



Chartered Institute of  
Internal Auditors

# Today's Event : *Aspire | Handling Difficult Client Situations - Challenges and Strategies*

The virtual event will be starting shortly, at 17:15

- We recommend you join with computer audio for the best sound quality.
- If you have any questions throughout the event, please submit them through the Q&A section, where they will be addressed during the Q&A periods of the event and during the panel discussion. If your question is for one of the panellist please would you type # their name and then your question.
- During this event we will launch a poll, which will appear with answers to select on the right hand side of your screen.
- We are recording today's session and the link to the recording will be made available on the Chartered IIA website within the week.

# Aspire | Handling Difficult Client Situations - Challenges and Strategies

3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020



Chartered Institute of  
Internal Auditors





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**Aspire | Handling Difficult Client  
Situations - Challenges and  
Strategies**

Ben Rawal MBA CMIIA  
Aspire Consulting Solutions  
3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020



# Today's session

Introduction

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The Power of Communication

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Rapport and Emotional Intelligence

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Common Mistakes and Strategies for Success

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And Finally...

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Summary

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Question Time

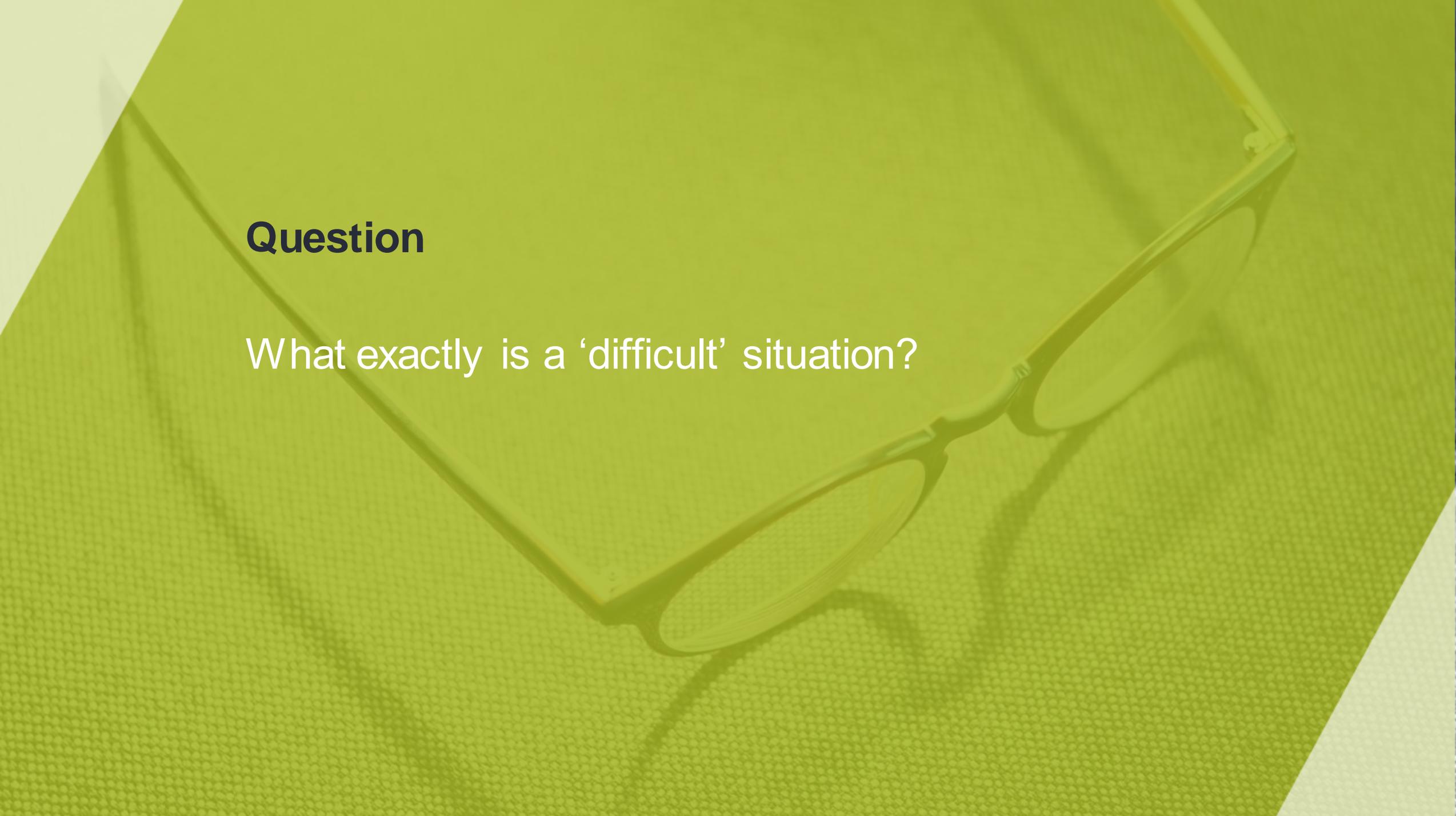
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# Your Presenter

