

Transcript | How to Deal with Conflict at Work

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00:00:19.570 --> 00:00:26.850

Christopher Rosselot: Hello and welcome! I will give a couple of seconds for attendees to join the virtual room. We'll get started in just a minute.

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00:00:36.340 --> 00:00:54.140

Christopher Rosselot: Alrighty, I can see we're getting quite a number of folks in, so we'll go ahead and start. Hello, and welcome to this special 1st of April Masterclass on how to win every lunch argument, because as far as I'm concerned, pineapple on pizza is the best possible topping.

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00:00:54.380 --> 00:01:11.279

Christopher Rosselot: Alright, remember, it's April Fool's, that's our quick April Fool's joke. Today, we're actually here to talk about something a bit more useful, how to deal with conflict at work. That's the actual topic of the day. My name is Christopher Roslow, and I'm a community manager here at Apolitical.

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00:01:11.300 --> 00:01:20.050

Christopher Rosselot: It'll be great to hear from all of you, too, so please do post in the chat where you're joining us from and what organization you work for.

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00:01:20.050 --> 00:01:36.040

Christopher Rosselot: A technical note is that your messages might come through to only hosts and panelists due to your Zoom's default settings, so please be sure to select everyone from the blue drop-down menu in the Zoom chat if you'd like to send a message to all of us here today as you introduce yourself.

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00:01:36.360 --> 00:01:47.139

Christopher Rosselot: Today, we're looking at how public servants can approach difficult conversations with confidence and care, from managing team tensions to addressing everyday friction.

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00:01:47.240 --> 00:01:58.459

Christopher Rosselot: We'll explore practical ways for those conversations, respond to challenges in the moment, and build more positive, respectful working relationships across teams.

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00:01:58.460 --> 00:02:12.519

Christopher Rosselot: For those of you who may be joining us for the first time, welcome. AP Political is the world's largest online network of public servants used by more than half a million public servants and policymakers across 170 countries.

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00:02:12.540 --> 00:02:23.589

Christopher Rosselot: APolitical is a strategic partner to governments, helping them prepare their workforces for the future, and we achieve this by upscaling government workforces through short online courses focused on government priorities.

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00:02:23.590 --> 00:02:40.630

Christopher Rosselot: Enabling public servants to find and share best practices through peer communities, and building innovative tools designed for and with governments. And I'm loving all the introductions and opinions on pizza toppings coming in in the chat, so it is lovely to have you here today.

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00:02:40.630 --> 00:02:47.300

Christopher Rosselot: Before we get started, I also want to introduce you to the life and government community on Apolitical.

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00:02:47.300 --> 00:02:59.300

Christopher Rosselot: Whether you're new to the public sector or further along in your career, this forum is a space to share resources, ask questions, and learn from peers about the informal rules and everyday realities of government.

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00:02:59.300 --> 00:03:12.550

Christopher Rosselot: If you've ever wondered about these, you're definitely not alone, and this community, the Life and Government community, is a great place to connect with and learn from your peers in the public sector. My colleague will post the link to the community in the chat.

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00:03:13.090 --> 00:03:31.419

Christopher Rosselot: So, a few technical notes to get out of the way. This event is recorded for on-demand viewing on the apolitical website, so please don't record it yourself. Contact details

for privacy concerns are in the apolitical homepage footer. Closed captions are available and can be toggled off or on in your screen settings.

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00:03:32.740 --> 00:03:46.939

Christopher Rosselot: Before we introduce our speakers, we are going to run a quick poll, just to get a sense of where you're coming from in today's discussion. So, the question to you is, what most often stops you from addressing conflict when it arises?

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00:03:47.600 --> 00:04:05.960

Christopher Rosselot: Is it, I don't want to make things worse, I'm not sure it's my place to say something, I worry about how it will affect my career, I don't know about how to start the conversation, I hope it will resolve itself. What most often stops you from addressing conflict when it arises? And lots of answers coming in.

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00:04:07.100 --> 00:04:10.960

Christopher Rosselot: Perfect. Thank you so much for participating.

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00:04:14.250 --> 00:04:22.830

Christopher Rosselot: Looks like there is definitely a clear winner, although we have people Answering every which way.

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00:04:24.680 --> 00:04:29.880

Christopher Rosselot: And we have the results, and the clear winner is I don't want to make things worse.

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00:04:30.140 --> 00:04:38.410

Christopher Rosselot: So that is what often stops people from addressing conflict when it arises, is this tendency not to want to make things worse.

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00:04:38.780 --> 00:04:45.530

Christopher Rosselot: Now, to introduce our speakers, we're fortunate to have two brilliant guests, Nick and Zoe, joining us today.

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00:04:45.730 --> 00:04:57.160

Christopher Rosselot: First, Dr. Nicholas Barkas brings a human-centered perspective to public service, shaped by a decade as an Orthodox priest, and 12 years in the UK civil service across the Home Office.

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00:04:57.160 --> 00:05:10.080

Christopher Rosselot: Cabinet Office, and the Department for Business and Trade. He focuses on improving workplace culture, inclusion, and communication, and is known for his thought leadership on respectful workplaces and difficult conversations.

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00:05:10.540 --> 00:05:25.639

Christopher Rosselot: Zoe Rohde is sponsorship lead for the Anti-Racism Observatory for Scotland within the Scottish Government. She previously worked in digital health communications and spent over a decade with the UN in South Africa, focusing on migration and human trafficking.

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00:05:25.640 --> 00:05:31.330

Christopher Rosselot: Zoe is passionate about building inclusive, collaborative public sector environments.

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00:05:31.420 --> 00:05:42.909

Christopher Rosselot: You can read the full bios for Nick and Zoe by visiting the Resources tab at the bottom of your Zoom screen and heading to the Speakers section. Welcome both, Nick and Zoe, it's lovely to have you here.

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00:05:43.710 --> 00:05:46.290

Christopher Rosselot: Let's start with an icebreaker to kick things off.

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00:05:46.410 --> 00:05:56.040

Christopher Rosselot: You'll each have 30 seconds to share your responses, and we'd love to hear the answers of everyone here today, too, so again, feel free to pop your answer in the Zoom chat.

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00:05:56.180 --> 00:06:03.160

Christopher Rosselot: But Zoe and Nick, if difficult conversations were a sport, Which one would they be?

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00:06:03.310 --> 00:06:14.589

Christopher Rosselot: While you think on your answers, again, I invite you to share your examples in the chat, but 30 seconds, Nick, if difficult conversations with us were a sport, which one would they be?

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00:06:16.410 --> 00:06:30.940

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: I would say it's obvious I'm not very sporty. All sports, for me, are, like, difficult conversations. They have their own language, their own rules, and their own communication, but if I were to pick one, it would have been archery.

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00:06:30.940 --> 00:06:38.159

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Because with archery, you have the target, you have the silence, you have the preparation, and then you...

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00:06:38.160 --> 00:06:40.209

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Are ready to hit the target.

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00:06:40.270 --> 00:06:51.210

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Funny enough, the Greek word, person, amartia, means exactly that, missing the target in artery. There is no judgment, it's just a measurement. Have you hit the...

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00:06:51.310 --> 00:07:07.289

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: mark, and that's what we need to do. And it is really the silence before the release. And I always say that a conversation, especially difficult conversation, it's just not the waking of tongues, but it is the deep, sad silence.

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00:07:07.450 --> 00:07:18.050

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And that's from Robertson Davis, my favorite, author. So, archery and Silence, I would say, is my go-to for difficult conversations.

