

# Dignity & Emotional Intelligence

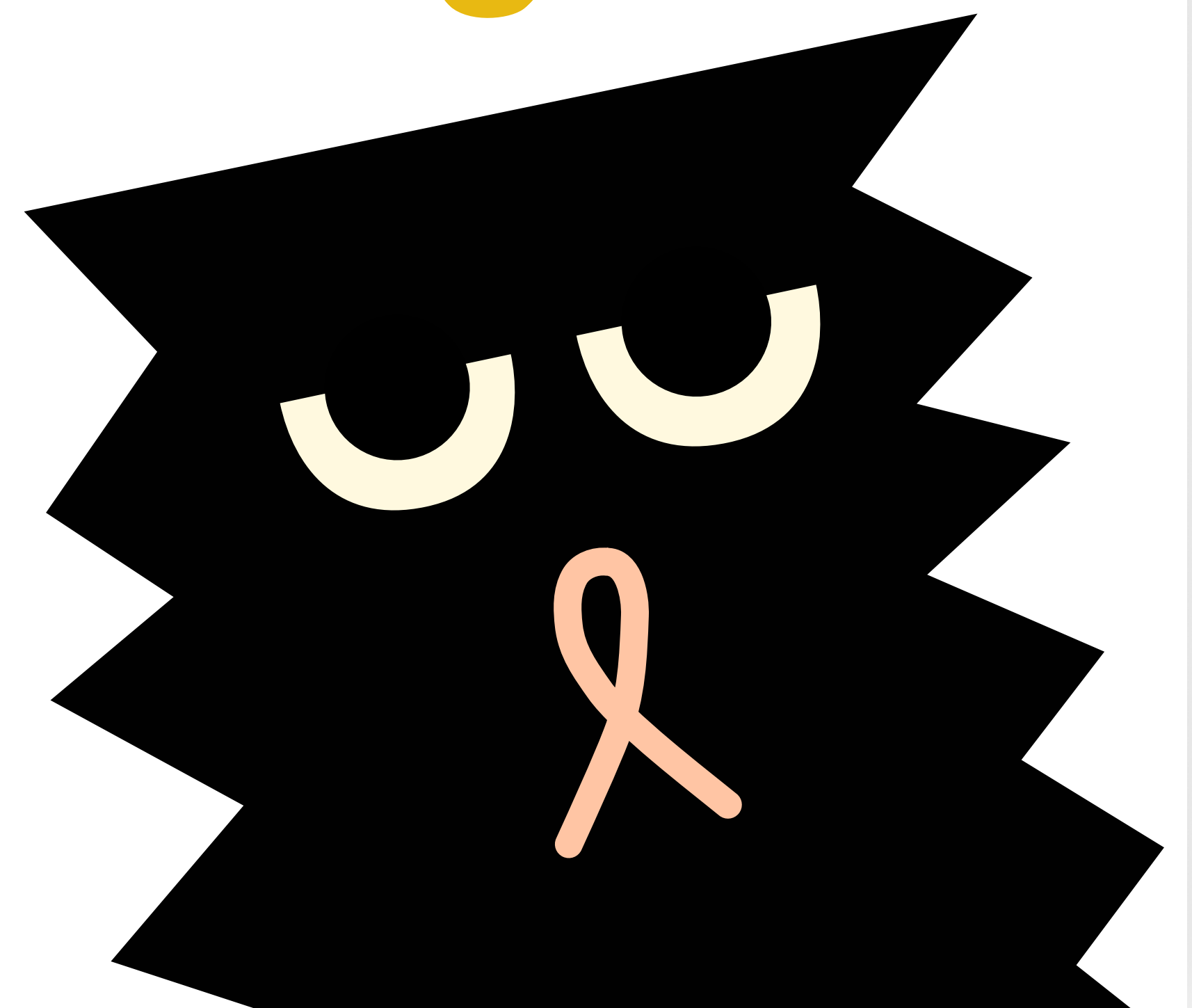
**Core Concepts To Manage Hard Conversations**

**What are we  
doing today?**

**Dignity Overview**

**Basic Emotional Intelligence  
Overview**

**How to leverage those to manage  
hard conversations**



**What is the dignity model?**

**It is my response to what I have observed to be a missing link in our understanding of conflict: our failure to recognize how vulnerable humans are to being treated as if they didn't matter.**

**Donna  
Hicks PhD.**

**Dignity is the inherent worth and value of every human. It is non-negotiable. We all matter the same amount, no matter what.**



# Dignity and Respect are Different

## Respect:

Earned and lost through an individual's or organization's choices, actions, and behaviors

Going above and beyond the baseline right to be treated well

Cannot be guaranteed or demanded

Biased, socialized, context driven, supports systemic oppression

# PERSONAL + STRUCTURAL

Organizing work cultures around respect creates a system where hierarchy and status are the driving motivators, as well as forces that police the perceived value and participation of others.