## Ben Rawal MBA CMIIA

- Began professional career as a trainee internal auditor.
- Subsequently held two 'Head of' positions, leading a team of audit and risk professionals.
- Now supports businesses improve their compliance by developing governance and behaviours, and through enhancing leadership skills.
- Supported my career through specialist non-technical training in areas including Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) and executive coaching.



A pair of glasses with a thin frame is positioned diagonally across the frame. The background is a green textured surface, possibly a book cover or a piece of fabric, with a white corner visible in the top-left and bottom-right. The glasses are slightly out of focus, and their reflection is visible on the surface below them.

## **Question**

What exactly is a 'difficult' situation?

# A 'difficult' situation

It is important to note that a situation that is 'difficult' for one individual, may not be so for someone else.

It is therefore unique to the individual that **experiences the situation.**

- For example, some of us may enjoy dealing with individuals that are argumentative....they don't perceive this as 'difficult'
- Others will avoid such circumstances due to the level of uncomfortableness that this can bring

Common 'difficult' situations for many...

- Disagreements
- Displays of emotion
- A threat to your personal values
- Unacceptable behaviours

Today, we will explore some of the common strategies and behaviours used by individuals that are effective at dealing with difficult situations.

## Question

From time to time, we all face difficult situations in our work.

When dealing with someone who you feel is particularly difficult, which of these strategies do you commonly use?

# Difficult Situation Strategies

Choose the strategy that you use most frequently:

- Ignore any emotion and stick to the facts – present them with the evidence available
- Refuse to accept 'no' for an answer and continue to push your point or concern
- Avoid any conflict that arises – change the subject, agree to their demands or walk away
- Fight 'fire with fire'! If they want a battle, they'll get one!
- Focus on being friendly and helpful – even if this means you don't get what you want or need
- Enforce your position – Internal Audit has a critical role to play in providing independent assurance
- Something not listed above...



# The Power of Communication

# The Power of Communication

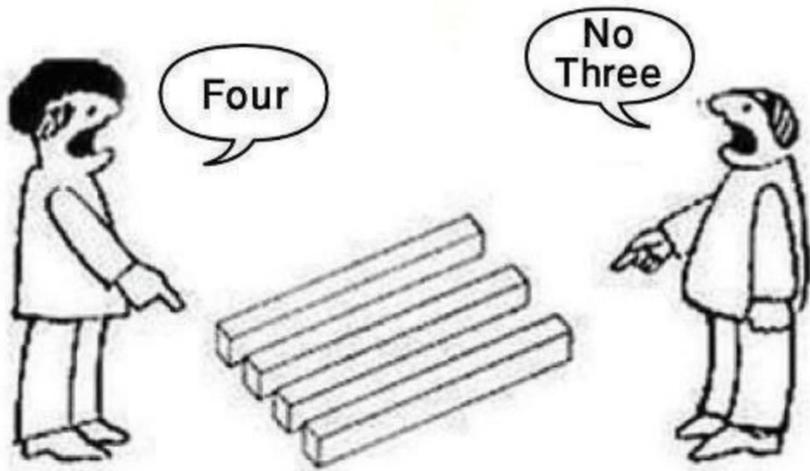
Why is communication so important?