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00:07:18.920 --> 00:07:37.590

Christopher Rosselot: I love it, I love it. And Zoe, before I go to you, I think you're gonna have a hard time, finding a sport that hasn't been named. We have everything from rugby to chess to basketball to UFC to deep water diving to my favorite sport, running. Can you come up with something else?

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00:07:38.120 --> 00:07:47.299

Zoe Rohde: Yes, Nicholas, I loved your answer. I think, given I practice this regularly, I would choose yoga, because you need to be balanced.

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00:07:47.510 --> 00:07:49.130

Zoe Rohde: You need to have focus.

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00:07:49.460 --> 00:07:58.560

Zoe Rohde: It's good to be flexible, and you need to stay present when things are difficult and when things get uncomfortable. So yeah, I would choose yoga.

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00:07:59.920 --> 00:08:05.659

Christopher Rosselot: I love that. I really love that notion of balance and flexibility. So thank you both.

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00:08:05.850 --> 00:08:19.310

Christopher Rosselot: Now, to get right into things, what you're here for today, Nick and Zoe have both prepared a masterclass drawing on their experiences working in the civil service. As always, we'll leave plenty of time for you in the audience to ask questions.

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00:08:19.310 --> 00:08:27.380

Christopher Rosselot: afterwards. So, but, please start thinking about those questions and posting them in the chat as we go, or using the Q&A function.

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00:08:27.380 --> 00:08:32.459

Christopher Rosselot: First, though, let's get started with Nick. Nick, you have 15 minutes for your masterclass.

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00:08:33.240 --> 00:08:34.299

Christopher Rosselot: Feel free to go ahead.

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00:08:34.729 --> 00:08:39.059

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Let me see how twice to serve, because I don't see any buttons.

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00:08:39.879 --> 00:08:40.969

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Oh, there it is.

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00:08:41.289 --> 00:08:42.079

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Okay.

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00:08:42.399 --> 00:08:44.499

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: We are nearly there.

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00:09:05.889 --> 00:09:06.719

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So...

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00:09:07.089 --> 00:09:17.319

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: before it comes on screen, let me say that today I'm gonna speak about the circle of, bullying and harassment, and how, this

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00:09:17.929 --> 00:09:32.099

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: appears again and again, and we don't seem to be able to tackle it. And the question is, why is that? Why can we not do it? Why do we have, this recurrent,

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00:09:32.919 --> 00:09:35.709

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: The theme in, our civil service life.

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00:09:36.189 --> 00:09:42.679

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And we spend a lot of money, and we do a lot of actions, and we put a lot of effort

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00:09:43.439 --> 00:09:50.449

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And we still haven't managed to... to master the... the... Solution of this problem.

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00:09:50.689 --> 00:09:54.269

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So... and indeed, it is a circle.

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00:09:54.669 --> 00:09:55.499

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Sorry.

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00:09:56.379 --> 00:10:07.479

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So, you see, it comes to our attention, either through an HR intervention, and... or through receiving a complaint, or during the staff survey.

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00:10:07.679 --> 00:10:26.319

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And then we apply a short-term fix. We either create a committee, or we get an external provider, or we ask people to do some training, and this sort of, gives a temporary relief, temporary quietness, and... till the next incident.

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00:10:26.739 --> 00:10:32.309

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: But the, the, the circle is going, and, we, we see that,

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00:10:32.679 --> 00:10:42.769

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: There is a momentum, especially after the staff survey, where we know what's wrong, we know the causes, but still, we seem to fail to take action on these things.

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00:10:43.069 --> 00:10:44.009

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So...

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00:10:46.129 --> 00:10:55.859

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: The next thing we need to consider, actually, is the scale of the problem, because, especially for the UK,

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00:10:55.889 --> 00:11:08.889

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And I'm not talking just for the civil service, I'm talking generally. We have an 18 billion pound cost to the UK employers. We have 9 million employers affected.

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00:11:08.949 --> 00:11:18.789

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: In the civil service, 47.1 of the long-term sickness absence is due to, mental health illness.

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00:11:18.959 --> 00:11:23.329

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And then, If we were to train our managers.

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00:11:23.339 --> 00:11:38.809

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: to have quality conversations, as the name of the training program is, it costs £260. If you have 10,000 managers you want to train, that immediately puts the cost really high up.

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00:11:38.819 --> 00:11:44.819

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And if you need to repeat this every 3 to 5 years, the costs go higher and higher.

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00:11:44.959 --> 00:11:53.139

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So, we really need to consider, are we not able ourselves to sort these problems? Are we not able to be civil to each other?

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00:11:53.289 --> 00:11:54.149

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Or...

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00:11:54.359 --> 00:12:00.219

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Civil servants, as the newspapers will say, are spoiled and are complaining all the time. None of this is true.

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00:12:00.559 --> 00:12:13.579

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: There is a real issue, and we really need to address it, and address it internally, and also in a way that it provides value for money to the public.

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00:12:15.599 --> 00:12:27.999

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Let's see. So, with this in mind, with thinking that we should solve our own problems, I wrote three articles and provided 3 solutions. One was the Respectful Workplace Toolkit.

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00:12:28.069 --> 00:12:30.719

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: The second was the conversations that count.

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00:12:30.729 --> 00:12:50.399

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And that was an LGBT bot, where I created about 30 scenarios where you can practice, somebody comes with a problem, and you put the scenario to the chatbot, whatever you use, Copilot, whatever you have in your department, and that will recreate

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00:12:50.569 --> 00:13:04.689

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: a real-life scenario. And you can raise the temperature, lower it, you can reverse the rules, you can give whatever answers you feel to answer, and you will get, at the end, a response, and you will get a feedback, and you will get actions

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00:13:04.689 --> 00:13:14.739

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: to improve the way you do things. And the smart talk was exactly the same, only a bit more wide, about problems, people,

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00:13:14.899 --> 00:13:29.819

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: encountered during the managing duties. I have also received a recommendation from a leader in a political to create a specific one for disabilities, and if I have the time, I will also do that.

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00:13:30.129 --> 00:13:39.109

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And, hopefully, Unite all the boats into one, so anybody can go in and train, because

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00:13:40.599 --> 00:13:48.809

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: as you said, I'm afraid that I will do things worse if I enter into a conversation. So, what is the best way? The best way is

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00:13:49.039 --> 00:13:50.289

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: to practice.

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00:13:50.619 --> 00:13:55.229

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: That's what we all say to children. That's what we all heard as children. Practice makes perfect.

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00:13:55.499 --> 00:13:59.879

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: In a safe environment, where you're not being judged, it's just yourself and the AI.

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00:14:00.069 --> 00:14:15.289

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And then you receive feedback in accordance to the Civil Service Code, to the department, any departmental, ways of behavior, and anything else that could be helpful

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00:14:15.479 --> 00:14:25.899

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: to, provide a quality conversation. With the Respectful Workplace Toolkit, what I did is just a diary where you note your behavior.

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00:14:26.149 --> 00:14:31.899

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: There are a lot of, incivilities in the workplace, micro-incivilities, and microaggressions.

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00:14:32.099 --> 00:14:46.009

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: things that are embedded in our characters, things that we don't even realize they're there. Things that, in a... I'm in a policy, but I've worked in, production, wherein a production, might be considered, oh, yes.

