

collegevine

November 30, 2023

Difficult conversations

The weekly

VineDown

with Emily Smith





The world's largest network connecting students with colleges.

- **2M+** students and a new one joins every 30 sec
- **400+** colleges actively recruiting students
- **4,000+** school counselors
- **Thousands** of student<>college connections made every week

The screenshot shows a student profile for Alina Johnson. At the top, there is a circular profile picture of a young woman with dark hair, smiling. To the right of the photo is the name "Alina Johnson" and two buttons: "Accept connection" (blue) and "Ignore" (grey). Below the name, there are filters for "Class of '24" and "Female". To the right of these filters are icons for messaging, calling, and viewing parent/guardian info. The profile lists the location as "Bentonville, AR 72713" with a note that the median family income is \$116,660, compared to a national average of \$85,028. The school is "Montgomery High school", a public rural-fringe school. The student is studying "Criminology" and has career interests in "Doctor" and "Criminal Justice".

Insights

Persona Explorer

The Explorer is a quintessential liberal arts student; they value a smaller learning environment to help them explore a variety of pathways for their future.

- Admission chances: 77%
- College affinity: 98%
- Environment Index: 36%

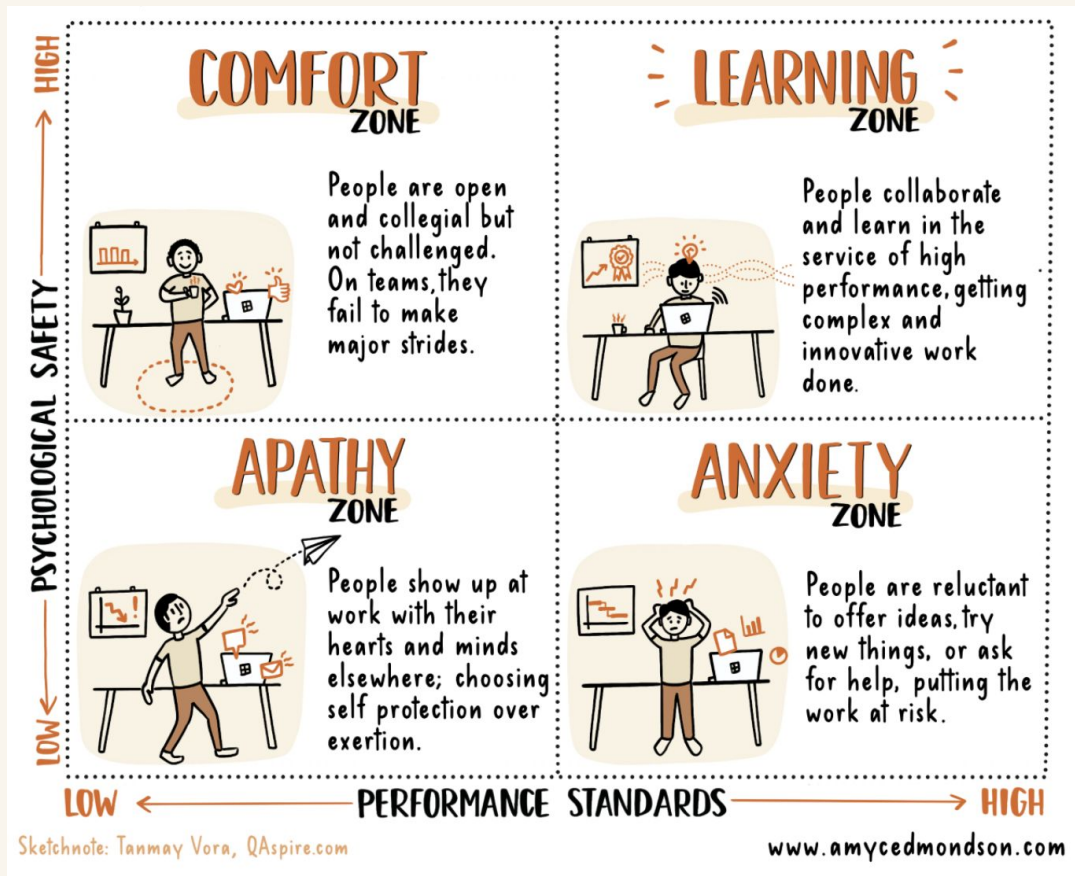
I care about

- Academic rigor
- Affordability
- Ease of switching majors

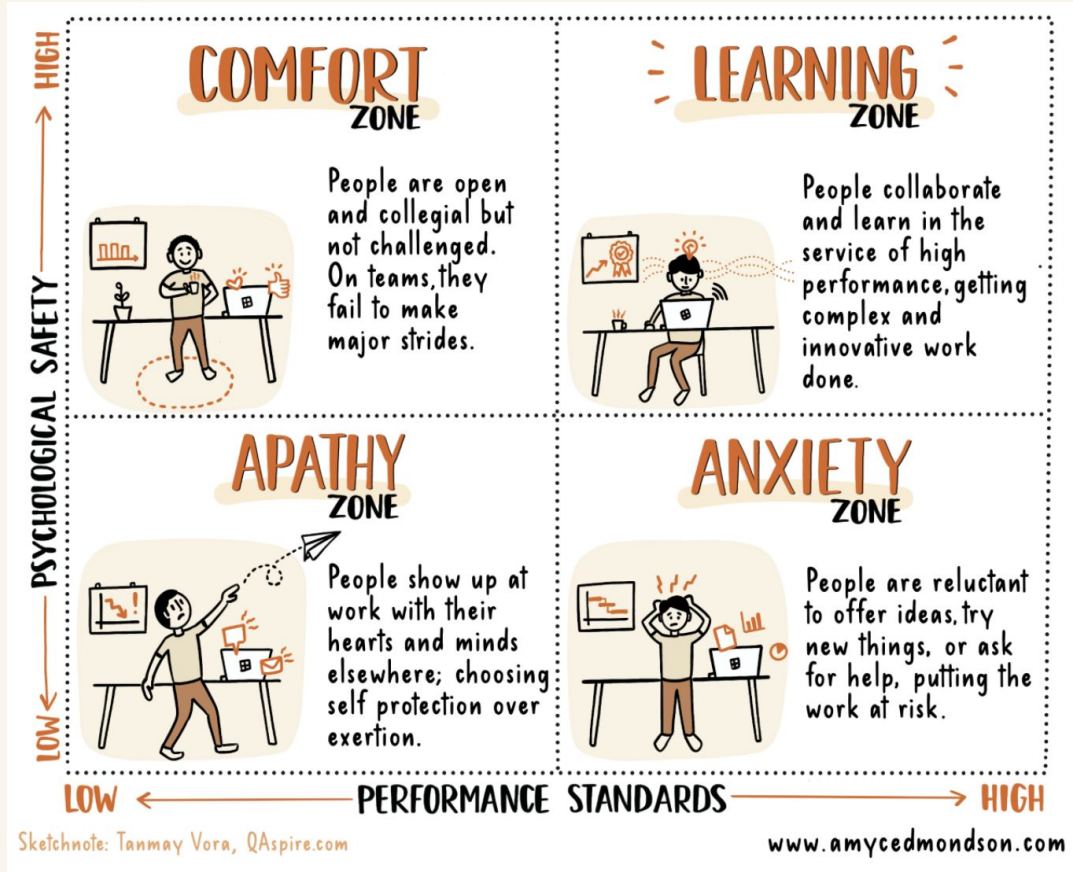
Conflict can lead to escalations at worst and difficult conversations at best