- Difficult situations can arise or be exacerbated through how our communication is interpreted.
- Sometimes what we / others say is not what we / others *mean*.
- To make matters worse, even if we say what we *mean*, others may *receive* a different message.

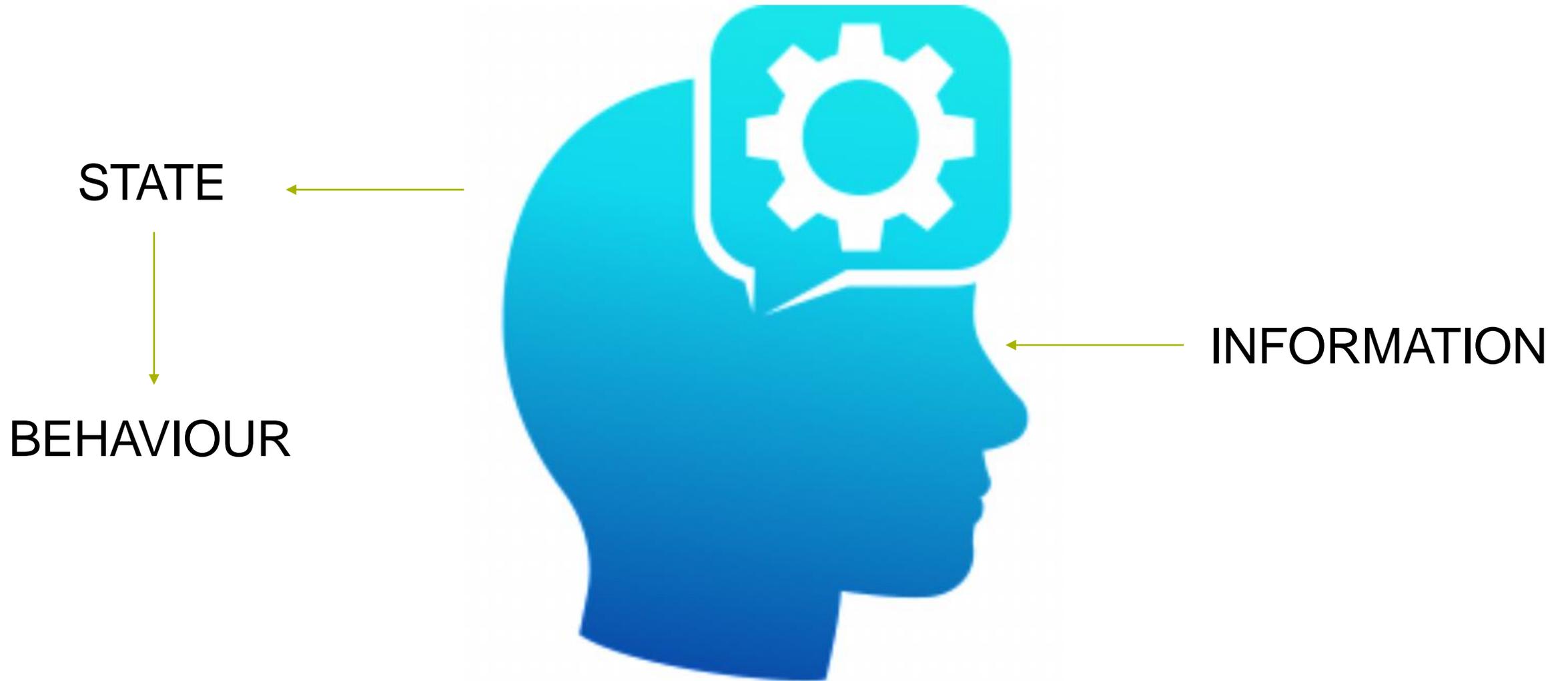


# The Power of Communication

A simple example...