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00:14:46.009 --> 00:14:59.269

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: you have to be a tough manager, or you have to be, hitting the targets, or whatever. And incivilities and microaggressions, become embedded. So this, this first one, the toolkit.

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00:14:59.949 --> 00:15:03.869

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Was based on diaries that children keep to stop bullying.

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00:15:04.129 --> 00:15:12.789

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: It helps the child to use it in schools, and it helps the child, to understand its behavior and the effects it has. And...

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00:15:13.509 --> 00:15:19.319

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: there is a scale, and of course, if you go over the scale, it says, well, you better have a talk with HR.

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00:15:19.439 --> 00:15:30.209

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: But it's a way of helping people understand how they react with others, the effect they have to others, and help them really focus

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00:15:30.349 --> 00:15:33.419

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: On improving their behavior.

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00:15:36.589 --> 00:15:48.099

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: The toolkit and all these, solutions had been, till recently, downloaded by about 2,000 readers,

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00:15:48.579 --> 00:16:01.269

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: it helped... the toolkit helped give structure, prevent escalation, and keep a focus. The advice I had given to people using it was, use it as yourself as a personal diary.

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00:16:01.809 --> 00:16:09.139

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: If you're a manager and there is a problem area, ask for somebody to do it for themselves, but don't use it as a stick to beat them up.

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00:16:09.539 --> 00:16:10.459

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Or...

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00:16:10.759 --> 00:16:26.579

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: the senior civil service can say, listen, let's do it all together. Let's make sure that we, remove incivility in the workplace, and we remove microaggression. And we will all do it, we will give you half an hour.

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00:16:27.199 --> 00:16:28.189

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Through the week?

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00:16:28.699 --> 00:16:30.139

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Just to fill in that...

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00:16:30.529 --> 00:16:35.209

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Thing. And then, you can reflect on it, and see if you can improve.

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00:16:36.139 --> 00:16:38.179

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And...

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00:16:39.069 --> 00:16:50.769

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: all... it was also all about changing the culture, because as I said, a lot of these things are either individually or corporately embedded and need to change.

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00:16:52.699 --> 00:16:54.639

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: with,

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00:17:00.409 --> 00:17:01.849

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: It's not moving for me.

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00:17:03.119 --> 00:17:18.939

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Yes, with the conversations that the LGBT, chatbot, I did a lot of work with our network, our LGBTQ plus network in DBT. We tried it... we tried to find... we used both members, and we used

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00:17:19.449 --> 00:17:31.049

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Non-members to see both sides of, The problem to understand Does this respect Does it use the...

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00:17:31.049 --> 00:17:50.829

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: proper vocabulary? Does it help people? And also people that were afraid to speak with LGBTQ colleagues, that were not comfortable. People older, like me, that would instinctively say, don't ask, don't tell, something that's from 20, 30 years ago, and that's absolutely unacceptable now.

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00:17:50.829 --> 00:17:52.139

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Something that we grew up.

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00:17:52.139 --> 00:18:00.479

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Even those of us in the LGBTQ community might say these things. So, and... we create...

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00:18:01.049 --> 00:18:06.739

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Awkwardness, we create incivility, we create, aggression.

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00:18:06.889 --> 00:18:08.369

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And it's not...

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00:18:08.859 --> 00:18:16.639

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: willingly done. It's something that's out of ignorance, out of, falling back to ways of speaking that

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00:18:17.019 --> 00:18:18.909

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: are totally outdated.

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00:18:19.119 --> 00:18:32.069

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And there has been quite a good reception, and I got endorsement from my director, to whom I'm really grateful, and we are going to present that to our AI team for further development.

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00:18:32.179 --> 00:18:39.829

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And I think that's an excellent, Result for the whole community.

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00:18:40.739 --> 00:18:44.589

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And then we also have the,

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00:18:46.429 --> 00:18:56.369

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: other board that I created with the generic, conversations, where it tries, really, to short everyday problems, both,

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00:18:57.099 --> 00:19:02.769

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: ways in the... sorry, it seems to be... Stuck my,

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00:19:07.899 --> 00:19:10.599

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: My presentation seems to be stuck.

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00:19:13.329 --> 00:19:20.759

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: I'll... I'll tell you, so I would not, take the time. So, in that...

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00:19:20.939 --> 00:19:23.689

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Also, in the same vein, scenarios.

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00:19:23.799 --> 00:19:28.619

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: people practicing. Also, we can do reverse practice, which is also useful.

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00:19:29.079 --> 00:19:35.909

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Because one of the, problems that people have, Ease.

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00:19:37.389 --> 00:19:43.789

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: not having enough cards to speak out. So, the boats can all be reversed.

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00:19:44.509 --> 00:19:50.109

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So, you can... the AI can be the manager, and you can...

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00:19:50.359 --> 00:20:03.899

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: speak to them and see its reactions, and see what do you say, what could it be? And you can ask it to take a certain persona and see the reaction, because if we don't, speak out.

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00:20:04.109 --> 00:20:09.029

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: If we don't learn how to speak out, These problems would persist.

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00:20:09.969 --> 00:20:13.079

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: I seem to have a problem with my presentation.

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00:20:14.749 --> 00:20:15.919

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Can you hear me?

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00:20:17.240 --> 00:20:22.950

Christopher Rosselot: Yes, Nick, we can hear you, and I think my colleague is sharing your presentation, if you want to keep going.

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00:20:22.950 --> 00:20:23.560

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Good.

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00:20:24.580 --> 00:20:31.330

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So, the tools, they work together. They are scalable, and they're absolutely cheap.

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00:20:31.450 --> 00:20:32.460

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Costs nothing.

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00:20:32.590 --> 00:20:37.200

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: They target the real pain points, lack of time, avoidance.

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00:20:37.290 --> 00:20:56.190

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: fear and procedural inertia. They intervene on multiple stages in the bullying and harassment circle. It helps with prevention, it helps with inclusion, it helps with conflict handling. And most importantly, they address the cost drivers behind the wider annual burden of bullying and conflict.

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00:20:57.390 --> 00:21:04.099

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And this is not a theory, it's about an operational model for culture change.

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00:21:04.760 --> 00:21:11.629

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: I did, though, ask quite a few of our readers if They did apply the tools.

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00:21:12.030 --> 00:21:18.370

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Some of them had contacted me in person, and they asked to understand, and they didn't.

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00:21:18.770 --> 00:21:32.110

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And I did wonder what went wrong there, and the problem is... was lack of time, and falling back to the old ways, and also fear of trying.

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00:21:32.540 --> 00:21:39.929

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So, ideally, need... To start considering, are the old ways working?

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00:21:40.460 --> 00:21:41.609

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Doesn't seem so.

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00:21:41.860 --> 00:21:51.930

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: our, bullying and harassment, results do not change. And what is more interesting, if you see the stats.

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00:21:51.930 --> 00:22:02.929

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Especially, yes, this page where we are. 36% of those people who admitted to having been bullied or witnessed bullying in the civil service, it was about intimidation.

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00:22:03.410 --> 00:22:10.440

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: and oral... verbal or written aggression. So, the way we talk is problematic.

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00:22:10.610 --> 00:22:14.790

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And 37% were humiliated in front of Tim or others.

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00:22:15.180 --> 00:22:20.370

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So, and the majority of, respondents

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00:22:20.550 --> 00:22:26.340

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: attach these complaints to micromanagement, to, managerial,

149

00:22:26.710 --> 00:22:41.830

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: action. So, there is a real issue the way we communicate, there is a real issue the way we deal with each other, there is a real way we speak, and there are real issues there. And, although

150

00:22:42.000 --> 00:22:51.319

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Somebody thinks, but is it possible that there was, verbal or written aggression, or that, people were... well, this thing actually happened.

