### 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.

#### "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.

#### "My perspective is...What is your perspective?"

**When to use it:**
- When you've had a disagreement.
- When you are ready to both share and listen.

**What it does:**
- It presents your interpretation of things as a perspective and not the one truth.
- It gives them a chance to share how they see things.
- It gives you a chance to learn more about the situation.

#### "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.

**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?"