

Rural EMS Leadership Development Influencing Performance Through Conversations

Aarron Reinert, MA, NRP

SafeTech Solutions

August 27, 2026

Joan Field, EMT-I, CP-C, CHW

OREGON OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH, RURAL EMS

The mission of the Oregon Office of Rural Health is to improve the quality, availability and accessibility of health care for rural Oregonians.

The Oregon Office of Rural Health's vision is to serve as a state leader in providing resources, developing innovative strategies and cultivating collaborative partnerships to support Oregon rural communities in achieving optimal health and well-being.

Just a reminder: these educational webinars are offered through the
ORH Rural EMS Supplement (FLEX) Grant | Visit our [website](#)

Webinar Logistics

- Audio will be muted for all attendees at the beginning of the webinar.
- **However**, this is meant to be an interactive session with discussion, so feel free to raise your hand and unmute, and you can also post your question or comment in the chat.
- We encourage you to leave your camera on; it helps us feel connected!
- Presentation slides and recordings will be posted shortly after the session at:
<https://www.ohsu.edu/oregon-office-of-rural-health/emergency-medical-services-programs>.



Aarron Reinert, MA, NRP

- Nationally known facilitator and master teacher
- Expert in EMS leadership and management
- Consultant with expertise in
 - EMS financial viability
 - System Design
 - Rural EMS applied best practices
 - The unique challenges facing rural EMS



Aarron Reinert, MA, NRP

Aarron is nationally known as a facilitator, master teacher, and expert in EMS leadership, management, financial viability, system design, and applied best practices in rural and small-town EMS systems.

He's worked in EMS for over 35 years and is the executive director and chief of EMS for a critical care ALS ambulance service in a suburban, rural, and *super-rural* region of Minnesota and Wisconsin. He understands the unique challenges facing small-town ambulance and first-response services.

Using the tools of deep listening, facilitation and strategic planning, Aarron helps ambulance services and communities build sustainable and reliable EMS that strikes the necessary balance between finance, customer service, employee & volunteer satisfaction, and community awareness.

Aarron's skillset and expertise are regularly in demand in his roles as facilitator, EMS management consultant and lecturer.

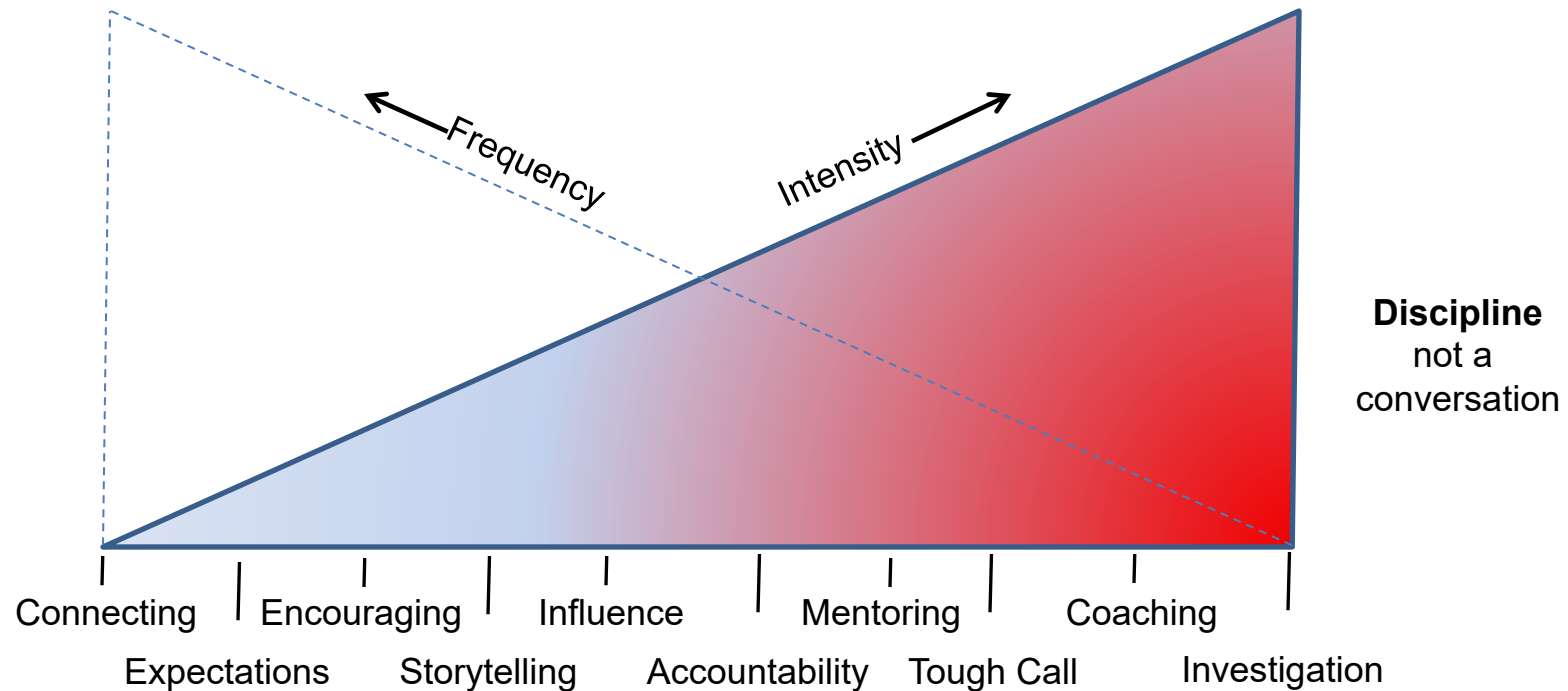
Aarron's recognized understanding of current EMS issues has led to his appointment as chairperson of the National EMS Advisory Council by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation and election to serve as President of the American Ambulance Association.