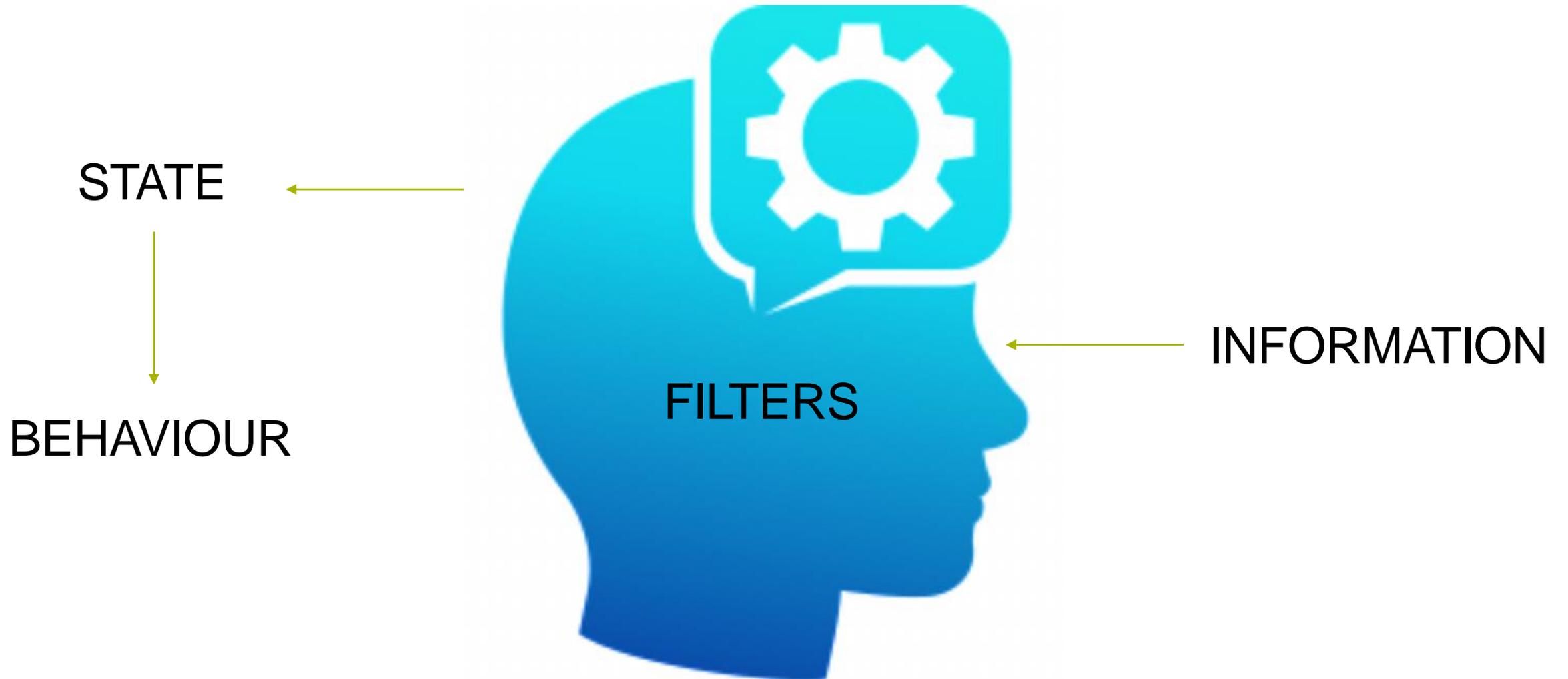
# The Power of Communication



# The Power of Communication



# The Power of Communication



# The Power of Communication

- **Delete** – Ignoring certain aspects of our experience due to the vast amount of information available. E.g. “I know he did it...”
- **Distort** – Misrepresenting our own view of reality. E.g. Constructing goals and future planning
- **Generalise** – Drawing conclusions so that information can be used in the future. E.g. All van drivers are aggressive



# The Power of Communication



682395823482452395492359235923



# **The Power of Communication**



## Question

How much of that number can you remember?

