

Why Bonding Conversations Are an Essential Practice for Teams

According to Gershfeld & Sedehi, the practice of creating bonding conversations provides individuals a safe haven and secure base.¹ It means making the space necessary for individuals to deepen their emotions, fears, and needs. When we provide a sense of comfort and support without judgment or solution, we strengthen the connection and add positivity to the culture as a whole. This matters not only because it makes them feel safe, connected, and courageous, but because we need it too.

As the team leader, we carry a great responsibility to keep our team connected and keep our connection with each of our team members. Our fears and worries may be difficult to share with others as we want to come across as strong and confident. However, creating a deeper connection with the team will strengthen their abilities to hold that space for you as the team leader when you need it. When you can have a safe space for others, they create a safe space for you.

The very nature of bonding conversations fuels connections and becomes part of the change process in creating a positive and nurturing culture, widening individuals' perspectives of the need to connect with each other. It is about deepening emotional experience and shaping accessibility, responsiveness, and engagement, pulling people closer. It reveals the universal human need for reaching and responding in moments of vulnerability and stress. The complexity of dealing with disconnections in times of uncertainty adds stress to daily interactions. Why would any of us choose to be alone on a journey when it becomes hard?

These experiences make everyone feel isolated and alone, but it does not have to be that way. If we want our people to feel empowered, it is incumbent upon us to lead the change and implement bonding conversations into our traditional way of interacting with each other. If we want others to take risks and share their emotions, it is incumbent upon us to create opportunities to create safety and accept their care and support when offered. Eventually, creating bonding conversations will not be "one more thing to do." It will be the crucial step that makes all of the other actions easier to do. When we are connected, we become stronger. We work better. We create and innovate. We can move forward and engage with others. When we are connected with our team, our relationships become more durable, and the organization's mission becomes more explicit. With every bonding conversation, nurturing connections becomes natural and with less effort. And while no one else can carry the responsibility of a leader, it is in all of us to commit to creating and forging healthy and thriving cultures.



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¹ Gershfeld, L, and Sedehi, R. (2021) *Emotional Connection, The EmC Strategy*, New York, NY: Business Expert Press