Using Dignity is a radical shift in the way we have been taught to view human behavior. We have to intentionally engage and practice.

Basing your organization in Dignity is transformative because it prioritizes emotional safety and depersonalizes conflict. It doesn't weaponize shame or hierarchy.

Dignity leads to more innovation, less absenteeism, less conflict and work cultures that are ultimately much more profitable, efficient and stable.

### **Recognition**

Validate others for their talents, hard work, thoughtfulness, and help; be generous with praise; give credit to others for their contributions, ideas and experience

### **Safety**

Put people at ease at two levels: physically, where they feel free of bodily harm; and psychologically, where they feel free of concern about being shamed or humiliated, that they feel free to speak without fear of retribution

### **Independence**

Empower people to act on their own behalf so that they feel in control of their lives and experience a sense of hope and possibility

### **Understanding**

Believe that what others think matters; give them the chance to explain their perspectives, express their points of view; actively listen in order to understand them

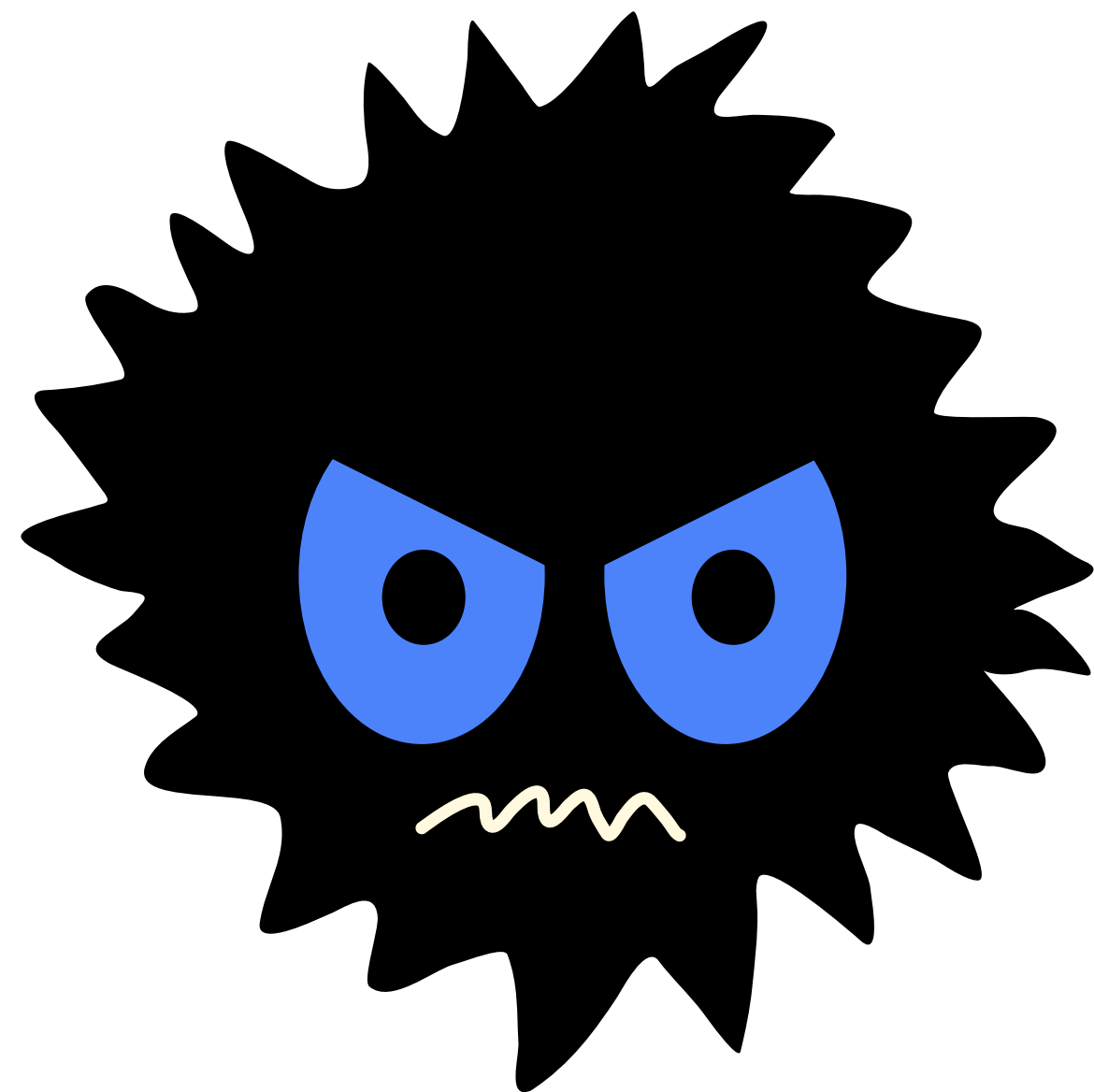
**Shared  
Vocabulary  
and  
Personal  
Data**

