

Coaching questions to build elephant shrinkers

If someone comes to you, concerned about growing tension, use these questions to coach them through:

Initial conversation

- Tell me about your perspective on the situation.
- Tell me a bit more about your relationship with that person.
- What is the story in your head about that person? How is that influencing how you feel?
- What strategies are you using to breathe through the emotions and get curious?
- Sounds like there could be an elephant here. What might be an alternative perspective of the elephant?
- What do you know about what is going on for that other person right now?
- What insight does your story give you about yourself?
- What do you think is the next valuable step to take?

Framing up their next conversation

- Tell me your comfort level in using the Five components of understanding an elephant from two different perspectives. Would it help to practise it?
- Talk me through it and practise it with me. (They may want time to write it out first).

Encourage them to have the conversation and come back to reflect on what insight was gained. Remind them, that if during the conversation, it is clear it isn't being resolved, they can ask that person to join them in a conversation with you. To get guidance on how to shrink the elephant together.

Further useful questions to ask when they are stuck:

- What are you trying to do? What does that truly give you? What really matters here? Is it serving you? What else is possible?
- What's your current story?
- What could an opposite perspective be? How could that be true? That is, you are helping their brain look for a different pattern than the one they have stuck in their head.
- Who is on your Board? Who might be useful to talk to on that Board right now?