes squish them together. So maybe there were 20 ideas that came up, and five of them just aren't plausible. And then another five are good, but not strong. And then there's a couple that are really good if you put them together. So if we do these three things, I think that'll work. Like no one of those ideas by themselves will get our accomplishments, will accomplish our goal here, but maybe if we do a couple of them.

So once you've figured that out, and you've gotten the best idea out of the whole bunch, then you're going to want to document it, because you don't want to go through this whole process and think you're on the same page with someone and then sign off the Zoom, and then you heard something different or you took it in a different direction. So you want to just document. It doesn't have to be some formal agreement, but just say, "All right, so we're clear, we are going to implement an agenda that's going to go out one day before the meeting, and we're going to use a round robin circle of sharing for these ideas" Okay, great, then you want to get into the weeds. So who's going to be responsible for creating that agenda? Who and when are they going to send it out by? And who are they going to get the information from? And how are they going to collect that information? You want to answer all the questions because the more thorough you are, you've done all the really hard work of sharing how you feel, of getting down into the nitty gritty of it. This isn't where you want it to fall off, the energy's going to come down a lot, because you've already generated all these ideas. And now it's like, "Oh, we got to do the boring stuff of logistics" So, but don't give up at this stage, because this is where you're going to know if it's successful.

So ask all of those questions, and then make sure it's balanced. So if it's between two people, your solution should probably be something each person has to do. And if it's with a group of people, a lot of people are going to be involved in. So that's how it's inclusive, right? That's how we get shared accountability and responsibility moving forward is everyone participated, and everyone takes a piece to move forward. And then once you've done that, if you've done a really good job of getting through the details, you just want to do a quick reality check and say, alright, we did all of these logistics, we've gotten everything written down. What could prevent this from working? What could happen? What could possibly happen that would make this plan crash and burn? And can we do something about it? And if not, when will we check in and alter our problems? So maybe, you know, one idea is like, it could- you could have a giant rainstorm and lose internet connection. Can we do something about that? Well, we can have a backup phone number that we use, instead of doing Zoom without that, we'll have a number we got conference call line, we can all just use our phones. Or, you know, so and so could not get their part of the agenda in on time. Okay, well, then what can we do about that? Well, maybe we need to plan it out. Maybe we need to set that deadline a little bit earlier.

You know, it's just working through all of these possible ideas, and then say, okay, so hey, let's try this idea of using an agenda and our round robin, and after that meeting, let's all just take a second and rate on a scale of one to five how we thought it worked. And if it was a four or five, let's use it again. And if it was less than that, let's think about trying something new. Or what if we have an anonymous evaluation after the meeting, and we say, hey, please let us know how you felt about these couple of items. And then we'll look at it and see if we need to make adjustments. Just again, if your goal is to have something that everyone agrees to, that really works and satisfies everyone's needs, it's just like committing to that, like, we're not committing to this one conversation, we're committed to like a relationship, where we're going to work together to solve all of the problems that might come up. Danielle, anything to add about agreements?

Danielle: Yeah, you know, just as a thought you can actually, you know, once you get these slides, you can get them in the chat, you could copy these questions out of the slide, put it into a Word document, and then have that be like the template that you use, like, literally, when you get to this step, ask the question, does the solution meet both of our needs? Yes or no? And type it in there. Are we able to implement the solution effectively? Like, literally go through and write and type these things out. And it's also a good kind of like meeting practice, right? Because you are documenting it. And then it's something that you can share with the team of people that you're doing this process with. Like, okay, yeah, this was the plan that we came up with, and this is, you know, we wrote it out, this is what we're going to do, this is kind of the timeline that we're going to do, and all those great things that Jess talked about. So the biggest thing we want you to take away from this presentation is to actually apply this, like take these slides, take them to your team, do a little lunch and learn, go over the process, do your own practice, and then like try it out. And you'll be just really amazed at the new kind of ideas that you can come up with, how energizing that this is to people. It's a really fun activity, people love kind of sharing their opinions.

And especially if you have a problem, or you need to innovate a process or something like that, and it's just been kind of stagnant for a while, or you need a team building activity. Or maybe this is a great excuse to bring up the topic of active listening and sharing and collaboration. You know, like, Oh, I just went to this webinar and, you know, because this is probably a topic, you know, everyone could use a refresher on. So yeah, bring it up, practice it, try it out, implement it, and let us know how it goes also.

Jessica: So we luckily have some time for a breakout, and we would love to give everyone just five minutes in a small breakout room to talk about maybe your major takeaway, and the thing that you're intending to use. If you could just share one thing you're taking away and you intend to use from here, we just want to give you an opportunity to chat with each other. So Kevin, if you will help us out with that, with putting people into rooms. If you are using an accommodation, please stay in the main room. Otherwise you can- when it pops up on your screen, you can click to join. It is... Let's see. Let's do five minutes. So Kevin, will you give us a one minute notice to everyone when they need to wrap up?

Kevin: I sure will.

Danille: Let me just address me on this question really quick. If you need a sample agenda, you can actually go on the CRP website. I'll share it in the chat when you guys come back from your breakout rooms. And we have a lot of good sample agendas, all kinds of good stuff that's on there. So I'll leave that link in the chat when they'll come back.

Kevin: And Danielle and Jessica, I wanted to just remind our interpreters and cadre staff that you'll probably be placed into a room as well. But you can just move yourself back into the main session. So I will open the rooms now for five minutes, and you'll get a one minute countdown when they're closing.

Kelly: [inaudible] will be ending in about three minutes. [inaudible]. That would be great. Thanks.

Danielle: Okay. Hey, Jess, I'm going to share two links in the chat and just give some context.

Jessica: Sure.

Danielle: Is everybody back now?

Jessica: It seems like it.

Kevin: Yes, they are.

Danielle: Okay. All right, everyone. So this first link that I'm sharing in the chat, that specifically goes to sample agendas that you can use pre-meeting preparation, all that good stuff for IEP meetings, so please check that out. And then another thing that normally when we have more time that we add on to this presentation is one about how to cope with challenging personalities, of which we all have challenging personalities, you know, because this process, you're thinking like, oh, well, this isn't going to work, you know, some of the people I work with, you know... but yeah, we all have challenging personalities. So I'm also sharing a link there with some strategies that you can use to help different personalities be able to collaborate together. Oh, I think I actually sent them to a direct chat. Let me fix that. My bad. And then, yeah, you can go ahead, Jess, that's all I was going to say.

Jessica: Sure. Well, we did an excellent job on time, Danielle. So I just want to just for a second, do a quick wrap up and just want to acknowledge that none of us is as smart as all of us. It is why this process is so important. And if you only have one person's view or two people's view, you're really getting a small visual of what the real problem is and what a good solution would be. So just remembering what you're seeing, if it's different than someone else, the question you should ask is, "Oh, I wonder what else is going on here that I don't know about" And approaching conflict, like it's an opportunity rather than, you know, something you need to be afraid of, or something that means that you failed. And so that brings us right to time. If you have questions, please feel free to put them in the chat and we'll try to answer them quickly. Otherwise, we really hope you enjoy your next session, and we thank you for spending some time with us.

Danielle: Yeah. Thank you, everyone.

Jessica: And thanks again to our cadre team who helped us get us all together. We really appreciate you all.