Words to defuse a tough situation.

**"I'm struggling"**
When to use it:
- To express your feelings or perspective.
- To invite someone into a conversation or a resolution.
What it does:
- It puts the responsibility on you for how you are feeling or perceiving a situation.
- It shares with the other person how this is impacting you.
- It reduces defensiveness.
- It gives the other person the opportunity to play a positive role.
- Instead of feeling attacked or blamed, they can step up and help with what you are struggling with.
Example: NOT: "You disrespected me."
Better: "I'm struggling because I feel disrespected."

**"Where from here?"**
When to use it:
- After giving someone a chance to share their concerns.
- When you want to know what they want to see happen next.
What it does:
- It's open-ended, so it allows them to respond however they want.
- It shifts focus from the past to the future.
- It gives people a chance to imagine what they want to see happen next.

**"I'm hearing that... "It sounds like..."**
When to use it:
- After someone has shared with you.
- Preceding a summary or reframe of someone's words.
What it does:
- It affirms that you are listening.
- It gives them an opportunity to expand or correct your summary of their words.

**"That's a lot."
When to use it:
- After someone expresses their concerns, feelings, or experiences.
What it does:
- It validates and empathizes with the storm of thoughts and emotions swirling in their head.

**"Can we work together to..."**
When to use it:
- To make a request.
- When you have an idea for a resolution or next step.
What it does:
- It invites the other person in as a collaborator.
- It distributes responsibility to both of you.
- It reduces defensiveness.
Example: NOT: "You have to tell me about these situations before they escalate!"
Better: "Can we work together to improve our communication and prevent this from happening again?"

**"This is important. What do I need to understand?"
When to use it:
- When someone is displaying strong emotions, even if they are directed at you.
- When someone is repeating themselves.
What it does:
- It validates that you are taking them seriously. It does not commit you to agreeing with them or condoning their behavior.
- It gives them the opportunity to express the core of the issue.
- It can defuse strong emotions. It is difficult to yell at someone who has said that what you are yelling about is important.