Type your answer now...

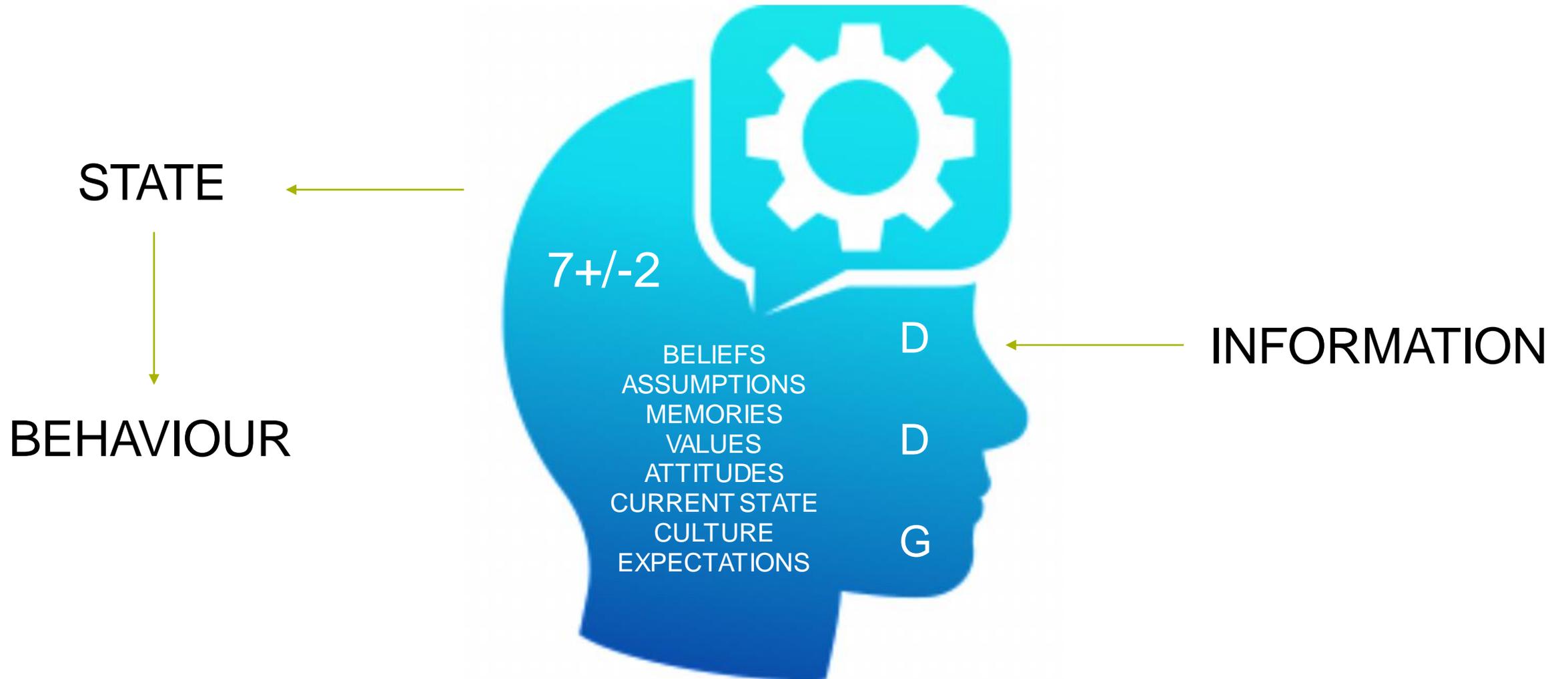


# The Power of Communication



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# The Power of Communication



# The Power of Communication

But why is this relevant to a 'difficult' situation?

- Individuals perceive information differently, which can lead to different behaviours
- If our communication contains DDGs, and other individuals also delete, distort and generalise information – misunderstanding, disagreements and sometimes conflict can occur
- Our experiences, expectations, culture and beliefs can result in conversations that are mis-aligned with others





# Rapport and Emotional Intelligence

# What is Rapport?

- Rapport represents a neurological connection between two or more individuals
- It covers that 'feeling' we get when we're interacting with someone with whom we feel 'comfortable'
- Broadly covers two areas:
  - I **like** you
  - I **am** like you
- Some examples of individuals with rapport...