Conflict & Psychological Safety



Conflict & Psychological Safety



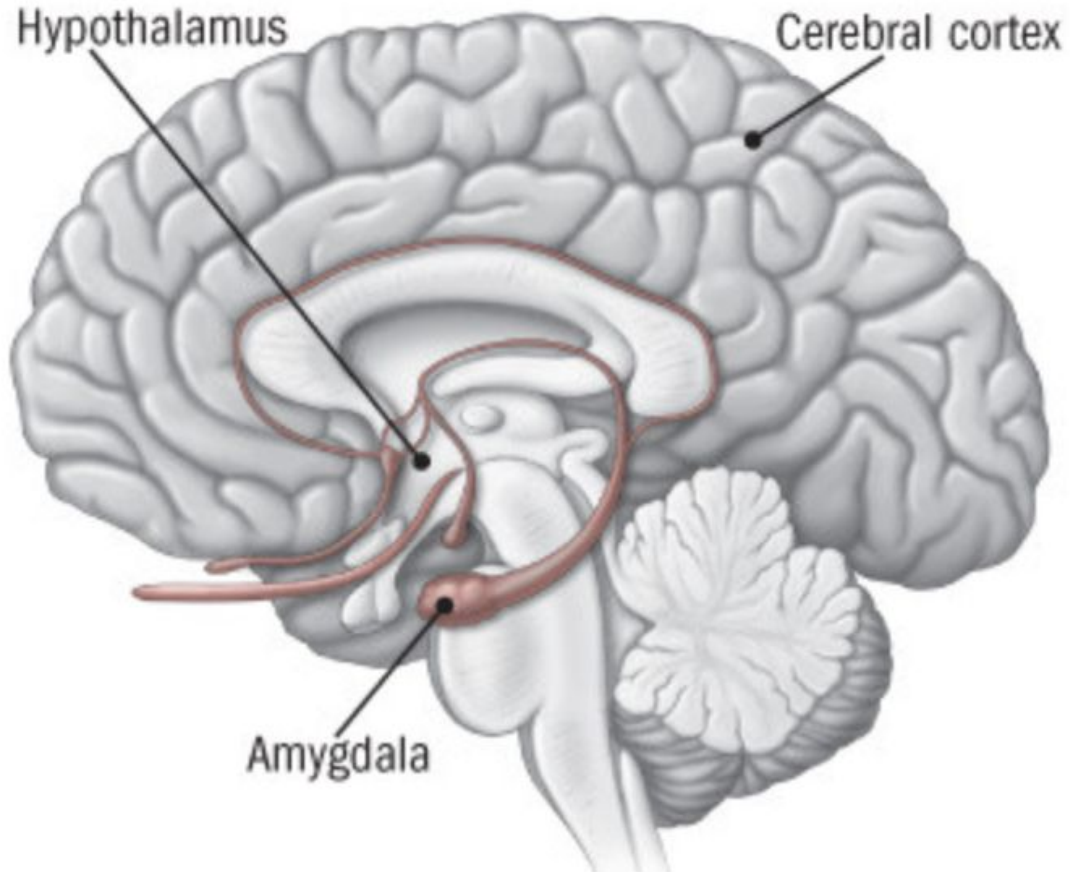
Types of Conflict

Type of conflict	What it is
Relationship	A clash of personalities
Task	A disagreement over the intended goal of a task or project
Process	A disagreement over how to carry out a project or task
Status	A disagreement over who's in charge or gets credit for the work

When the storm rolls in



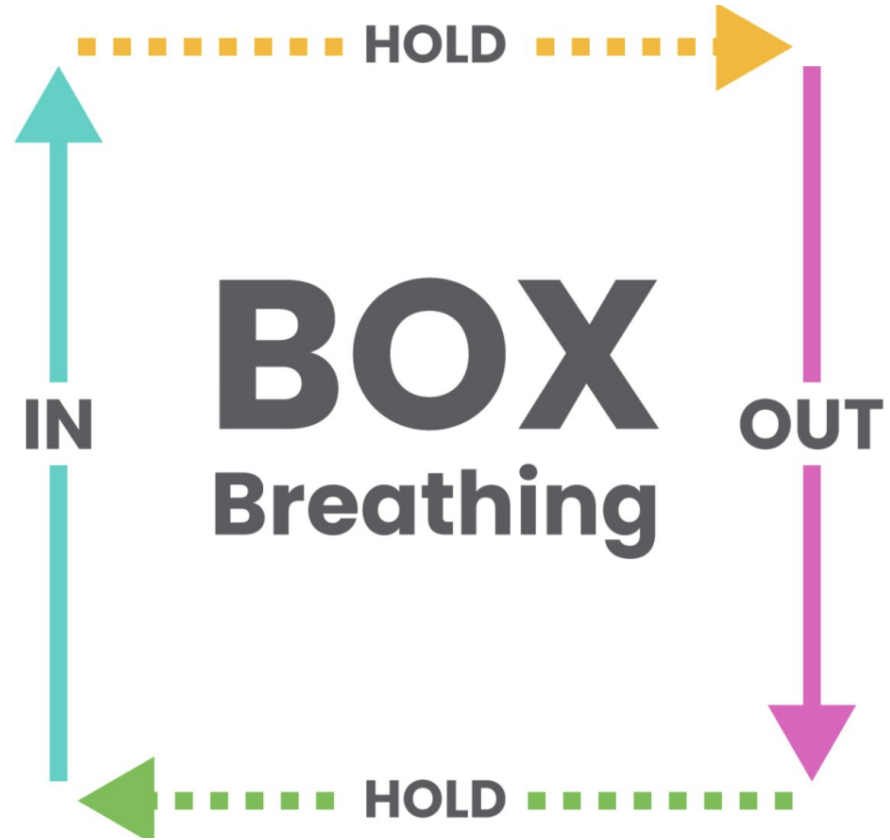
MMM. Brains.



Put on your airmask

1. Breathe
2. Body
3. Mantra
4. Label
5. Break

1. Breathe



2. Body



Put your head where your feet are.