**I am overwhelmed and  
have no idea how to cope  
or manage all this shit.**

**We are not taught to be  
emotionally intelligent.**







Emotional Intelligence is:

**The ability to monitor one's own feelings and emotions**

**The ability to discriminate among them**

**The ability to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions**

**-Salovey & Mayer**



Emotions are not reactions to the world they are constructions of the world. Your brain takes in the entire sensory context of an event. You are the one who decides what emotion best fits your experience. Humans are terrible at accurately guessing how others feel

Emotions are not universally expressed or experienced. They are based on context, culture, and how you have been socialized. Emotions and systemic bias are linked

Emotions are physical and crave a physical response. The goal of emotional intelligence is to de-activate your physiology. Emotions are like tunnels, you have to go through them to get out

**Emotions are contagious; positive & negative emotions are equally infectious.**

## **Actively Regulate:**

Remember you are constructing your emotion. Pay attention to it, acknowledge it, let yourself feel it.

## **Metacognition/Mindfulness:**

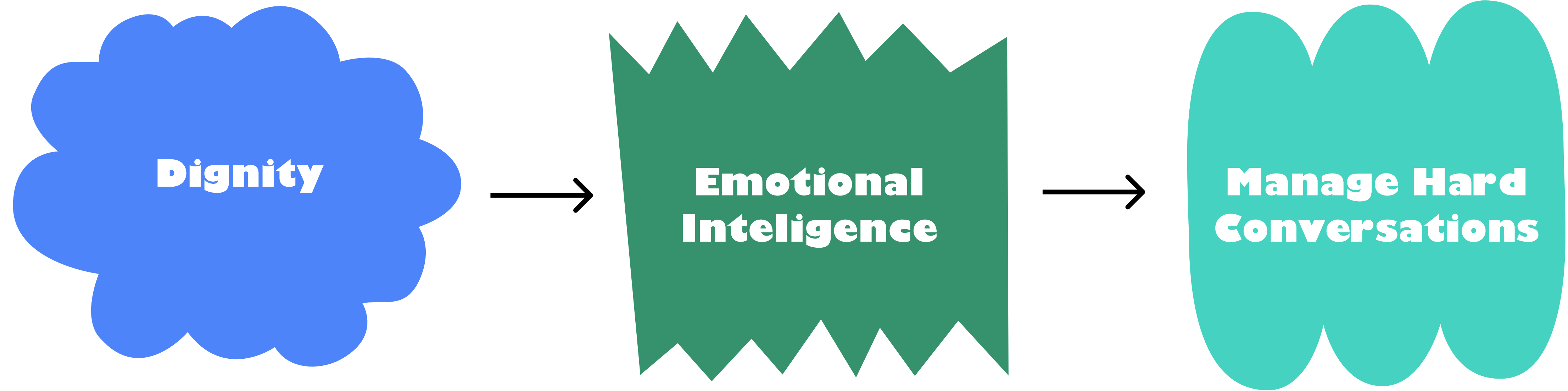
Thinking about your thinking. Slow down, take a breath, and remind yourself feelings are not facts

## **Emotional Granularity:**

Get specific about what you are feeling. Name it to tame it. The more emotion concepts you have the more emotions you can experience and use to process

## **Self Compassion:**

Turn to hard feelings/experiences with kindness and compassion. Actively comfort yourself like you would a good friend.