# What is Rapport?



# Why is Rapport important?

- 'Difficult' situations become easier when rapport is strong
- We are more likely to create a stronger relationship when we focus on building and maintaining rapport
- Favours and feedback
- Increases the likelihood of 'agreement' – on both sides



# What is Emotional Intelligence?

- Emotional Intelligence (EI) covers our awareness and response to our own emotions, and those of others.
- EI covers a variety of areas, including:
  - Self-Control
  - Self-Expression
  - Self-Awareness
  - Self-Reflection
  - Awareness of Others
  - Empathy
  - Resilience and Assertiveness
  - Relationship Management



## Why does EI matter?

- Studies show that individuals with higher levels of EI can deal more effectively with setbacks and difficulties.
- Emotionally intelligent individuals can manage their emotional state more effectively and are more aware of how they feel at any time – particularly useful when involved in a difficult situation.
- Furthermore, your awareness of how *others* are feeling will also be clearer – this will enable you to adapt your approach based on the emotions of the discussion.



# The Emotional Hijack

- The *Emotional Hijack* describes a situation that we have all experienced at one time or another.
- A 'hijack' occurs when the emotional area of our brain (the Amygdala) restricts our ability to 'think' in a rational and logical manner.
- Most noticeable when we feel certain emotions, including Anger or Fear.
- When a 'hijack' occurs during a difficult situation, it becomes almost impossible to continue the conversation in a way that will benefit both parties.





## **Common Problems and Strategies for Success**

# Common Problems

- Assuming that it's about you, your agenda or your needs (even when it is...)
- Fighting 'fire with fire'...
- Lack of preparation (fail to prepare...)
- Lack of flexibility
- 'Sticking to your guns' – not admitting / ignoring your inaccuracies
- Seeing it as a battle that you need to 'win'



# Avoidance Strategies

## Building Rapport

- Remembering the basics:
  - I like you
  - I am like you



## Question

How do you build rapport with others?

What do you believe are the three most important ways of building rapport?

# Building Rapport

Choose the three most important rapport building activities from the list:

- Small Talk
- Finding 'common ground' during discussions
- Smiling
- Maintaining Eye Contact
- Effective listening
- Using facial expressions
- Using hand gestures
- Showing empathy

# Avoidance Strategies

## Building Rapport

- Remembering the basics:
  - I like you
  - I am like you



# Avoidance Strategies

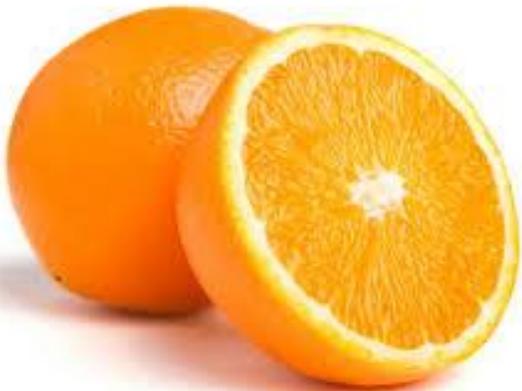
## Building Rapport

I like you	I am like you
Eye contact	Mirroring (largely unconscious)
Smiling	
Asking questions about them	Matching – Dress, Appearance, Tone, Volume / Pace, Hands
Proxemics	
Seeking understanding	Shared Interests
Listening	
Empathy	Shared Frustrations
Eye contact	



# Mitigation Strategies

The problem...



Two children, one orange...

Both children want the orange – what would you do?

Type your answer now!



# Mitigation Strategies

## Needs, wants, beliefs and assumptions

When attempting to influence or negotiate with others, how much do you focus on NEEDS, rather than WANTS?

Things to consider:

- Have you *understood* the other person's needs (or have you made assumptions)?
- The problem and the person should be kept separate – deal with the problem!
- Are you truly listening to what the other person is saying – or are you focused on your agenda?



