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PREPARING FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

Avoiding difficult conversations is normal, but putting them off does not necessarily cause them to go away.

Thinking about the reasons or feelings behind your wish to avoid the conversation is important.

Dealing with a bully is naturally uncomfortable. In these situations you may feel intimidated or disrespected. You're only human so approaching the bully is uncomfortable at best.

Do you have any concerns or fears of what could happen if you approached the person or if the person approached you? Consider whether the outcome of the conversation will be better or worse for you? What would be the consequence of an unresolved conflict if the conversation were avoided?

Thinking strategically will help you decide what's in your best interest in the long run.

Role-playing a difficult conversation with someone you trust or seeking out the services of a confidential office can be helpful. And, it's probably best for you to practice playing both roles to be fully prepared.

Writing what your responses might be and what you anticipate might be the other person's responses helps to prepare you for the conversation. Use your responses in a role-play exercise.

Try to keep an even, level tone if emotions run high. Do not match the other person's tone. At some point, the other person will need to quiet down in order to hear what you have to say.

Being heard and understood depends on the language and tone that you use. You may wish to review the other "**Quick Tips**" on topics of communication and conflict.

Ultimately, you'll decide whether to have a conversation, which is an immediate two-way communication. Or you could write an email or letter, which could be more effective, because you have time to carefully select your words.

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