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00:22:52.130 --> 00:22:56.250

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And it might be only the 8% of the,

152

00:22:58.150 --> 00:23:03.660

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: whole, workforce in the civil service. Still, 8% is 8% too much.

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00:23:04.420 --> 00:23:11.469

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So, that's why we need to practice, that's why we need to be mindful, to be civil, and...

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00:23:11.790 --> 00:23:17.380

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Using these tools help us Check ourselves, and then practice to become better.

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00:23:20.540 --> 00:23:21.520

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So...

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00:23:22.020 --> 00:23:41.600

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: The message really is, very simple. We need to change our culture, both in the way we're handling conflict and with the way we're using the tools to handle conflict. And the civil service has the talent, has the tools to be respectful workplaces. We do not need more

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00:23:41.720 --> 00:23:49.100

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: crisis-driven spending. What we need is Continuous, everyday behavioral capability.

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00:23:49.670 --> 00:23:53.750

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And that's what those tools aim for. Daily practice.

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00:23:54.290 --> 00:23:56.120

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Can you, can you still see me? Yes.

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00:23:57.270 --> 00:24:03.390

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So, and this is the takeaway, and... We can stop,

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00:24:03.770 --> 00:24:15.869

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: rehearsing and rehearsing and reliving the same problems over and over. And we can do that by empowering managers and teams to address issues early.

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00:24:16.300 --> 00:24:23.310

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And we can build a respectful civil service by practicing the behaviors that create it, and we can do that every day.

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00:24:23.800 --> 00:24:24.980

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Thank you very much.

164

00:24:28.860 --> 00:24:48.350

Christopher Rosselot: Fantastic. Thank you, Nick. And your points around the toolkit, creating prevention, inclusion, and then, you know, practical skills. I really appreciate you sharing those. Zoe, I'll hand over to you in just a second, but want to take a moment to encourage everyone to get questions submitted in time for Q&A.

165

00:24:48.350 --> 00:24:56.200

Christopher Rosselot: And remember, there is no such thing as a bad question, so please ask all questions. Zoe, over to you.

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00:24:56.880 --> 00:24:58.550

Zoe Rohde: Thank you so much, Christopher.

167

00:24:58.790 --> 00:25:05.180

Zoe Rohde: Good afternoon, everyone. And thanks to Apolitical for inviting me to present today.

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00:25:05.380 --> 00:25:11.529

Zoe Rohde: I'm going to be discussing how to build and sustain positive, respectful working relationships.

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00:25:11.690 --> 00:25:25.020

Zoe Rohde: So to start, I would like to hear from you. What would you say are the two most important things needed to achieve this? If you just want to pop that in the chat, and then we can see whether this tallies with any of the things that I talk about.

170

00:25:25.570 --> 00:25:27.280

Zoe Rohde: Okay, next slide, please.

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00:25:27.600 --> 00:25:30.749

Zoe Rohde: So, in this presentation, I'm going to cover

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00:25:30.940 --> 00:25:49.610

Zoe Rohde: my experience in this area, building the foundations of respectful working relationships, the importance of having clarity of purpose and strong communication, some of the tools that we use in Scottish Government to help build effective working relationships, and finally, the importance of reliability and trust.

173

00:25:50.370 --> 00:25:51.860

Zoe Rohde: Next slide, please.

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00:25:51.990 --> 00:26:00.449

Zoe Rohde: So, when I was first asked to speak today, I wasn't actually sure why apolitical had approached me, or what I could offer, but when I reflected.

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00:26:00.590 --> 00:26:10.179

Zoe Rohde: I realized that much of my career has actually involved navigating and facilitating and managing, actually, really quite complex and challenging situations.

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00:26:10.320 --> 00:26:12.280

Zoe Rohde: So, earlier in my career.

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00:26:12.410 --> 00:26:31.310

Zoe Rohde: I worked in South Africa for a UN organization. Part of my work involved supporting government and communities affected by xenophobic violence. So I worked with migrant communities whose homes or shops had been, attacked, and with the host communities where that violence had taken place.

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00:26:31.450 --> 00:26:38.320

Zoe Rohde: So, the first photograph on the left shows some of those community members with a much younger me in the middle.

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00:26:38.590 --> 00:26:42.480

Zoe Rohde: And as you can imagine, the mistrust ran really deep.

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00:26:42.830 --> 00:26:50.389

Zoe Rohde: Creating conditions for people to sit together and work collaboratively really required a huge amount of care and intention.

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00:26:50.850 --> 00:26:57.469

Zoe Rohde: For the past 4 years, I've been working in the Scottish Government, and my work has focused on anti-racism policy.

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00:26:57.600 --> 00:27:04.239

Zoe Rohde: And this second photo is a recent one, where we established the Anti-Racism Observatory for Scotland.

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00:27:04.810 --> 00:27:16.009

Zoe Rohde: So across all of this work, you know, counter-xenophobia, community cohesion, anti-racism, the conversations, as you can imagine, can be incredibly challenging.

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00:27:16.310 --> 00:27:33.940

Zoe Rohde: They bring discomfort, strong emotions, and reactions ranging from defensiveness, aggression, or disengagement. And I've seen group dynamics completely broken down, where trust is completely disintegrated, leading to a lot of frustration and negativity.

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00:27:34.540 --> 00:27:52.179

Zoe Rohde: So, through these experiences, I've really taken a lot of time to think about what conditions have helped, or will help, in building a sustaining, open, respectable, and positive working relationships. And I'm going to try and share some of that today, and relate it to work in the civil service.

186

00:27:53.330 --> 00:27:54.899

Zoe Rohde: Next slide, please.

187

00:27:55.610 --> 00:28:15.549

Zoe Rohde: So, through my work in anti-racism, I've learned that before any meaningful work can really take place, we need to spend intentional time agreeing how we want to work together. And I think this can apply to any kind of team setting or group setting. So, setting shared expectations helps everyone feel heard, included, and able to contribute.

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00:28:16.020 --> 00:28:21.819

Zoe Rohde: we often, and I'm sure you've heard this, we talk about creating a psychologically safe space.

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00:28:22.000 --> 00:28:39.040

Zoe Rohde: Which means feeling able to speak up without fear of judgment. But what I've recognized through my work in anti-racism is that safety isn't the same for everyone. So what feels safe for me might feel really unsafe for someone else.

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00:28:39.420 --> 00:28:50.169

Zoe Rohde: So in my work, I focus on creating what we call safe and brave spaces. When I work with a group, I spend time exploring what safety and bravery look like in practice.

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00:28:50.420 --> 00:29:00.870

Zoe Rohde: And when we talk about creating a brave space, we're talking about a space where people are willing to, A, speak honestly, sit with comfort, sorry, sit with discomfort.

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00:29:01.130 --> 00:29:09.239

Zoe Rohde: be accountable for their impact. So it's not just about what their intention is, it's how... what they do, and how that impacts on others.

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00:29:09.630 --> 00:29:20.720

Zoe Rohde: It's about, people being willing to hear challenge, and also challenge, but challenge in a respectful way, and take risks in the service of learning.

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00:29:21.380 --> 00:29:36.329

Zoe Rohde: Now, these kind of spaces don't happen by accident. They're built through really focused intention, accountability, and shared commitment. So, a lot of time has to be spent on this, but if that time is spent, it can really have a positive impact.