**Workplace conflict costs organizations close to \$360 billion dollars in paid work hours.**

**Misunderstanding emotions and dignity perpetuates oppression**

**Managing Conflict and Self-Advocacy are essential to enhance your sense of self worth and leadership skills**



## REFLECT ON THE ELEMENTS

Look over the 10 Elements and use them to proactively plan for your triggers or the triggers of others

Remind yourself that everyone is equally vulnerable

Remind yourself everyone has dignity, even in hard, shitty moments

You do not have to respect anyone. However, their behavior doesn't give you permission to humiliate or dehumanize

YOU are the keeper of your dignity, no one else

## REVIEW QUICK EMOTION FACT

Feelings are not facts

You have control over the volume of your emotions

Emotions are contagious, send out the ones you want and resist negative infection

You are bad at guessing how other people feel, don't jump to conclusions

Emotions are physical and want a physical response. Plan to breathe, move, jot down notes, or anything physical

## MAKE A LIST

Organize the facts you need to address

Keeps you focused if emotions arise during that are activating or distracting

Helps you remember your purpose and that you have valid things to share

Write it in the Notes app and set it as your phone's homescreen



# SHAME

creeps in when you feel vulnerable to whisper scary things full of self-doubt and self-criticism

wants to keep you small and stop your growth

wants you to believe you need the validation of others to think you are worthy

corrodes your sense of worth and makes you less likely to take risks, try new things or stand up for your boundaries

makes you think you are not worthy and your ideas are not valuable

Shame feels terrible and tells us to be cruel to ourselves. Shame is a liar. Learn to tell shame to shut up.

Recognizing the bias stories shame tells you is the first step. Then practice self-compassion and change your inner dialogue.



**Fuck off  
shame!**

Ask yourself where you learned this bullshit story.

Say something kind to yourself like, "This feeling sucks. This is hard and I feel vulnerable, but I am not worthless."

Confront your shame and tell it why the story it's telling you is wrong.

## COMPASSIONATE SELF TALK

Say nice things to yourself when you feel hijacked or dysregulated

Possible Prompts:

**I am a valuable employee**

**These are hard feelings, I am sorry you are feeling this way**

**I decide my worth, not others. I know I matter**

**It is really hard to feel like someone is upset with me**

**I am not a bad person for sharing feedback**

## SHAME CODE WORD

If you feel shame trying to hijack you, use a



It forces your brain to focus and not get overtaken by shame

Vulnerability is the only pathway to being known

You can't create transformational spaces if you refuse to be open to transforming yourself

## REMEMBER DIGNITY

Everyone is vulnerable to feeling like they don't matter

They are likely activated by a lack of something, which element might it be?

Your boundaries matter. Do not participate in spaces that deny you your dignity

Perspective taking is a skill. It is OK if you are frustrated. Frustration is normal.

How might you be contributing to someone feeling a lack of dignity?

## Practice Emotional Granularity

If you're emotionally activated you're going to attribute emotions to others that are likely not true and skew how you view the conversation

Get curious about how you feel and try and explore lots of emotion words

Observe your emotions without judging them. Just sit with them.

Make notes (write, voice record, whatever) about how you feel and why. Be as specific as possible

### FIELD GUIDE FOR A FEELING



Name it

**Nervous**

Describe

**Wiggly, red, fast moving**

Close relative

**Scared, uneasy, anxious  
afraid, unsure**

## Mindfulness

Most of our negative self talk is created by others and imposed on to us

Positive self talk and positive reappraisal create healthy psychological distance from your feelings so you can regain perspective and view the conversation more accurately

If it went well, celebrate.

If it feels like it went poorly practice self compassion. Try writing yourself a self-compassionate letter

Take 4 big breaths in and out



Feelings are not facts.  
I am not a shitty human,  
this is just a shitty  
moment.

## Regain control by affirming your worth.

Outloud or in your head repeat one of the phrases  
or make up your own.

Say it out load at least 3 times. Stop between and  
take 4 big breaths.

I matter. My  
emotions  
matter. I am  
valuable.

Feeling this way is  
fucking hard. And I  
am not a bad person,  
this moment just  
sucks.

I am good at  
my job, I am  
smart. I am  
valuable.

That conversation did  
not go as badly as I  
feel it did. All  
humans mess up. I am  
still valuable.

# WILD FEELINGS

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