3. Mantra

- “Go to neutral”
- “This isn’t about me”
- “This is about work”
- “This will pass”

5. Break



The words



Take it to Action

1. Ask questions to clarify
2. Say it back
3. Validate (with/without agreeing)

“Given that you see X, I am hearing/feeling that you think/feel Y. Is that right?”

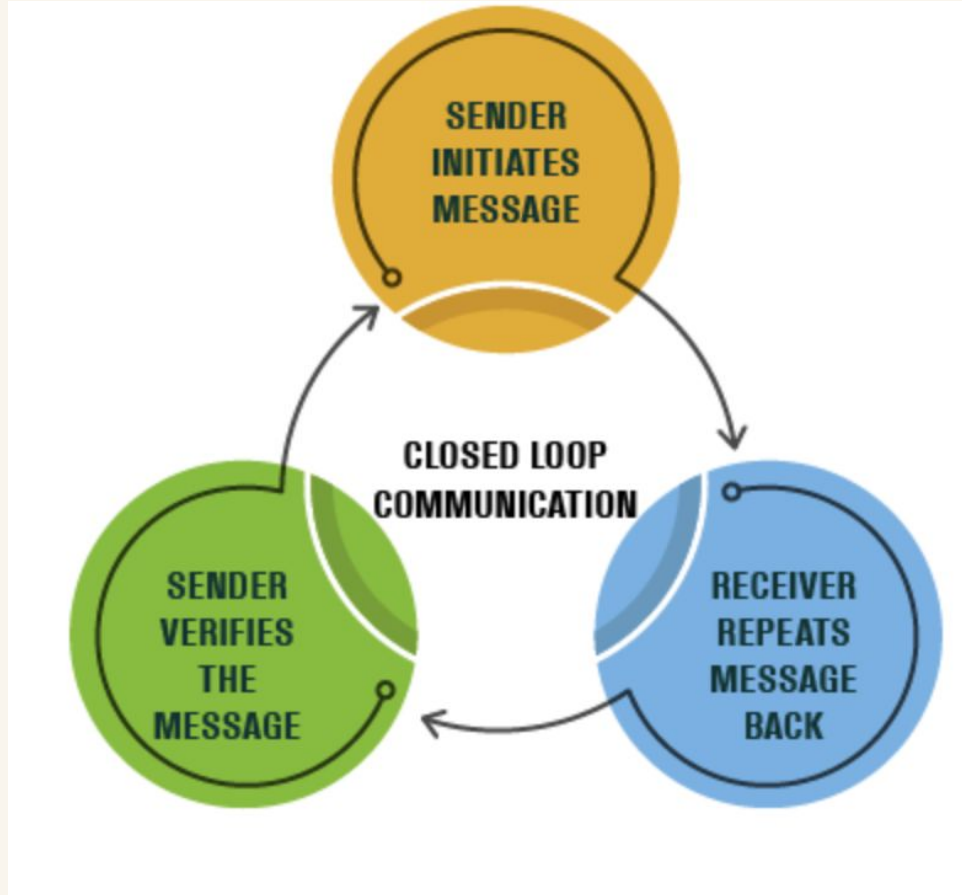
Next Steps

1. Co-create next steps (or at least get buy-in)
2. Ideally get enthusiastic agreement
3. Celebrate the agreement

Escalations & Feedback



Escalations: Closed Loop Communication



Closed Loop / Corrective Action Template

- Summarize
 - This is the WHAT
 - “At this time on this date, we tried to do X, and expected 1, but 2 happened instead.”
- Root Cause
 - This is the WHY
 - “This happened because... “
- Corrective Action
 - What we did, or plan to do to correct the WHY
- Next Steps
 - How we’ll continue to communicate *and when*
- Optional Apology
 - Not always part of it but always generous

Giving Developmental Feedback

Observation

Observable behavior
without judgement

When you said ...
I observed you doing ...
When you presented ...
During the meeting you ...

Impact

How you or others
were affected

The way I was impacted ...
I noticed that it impacted the team by...
The impact that it had was ...

Check

Check for
understanding

Let me check, do you remember it differently?
How did you see it?
Did you get the result you wanted?

Suggestion

Provide alternatives

What would you suggest?
I would consider saying/doing ...
You might want to think about ...
I suggest you try ...

Agreement

Set Expectations of
Opportunities

What do you recommend as next steps?
Given this, we agree to ...
Here's what I expect ...

Reflect

Learn

ASK FOR FEEDBACK



Sources: All of the Amys