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00:29:36.720 --> 00:29:43.980

Zoe Rohde: From that, then we co-create a ways of working agreement, which we can all stand behind and return to if things become difficult.

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00:29:44.120 --> 00:29:48.010

Zoe Rohde: And part of that is deciding how we handle disagreement and conflict.

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00:29:48.940 --> 00:30:07.279

Zoe Rohde: So, what I try to... to do is approach conflict with curiosity instead of defensiveness or aggression. And that's helped us to understand what's really going on underneath the surface, and I will return a bit later to this in the presentation around addressing conflict.

198

00:30:07.600 --> 00:30:20.689

Zoe Rohde: So, this process in itself around developing a shared ways of working agreement actually itself starts to build trust within the team or the group, because people start to see their perspectives shaping how the group operates.

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00:30:21.490 --> 00:30:23.320

Zoe Rohde: Next slide, please.

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00:30:25.270 --> 00:30:45.059

Zoe Rohde: So, in my current team, we make, and I'm sure you all probably have to do this as well, we set yearly objectives, and in our team, we make these visible to each other, and this gives us a shared view of the bigger picture and how our work supports the wider goal of, in our case, embedding anti-racism across the system.

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00:30:45.180 --> 00:30:49.049

Zoe Rohde: And clear, consistent communication is what makes that really effective.

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00:30:49.350 --> 00:30:54.150

Zoe Rohde: I've been in teams where communication has been really poor, especially top-down.

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00:30:54.390 --> 00:30:59.489

Zoe Rohde: And the impact was obvious. There was low motivation, confusion, and frustration.

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00:30:59.690 --> 00:31:03.590

Zoe Rohde: In contrast, if you see communication as a strength.

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00:31:03.730 --> 00:31:18.550

Zoe Rohde: which we do in our team. And we have weekly check-ins, which keep us aligned, help us spot pressures early, and allow us to connect as people. And we rotate sharing responsibilities, so everybody gets a turn. We use collaborative tools, like MSS Planner.

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00:31:18.890 --> 00:31:25.090

Zoe Rohde: And these... these kind of practices reduce ambiguity, build trust, and keep us focused.

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00:31:25.370 --> 00:31:34.110

Zoe Rohde: But there's also, like, a really strong relational side to communication, so our check-ins is not just about work, it's actually connecting

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00:31:34.300 --> 00:31:43.659

Zoe Rohde: As colleagues, as people, and having an understanding if somebody has support needs, or when they need... or when we need to recalibrate as a team.

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00:31:43.820 --> 00:31:45.820

Zoe Rohde: And how we're working together.

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00:31:46.150 --> 00:31:55.760

Zoe Rohde: And also, small acts of kindness and appreciation make a real difference, and if you kind of build this in, it can really help, especially during higher pressure periods.

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00:31:55.760 --> 00:32:09.540

Zoe Rohde: And together, as Nicholas was saying, they can help create a team culture that's aligned, connected, and purposeful. So it's kind of the accumulation of small things that can help build that culture.

212

00:32:10.210 --> 00:32:12.109

Zoe Rohde: Next, slide, please.

213

00:32:13.240 --> 00:32:23.770

Zoe Rohde: So, to deepen our understanding of how we work with one another, and how we each prefer to work and communicate, we also use a tool called the Manual of Me, which sets out

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00:32:24.060 --> 00:32:40.139

Zoe Rohde: our preferred ways of working, so it could be, like, our usual working hours and location, our preferred working style. For example, some people are very process-driven, and others like to see the big picture, others are detail-oriented, so if you have that understanding.

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00:32:40.140 --> 00:32:45.239

Zoe Rohde: it can really help, and as well as preferred ways to communicate. For example, I just, like.

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00:32:45.240 --> 00:32:53.180

Zoe Rohde: you know, sending off quick-fire Teams messages if I need something quickly, whereas I know other of my colleagues really find that irritating.

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00:32:53.310 --> 00:32:58.110

Zoe Rohde: And this manual also has preferred ways of receiving feedback.

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00:32:58.370 --> 00:33:09.530

Zoe Rohde: So, understanding these preferences, these personal preferences, improves how we work together, and it reduces the small frustrations and misunderstandings that can quite easily build into tension.

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00:33:10.210 --> 00:33:16.279

Zoe Rohde: And it helps us tailor our communications so interactions feel smoother, clearer, and more respectful.

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00:33:17.190 --> 00:33:18.590

Zoe Rohde: Next slide, please.

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00:33:19.920 --> 00:33:33.800

Zoe Rohde: So alongside our weekly check-ins, we also have monthly one-hour conversations with our line managers, and we use these conversations... sorry, we use conversation templates, like is on the screen, to guide this discussion.

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00:33:33.800 --> 00:33:44.359

Zoe Rohde: Now, everyone knows that these conversations are the space for really meaningful dialogue about performance, challenges, and progress. And so we each prepare in advance

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00:33:44.360 --> 00:33:52.309

Zoe Rohde: And that means we come ready to share openly, reflect honestly, and problem-solve collaboratively.

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00:33:52.520 --> 00:34:07.939

Zoe Rohde: And in the teams that I've worked with, it's also, it's something that I also now do as a line manager, is a time for the person that I'm line managing to reflect back to me how they feel I'm doing. So it's not just a one-way streak, it's a two-way process.

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00:34:08.210 --> 00:34:11.979

Zoe Rohde: And if you've done that kind of work at the beginning that I was talking about.

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00:34:12.520 --> 00:34:17.460

Zoe Rohde: There's a... there... there should be a kind of...

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00:34:17.659 --> 00:34:22.730

Zoe Rohde: Dynamic where people are more... more willing to be open and challenge.

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00:34:23.300 --> 00:34:33.909

Zoe Rohde: So these conversations are structured around questions such as well-being, successes, and lessons learned from the past month, as well as priorities for the month ahead.

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00:34:34.530 --> 00:34:45.089

Zoe Rohde: And these conversations are more... are far more than just routine check-ins. When these templates are used consistently, they build a rich and reliable record of achievements, challenges, and growth.

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00:34:45.389 --> 00:34:55.470

Zoe Rohde: And this can be incredibly useful, not only for ongoing development, but also, you know, for job applications and for interviews or promotional conversations.

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00:34:55.480 --> 00:35:14.420

Zoe Rohde: So ultimately, if you really engage and set aside the time for these kind of sessions, they can help strengthen clarity, support, and accountability. And they also ensure that well-being and development remain central to how we work, rather than something we only address when problems arise.

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00:35:15.390 --> 00:35:17.409

Zoe Rohde: Next slide, please.

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00:35:20.190 --> 00:35:25.750

Zoe Rohde: We also prioritize, employee passports and personal learning plans.

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00:35:25.760 --> 00:35:41.659

Zoe Rohde: Treating them as essential tools rather than optional extras, even though they are voluntary in Scottish Government. So we use these tools, and we talk about them at the monthly conversations, so that well-being, learning, and development stay central to how we work.

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00:35:41.800 --> 00:35:57.540

Zoe Rohde: The passport offers a structured, supportive way to discuss circumstances that may affect work, such as health conditions or caring responsibilities. And regular reviews help us to identify and implement adjustments quickly, enabling people to perform better.

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00:35:58.370 --> 00:36:06.530

Zoe Rohde: So when used consistently, they build a much deeper understanding, and they build that sense of trust between team members.