Influencing Performance Through Conversations

A Study of Drama and Toxicity

Ten Essential Conversations



What are the critical skills needed to influence a productive Conversation?

Lets discover them together!

Five behaviors you encountered

What worked and what didn't?

- Anti-management
 - Silence
 - Victim
 - Denial
 - Friend
 - Not safe
-
- Did we miss any?

Key points about successful influencing conversations

- You are in charge
- Most responses are about distraction
- Often need a number of the strategies together
- You get better with practice
- You will need the tools less the more you practice them
- Must be a top-down approach
- When possible, we should never be alone
- Your success is directly tied to your preparedness
- Separate the stimulus from your response

Goals and objectives

- What is the shortcoming, exactly
- How does it affect the organization
- Expectations
- Possible educational needs
- Be ready to listen (listening, hearing and bearing witness)

Leading and Managing Performance

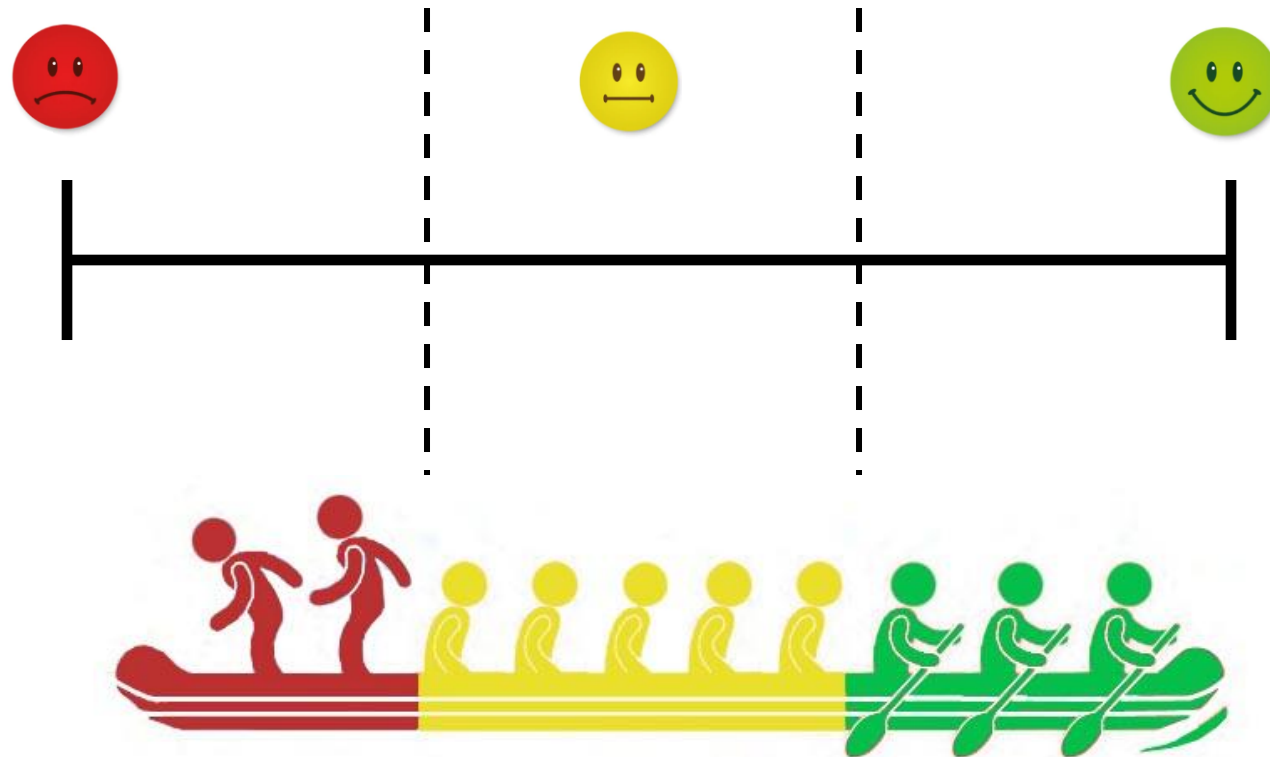
- What is drama (distracting noise)
- What is toxicity (punching holes in the hull of our ship)
- How would you address each and why?