# Mitigation Strategies

Needs, wants, beliefs and assumptions

Things to consider:

- Does meeting others' needs eliminate your needs?
- How does their agenda match / conflict with yours?
- Can you be flexible to ensure that you meet their needs?
- Explore options TOGETHER
- Where available, use objective criteria





**And Finally...**

# Advanced Tips

## Phrases

- Can you help me with something?
- How would you feel if...?
- When would be a good time to...?



# Advanced Tips

## Communication Approach

- Goals v Avoiding Problems?
- Options v Procedures?
- Reactive v Proactive?



# Advanced Tips

## Communication Approach

### Goals v Avoiding Problems

- GOAL focus – c40%
  - Thinking / speaking in terms of **what they want**
  - Often communicate what they might **gain or achieve** through a particular course of action
  - Usually more 'positive' non-verbal behaviour, such as nodding
- PROBLEM-AVOID focus – c40%
  - Notice what should be **avoided**, motivation by **problems to solve**
  - Often communicate what they want to **avoid** through a particular course of action
  - Usually more 'negative' non-verbal behaviour, such as head shaking



# Advanced Tips

## Communication Approach

### Options v Procedures

- OPTIONS focus – c40%
  - Enjoy the possibility of doing something **differently**
  - Bending or breaking the rules might feel good!
  - Often good at *starting* tasks, but not always *finishing!*
- PROCEDURES focus – c40%
  - Prefer to follow a step-by-step approach – a **right** way to do things
  - May feel personally violated if they are told to bend or break the rules
  - Generally good at finishing the task



# Advanced Tips

## Communication Approach

### Reactive v Proactive

- REACTIVE focus – c20%
  - Will often wait for the **right** situation before acting
  - Often talk about **thinking** or **understanding**
  - Generally have a need to **analyse** a situation before taking action
- PROACTIVE focus – c20%
  - Tend to **act**, often without extensive consideration
  - Usually **very direct** and rely on short, crisp sentences to communicate their views
  - Can often show signs of **impatience** when they are required to wait or understand more detail



# Advanced Tips

## What if it goes 'wrong'?

- Admit you've got it wrong!
- Walk away – give yourself time to revisit your perspective and how it differs to those of others
- Ask for help / support



# Summary

Today's key points:

- A 'difficult' situation is in the 'eye' of the beholder
- Our perceptions and filters are likely to determine how we act – even if we're seeing or experiencing the same information
- Everyone has their limitations when it comes to information and communication – use this for everyone's benefit if the situation is 'difficult'
- Rapport is essential in maintaining a relationship and avoiding difficulties
- Focus on developing your emotional intelligence – you will understand yourself and others more effectively
- Ask yourself – What does the other party actually NEED and what are my assumptions and beliefs about this requirement?
- What are the differences between my preferences for working and communication, and those of the other party? How can I adapt my approach?



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Thank you

# Contact us

**Ben Rawal MBA CMIIA**  
**Lead Consultant**  
**Aspire Consulting Solutions**



[ben.rawal@aspireconsultingsolutions.co.uk](mailto:ben.rawal@aspireconsultingsolutions.co.uk)



0121 517 0225 / 07484 072 155

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## Aspire | Handling Difficult Client Situations - Challenges and Strategies | 03 June 2020

### Panel discussion with Q&A

#### Chair:

Rosie Nightingale - Manager, PwC and Chair of the Aspire Steering Committee

#### Panel members:

Ben Rawal - Lead Consultant, Aspire Consulting Solutions

Sophie Reed - Manager, EY

Katie Timms - Senior Manager, EY



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## What's next?

- Did you like this event on how to handle difficult client situations? If so, please register your interest for **an in-depth training course** by emailing [Joanne.Allen@iia.org.uk](mailto:Joanne.Allen@iia.org.uk)
- **The next Aspire Community event** – please keep an eye on the Chartered IIA website for the next virtual event due to take place in September.



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Thank you