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00:36:06.620 --> 00:36:20.860

Zoe Rohde: So, please feel free to share in the chat if you have any similar tools, and whether they're effective. The Personneling Learning Plan helps set clear learning and development goals and ensures that these are actively discussed each month.

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00:36:21.200 --> 00:36:35.899

Zoe Rohde: So, through using these tools, it shows that growth, well-being, and aspirations genuinely matter, and this consistency helps create that culture I was talking about where people feel valued, supported, and motivated to contribute their best.

239

00:36:36.870 --> 00:36:38.270

Zoe Rohde: Next slide, please.

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00:36:43.250 --> 00:36:49.520

Zoe Rohde: So earlier I mentioned the role of curiosity, especially when things get tense. So...

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00:36:49.520 --> 00:37:09.379

Zoe Rohde: as you will have heard from my introduction, over the years, I've found myself in really challenging, situations, challenging meetings where conflict has really escalated right in front of me. And to be quite honest, I felt like a deer in headlights, and my heart was pounding, my hands were sweating, it was incredibly tense, and I just didn't know what to do.

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00:37:09.820 --> 00:37:22.679

Zoe Rohde: So as a result of that, because I don't want to have to go through that again, I've learned a few techniques that I think really help in that moment, particularly when you might be between two people who are... who are arguing.

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00:37:23.440 --> 00:37:32.940

Zoe Rohde: So a good tip is to intervene gently and slow things down. And I ask if people are then willing to try something to support understanding.

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00:37:33.000 --> 00:37:45.740

Zoe Rohde: And I invite them to stop and summarize what the other person is saying. Not to criticize them, or not to critique what they're saying, but simply to reflect back what that person is saying.

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00:37:45.890 --> 00:38:01.779

Zoe Rohde: And then we check that understanding with the person, and then we switch roles. And sometimes I'll ask other questions, like, you know, what do you think this person's feeling, or where do you agree? Or what's actually at the core of this disagreement?

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00:38:02.000 --> 00:38:16.919

Zoe Rohde: And that simple shift really helps to reset their dynamic, and it can encourage real listening. Not listening to respond, or holding a really rigid position, but listening to understand, and that can often change the conversation entirely.

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00:38:17.820 --> 00:38:24.769

Zoe Rohde: I've also had to manage performance issues, which I think we all can agree can be really uncomfortable.

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00:38:24.900 --> 00:38:25.590

Zoe Rohde: But...

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00:38:25.760 --> 00:38:32.220

Zoe Rohde: I've learned that conflict isn't automatically something negative. It can actually be a real opportunity for insight and growth.

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00:38:32.560 --> 00:38:51.669

Zoe Rohde: So, I mean, this is where I think, Nicholas, some of your tools would be really useful, if you want to practice, is before these conversations, what I do is I try to prepare myself. So, I will, if I know I've got to deal with something challenging, I will center myself, I will try to get calm.

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00:38:52.250 --> 00:38:59.559

Zoe Rohde: And everybody will have their own unique way of doing that. But I have a very clear understanding of the purpose of the meeting.

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00:38:59.560 --> 00:39:15.489

Zoe Rohde: I will check in with my own emotions and start to think what might trigger me in this meeting, and I think ahead about how I want the conversation to go. And I have a range of kind of open-ended questions that I want to ask, but with a key understanding of what it is that I want to achieve at the end.

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00:39:16.080 --> 00:39:23.810

Zoe Rohde: By opening... asking opening-ended questions, it gives much more opportunity for the other person to share their perspective.

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00:39:24.060 --> 00:39:36.249

Zoe Rohde: And if we get stuck, I'll pause, and I'll look. You know, we might have to take 5 minutes if things escalate, but yeah, I try to recognize when I myself am triggered, and when I need a moment.

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00:39:36.730 --> 00:39:46.290

Zoe Rohde: So, as you all know, there are many reasons people underperform. It could be health, personal circumstances, unclear objectives, poor induction, and so on.

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00:39:46.730 --> 00:39:57.370

Zoe Rohde: But that's why the curiosity matters, because approaching the conversation openly and without accusations, it really helps us understand what's going on underneath.

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00:39:57.950 --> 00:40:08.090

Zoe Rohde: So once we understand the issue, we can then look at the solutions, whether that's adjustments in the employee passport, or development needs built into the personal learning plan.

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00:40:09.520 --> 00:40:19.619

Zoe Rohde: I mean, I've been in teams where none of these kind of tools have been used. There is no structured conversations, no clarity, and no space to discuss well-being.

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00:40:19.770 --> 00:40:28.410

Zoe Rohde: And as a result, people felt really undervalued. They felt completely directionless, and they felt really frustrated, and there was no trust or respect.

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00:40:30.990 --> 00:40:42.279

Zoe Rohde: Yeah, so I mean, I think if these kind of... these tools are used meaningfully and routinely, and they're built into the kind of conversations, I think they can have a huge impact.

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00:40:42.830 --> 00:40:48.849

Zoe Rohde: So moving on to the last slide, or second last slide, on trust and reliability.

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00:40:48.980 --> 00:40:55.089

Zoe Rohde: Trust, I think, is the foundation of effective teamwork, and when it breaks down, everything becomes so much harder.

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00:40:55.550 --> 00:40:59.000

Zoe Rohde: And trust grows through consistency, whether that's

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00:40:59.580 --> 00:41:04.500

Zoe Rohde: as I talked about earlier, the clear shared ways of working, which helps.

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00:41:04.790 --> 00:41:23.259

Zoe Rohde: But it also comes from showing up reliably and transparently. So, meeting deadlines, or when you can, explain why you can, so that people understand what your constraints are, and they can start to consider the impact of delays. And people learn that they can then depend on us.

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00:41:23.450 --> 00:41:30.500

Zoe Rohde: Being transparent about decisions gives other people context, and it reduces assumptions and supports smoother collaboration.

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00:41:30.810 --> 00:41:38.320

Zoe Rohde: So when teams consistently demonstrate reliability, transparency, fairness, and recognition, trust then deepens.

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00:41:38.750 --> 00:41:43.649

Zoe Rohde: People feel more confident sharing ideas, offering feedback, and supporting one another.

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00:41:43.750 --> 00:41:58.969

Zoe Rohde: And also, of course, recognizing successes and individual contribution also really helps to build that sense of teamwork and trust and people feeling seen and feeling valued, which is just so important, I think, when you work with people.

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00:41:59.670 --> 00:42:02.810

Zoe Rohde: So just the last slide, please.

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00:42:04.210 --> 00:42:17.659

Zoe Rohde: I'm gonna end with a quote from the poet Maya Angelou, which I think is an important reminder for us all. People will forget what you said, they'll forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel.

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00:42:17.940 --> 00:42:20.749

Zoe Rohde: Thank you, and happy to take questions.

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00:42:22.740 --> 00:42:33.889

Christopher Rosselot: Thank you so much for that presentation, Zoe, and what a great quote to end on, too. It's also great to see examples of people in the chat who have used the tools and routines, whether it's the manuals.

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00:42:33.890 --> 00:42:51.160

Christopher Rosselot: Or the monthly check-ins, the quality conversations that you speak about, the people who've used those. So, remember to keep dropping in any questions you have for our speakers here in the Zoom Q&A. And just before we do dive into those questions.

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00:42:51.160 --> 00:43:11.380

Christopher Rosselot: I want to let you know that we have also curated a great follow-on resource to today's topic that we think you'll find useful, and a couple of you have been asking for it. It's a short article written by Nick, which provides more details about the Smart Talk Toolkit. The article shares practical guidance on how to use AI to prepare for difficult conversations.

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00:43:11.380 --> 00:43:19.700

Christopher Rosselot: To receive that link to the article, go to the Life and Government community after the event, and leave a comment on the post penned at the top of the page.

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00:43:19.700 --> 00:43:26.659

Christopher Rosselot: We'll send you the resource by email after the event. My colleague has also posted a link to that thread in the chat.

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00:43:26.700 --> 00:43:40.220

Christopher Rosselot: And now to getting to your questions. So, first, Zoe, I want to come back to you. Could you share, and this is a question from Rebecca, can you share some examples of those open-ended questions that you use?

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00:43:41.910 --> 00:43:43.010

Zoe Rohde: Mmm...

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00:43:43.120 --> 00:43:59.540

Zoe Rohde: I mean, it will depend on the context, but I... I guess, I noticed you were... you've been coming in late, is there... is there something going on outside of work that you'd like to... to bring to this conversation?

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00:43:59.640 --> 00:44:07.559

Zoe Rohde: You know, just opening up, making somebody feel Safe and willing to share

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00:44:08.190 --> 00:44:13.250

Zoe Rohde: you know, being curious about whatever the issue is. So I think, yeah, those...

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00:44:14.650 --> 00:44:16.400

Christopher Rosselot: No, perfect, thank you.

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00:44:16.680 --> 00:44:35.329

Christopher Rosselot: We had a question, we had two similar questions from Olivier and from Heidi, and this question, one for each of you, so I'll kind of combine it. How can you reach the learners who actually need to practice respectful communication instead of preaching to the choir? And, you know, kind of on the notion that sometimes bullies

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00:44:35.330 --> 00:44:47.430

Christopher Rosselot: don't see problems with their actions, and then how do we practice conflict resolution with people who are not self-aware and don't seem to get what the issues are? Nick, I'll start with you first, and then Zoe, if you want to add on after that.

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00:44:48.560 --> 00:45:01.779

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So, exactly that is the reason I created the toolkit, to help people become self-aware. And the beauty of a political is that everybody can have it. I just emailed Christopher with the,

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00:45:01.780 --> 00:45:08.720

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: format, for the diary, so you can ask for it. So that helps people

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00:45:08.820 --> 00:45:24.719

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: understand themselves. How would you get them there? A lot of us are managers, there are a lot of senior managers, as I know, in this conversation. We should ask them to practice it, to take it, to introduce it to their departments.

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00:45:25.440 --> 00:45:30.719

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Each one of us can take it and ask their manager to use it.

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00:45:30.870 --> 00:45:48.810

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: we can do it, and give the example ourselves. And it really helps. It really brings up all possible behaviors, from the smallest, microaggressions and sensibilities to the worst kinds of behavior.

291

00:45:48.940 --> 00:45:58.490

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So, that's the only way. We need... is there any question during staff survey how we can improve it? We promote the toolkit.

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00:45:58.580 --> 00:46:14.170

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Is there any issue where we go with a complaint or a manager and say, listen, this person's bullied me, but, you know, they might not understand that it's this journal they can use. You don't need to know the results, as long as they use it.

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00:46:14.170 --> 00:46:25.270

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And when we start, and as I said, this has been practiced in schools to help children understand the adverse effects of their, behavior. And then.

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00:46:25.320 --> 00:46:36.579

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: If we can gather the results, and you can contact me, we can write an article on it, and we can insist that this is a solution that has been proven through practice in the civil service.

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00:46:36.660 --> 00:46:44.140

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: And in this way, a political would really help us Create a solution that,

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00:46:44.700 --> 00:47:02.309

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: will reach, as you said, those that are completely unaware and those that are, quite happily go... I had a manager myself who used to say, quite happily in front of everybody, there is no law against bullying in Northern Ireland. And he used to belt that, and nobody, you know.

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00:47:02.310 --> 00:47:11.320

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: went to see him and say, you know, Azar might be quite interested about your views on bullying, and we just let him, and he did bully everybody, and...

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00:47:11.870 --> 00:47:31.560

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: I thought, we didn't do him a favor, we didn't do ourselves a favor. If we had the tool and said, listen, went to his manager and said, listen, he's saying this thing, perhaps he needs to reflect on himself, needs to do something, needs to understand what effect he has on other people, and that would have helped everybody.

299

00:47:38.510 --> 00:47:54.000

Christopher Rosselot: Zoe, coming back to you, I don't know if you want to add anything on how to make people aware, but kind of sticking with this engagement theme, we had a question from an anonymous participant. We have tried a lot of these tools, but the problem is not everyone

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00:47:54.000 --> 00:47:59.800

Christopher Rosselot: engages with it. Or the problem is that if not everyone engages with it, it fails.

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00:47:59.800 --> 00:48:06.370

Christopher Rosselot: So, do you have any tips to get people and, you know, a majority of an organization to engage?

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00:48:09.950 --> 00:48:20.170

Zoe Rohde: I think it needs to come from top down, trickle down. There needs to be those directives, but I think it can also be requests made up the way.

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00:48:21.050 --> 00:48:31.430

Zoe Rohde: I don't think there's harm in that, in saying, you know, voicing an opinion to say I think we could do a lot better working, you know, more collaboratively,

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00:48:32.880 --> 00:48:34.989

Zoe Rohde: And bringing that to the team.

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00:48:35.130 --> 00:48:36.960

Zoe Rohde: Making suggestions.

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00:48:37.470 --> 00:48:39.859

Zoe Rohde: And, you know, just pilot and see.

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00:48:41.150 --> 00:48:44.450

Zoe Rohde: And I think spending time, like I said, on...

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00:48:44.820 --> 00:48:54.519

Zoe Rohde: And I agree, I think practice makes perfect. I mean, dealing with, kind of, conflict and difficult conversations is really difficult, and it just does take practice.

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00:48:54.630 --> 00:49:04.050

Zoe Rohde: And, like I said, I mean, I think that feeling of your heart pounding and all the rest of it, it becomes easier with time when you put it into practice, and I think you can do that

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00:49:04.410 --> 00:49:19.110

Zoe Rohde: By having those kind of... you can start to have difficult conversations in a team when it's not kind of a charged situation, because people come with such diverse perspectives, so that ultimately, you know, there will be that discomfort, and you can explore that.

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00:49:19.270 --> 00:49:23.049

Zoe Rohde: In a way that is not going to be charged at the time, and then you can...

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00:49:23.180 --> 00:49:27.420

Zoe Rohde: I think that's possibly a way of kind of starting these conversations.

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00:49:30.320 --> 00:49:32.590

Christopher Rosselot: For both of you,

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00:49:33.550 --> 00:49:48.709

Christopher Rosselot: this question, you know, I think you just touched on emotion and how difficult, you know, sometimes conversations can be, right? That's been the whole theme of today. But for both of you, how can you build emotional resilience, to navigate conflict without

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00:49:48.990 --> 00:49:59.059

Christopher Rosselot: you know, getting overly emotional, especially if it... especially if that conflict or the source of that conflict escalates. So how can you build that emotional resilience?

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00:49:59.270 --> 00:50:03.710

Christopher Rosselot: Feel free, if every one of you wants to hop in first.

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00:50:04.310 --> 00:50:05.150

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Can I go?

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00:50:05.790 --> 00:50:07.240

Zoe Rohde: Yeah, Nicholas, on your go.

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00:50:08.070 --> 00:50:14.130

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: I was planning to write a fourth article, and the fourth article would have been on confidence.

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00:50:14.410 --> 00:50:19.829

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Because that's where the problem is. And this is not, victim blaming at all.

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00:50:19.920 --> 00:50:37.659

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Because I've been in that, situation. Have no confidence, let things escalate, get myself angry, and have a big, big, big argument. Instead, if you have the confidence, and if you speak, and speak at the appropriate moment.

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00:50:37.830 --> 00:50:40.809

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: When... when... when the problem just starts.

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00:50:41.420 --> 00:51:00.590

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: that will help de-escalate things. But we don't help our people, we don't help ourselves to have confidence, and this is a big conversation, and that's why I have not written that article, because it requires quite a lot of, introspection. First of all, myself, because I don't...

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00:51:00.780 --> 00:51:11.859

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: I don't always pick out, and it needs to understand how we can help people build this... this confidence. And of course, it is a

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00:51:13.040 --> 00:51:15.939

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: A question of the organization and of the team.

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00:51:16.500 --> 00:51:36.109

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Because you can have a team like Joyce, where you can go and speak, and there would be no consequences, and there are other teams where you cannot speak, where you think the consequences, where you think, will I be victimized? And of course, as a civil service, both here, Canada, and everywhere else, we do take measures to avoid victimization, but it happens.

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00:51:36.190 --> 00:51:46.629

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: So, what we need to do is to help people understand why they're not speaking out, and how we can build their confidence. And, of course, in this modern world.

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00:51:46.630 --> 00:51:57.319

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: there are problems, and I did... I did write, actually, I have written a small article on confidence, announcing the larger one. I said, there is a question of language.

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00:51:57.320 --> 00:52:03.530

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Some of us do not have English as a first language. We are afraid what we might say in our

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00:52:03.720 --> 00:52:09.399

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Minds might translate in something like frogs coming out of your mouth, so...

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00:52:09.410 --> 00:52:24.969

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: you have bilingual nations, you have other situations where language is a barrier. So, we need to understand how... what sort of workforce we have, and how we can help that workforce to be confident enough

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00:52:25.140 --> 00:52:26.750

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: To raise the issue.

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00:52:26.920 --> 00:52:30.730

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: when it happens. Before all this...

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00:52:31.130 --> 00:52:45.910

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: Boiling happens that makes things worse, and that actually puts the victim in a much worse position than they should be, because they have to deal with that anger, which is a righteous anger, which is absolutely justified, but

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00:52:46.430 --> 00:53:01.310

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: it's not expressed appropriately, or it's not expressed in a civil way, and they appear as the one that they are losing their temper, as the one that, oh, that's the crunk, he's getting angry, but of course he's getting angry, he's getting bullied every day, but

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00:53:01.420 --> 00:53:05.429

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: We don't see that. So, what we need to do is

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00:53:05.610 --> 00:53:14.060

Dr Nikolaos Barkas: to really learn to build confidence. First of all, ourselves, and then as teams, we need to make this as a priority.

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00:53:19.160 --> 00:53:21.099

Christopher Rosselot: Zoe, did you want to add anything?

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00:53:21.480 --> 00:53:22.050

Zoe Rohde: Yeah.

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00:53:22.440 --> 00:53:33.820

Zoe Rohde: I totally agree. I think just in terms of one's own emotional resilience, I think is having people that you can turn to, for support.

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00:53:33.820 --> 00:53:46.230

Zoe Rohde: when things feel really difficult, and if that's not your line manager, somebody in your team, having other people that you can go to and talk about the issues, I think, is really helpful. It's definitely helped me.

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00:53:46.550 --> 00:53:50.800

Zoe Rohde: And I think... I think another kind of tip is...

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00:53:51.430 --> 00:54:10.459

Zoe Rohde: is rather than calling out behavior, which can shut people down, or can kind of create that also kind of further aggressive, it's like calling in. It's that curiosity. It's being curious about somebody's behavior as to why they're behaving. And when you approach something like that, it can actually...

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00:54:11.170 --> 00:54:17.009

Zoe Rohde: It can also help diffuse the situation, and you can actually start to kind of understand what's going on underneath.

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00:54:21.170 --> 00:54:36.070

Christopher Rosselot: Well, thank you so much to both of you. That's all the time we have for questions today. If you have further questions, and there were a lot more, as always, feel free to post them in the Life and Government community and continue the conversation there.

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00:54:36.280 --> 00:54:55.250

Christopher Rosselot: We've had incredible wisdom from both Nick and Zoe, and I'd like you to join me in giving a round of applause with the emoji reactions to both of our speakers. And most importantly, thank you to you, an audience investing in learning and being so engaged and supportive in this topic.

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00:54:55.390 --> 00:55:01.859

Christopher Rosselot: The team is going to pull up a couple of quick polls. First, we want to know what you'd like to see next.

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00:55:02.440 --> 00:55:12.630

Christopher Rosselot: This is a more general question used to support us in continuing to develop learning events that meet your needs. So, what would you like to learn about at an apolitical event?

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00:55:12.830 --> 00:55:30.279

Christopher Rosselot: Building lightweight dashboards for team visibility, reaching faster decisions with colleagues, using data to forecast workload and capacity, turning discussions into follow-through. Something else, feel free to share it in the chat. Thank you so much for helping us figure out

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00:55:30.280 --> 00:55:33.199

Christopher Rosselot: What learning will be good for you.

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00:55:40.510 --> 00:55:49.620

Christopher Rosselot: And thank you again for continuing to show appreciation for Nick and Zoe for sharing their experience, and their insights with us today.

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00:55:50.510 --> 00:55:59.599

Christopher Rosselot: And finally, we'd like to hear how you felt about today, which will help us continue improving our content. We'd really appreciate your responses.

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00:55:59.630 --> 00:56:11.260

Christopher Rosselot: These ones won't be shared with the rest of the attendees, just for us here at Apolitical. So on a scale of 1 to 10, rank your agreement, let us know how good of a use of time you thought today was.

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00:56:11.500 --> 00:56:26.590

Christopher Rosselot: Before you go, and while you're responding to that poll, I want to share a few more events that you can register for to join us again soon. If you're not available to be there live, remember that you can always register for the event in order to get the recording to catch up whenever suits you.

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00:56:26.620 --> 00:56:40.849

Christopher Rosselot: Next Wednesday, we have Career Moves, how to get your first senior role on progressing to senior positions in government. In two weeks, we have Communicating More Strategically at work on making your ideas clear, compelling, and influential.

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00:56:40.850 --> 00:56:47.950

Christopher Rosselot: And then next month, we have Building Habits to Reduce Work Stress on Managing Pressure and Avoiding Burnout at Work.

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00:56:49.290 --> 00:57:01.529

Christopher Rosselot: Okay, that is all we have time for today. We hope you found it helpful, and we want to say a huge thank you again to Nick and Zoe, to everyone who's made today happen, and to you for taking time out of your busy days.

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00:57:01.530 --> 00:57:11.159

Christopher Rosselot: Keep an eye out for the email coming your way with today's recording and resources, and we hope to see you at another apolitical event again very soon.

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00:57:11.160 --> 00:57:12.510

Christopher Rosselot: Have a great day.

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00:57:12.550 --> 00:57:13.610

Christopher Rosselot: Goodbye!