Proactive Steps

- Developing a plan

“Begin with the end in mind”

- Stephen Covey



Crucial Conversations

- Investigation vs discipline
- BIFF
- Two sides of the story
- Three path
- Big words
- Union
- Nice vs kind
- Fair vs equal
- “Venting”
- Addition through subtraction (Scott Moore)

BIFF

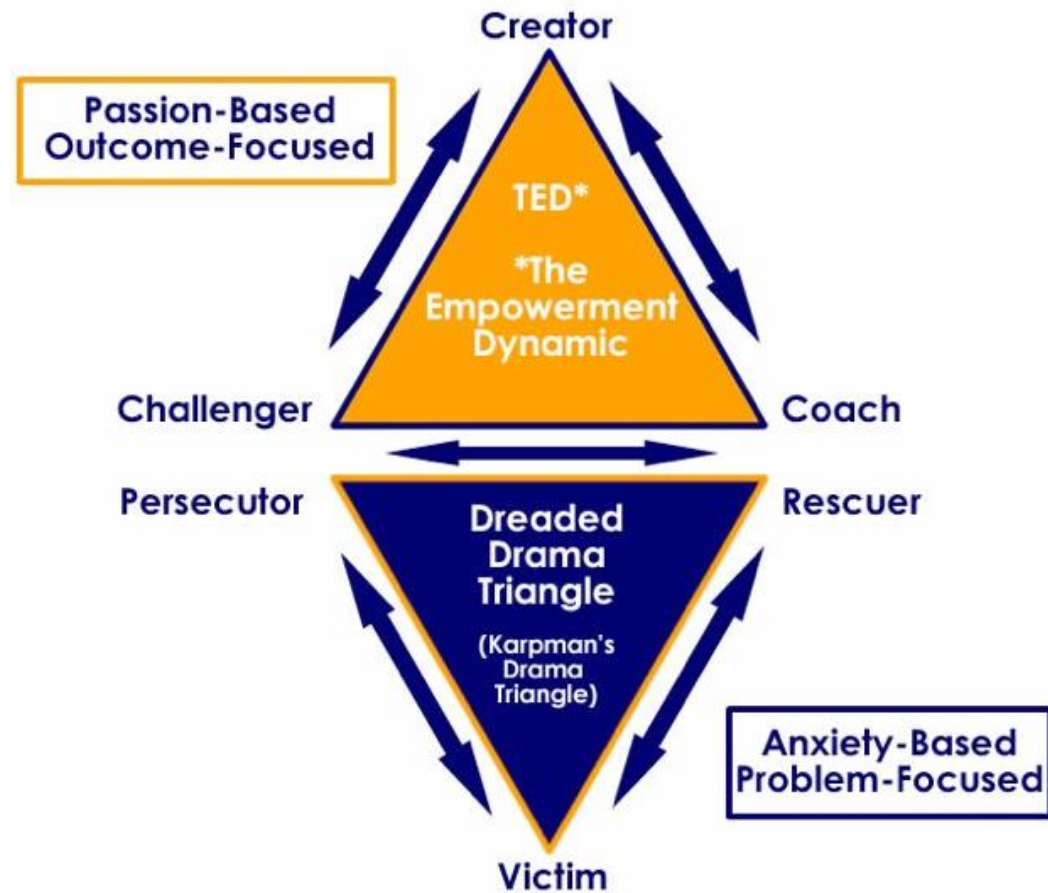
- Brief
- Informative
- Friendly
- Firm

EQUAL



FAIR





The Coaching Conversation

- A conversation about strengthening an action or behavior that has a connection to employment.
 - Clear that its not discipline
 - Simply about strengthening or improving
 - Three questions (crucial conversations)
- Key components:
 - Clear roles and responsibilities
 - Kind truth
 - Deep desire for success
 - Employee is expected to do much of the work

Strategies for success

- Agree that there is a problem
- Clarify expectations
- Mutual Commitment
- Agree on measurement of progress
- Time table for follow up
- Be clear about what happens next

Investigation

- A formal conversation that gathers information about a incident, policy violation, behavior, etc.
- Key components:
 - It is not discipline - should be distinct and separate from discipline
 - No leading the conversation
 - A true conversation (listening and hearing)
 - Focused, unemotional, fair
 - An honest investigation
 - Openness to new or different information

Discipline – not a conversation

- Designed to deliver a powerful message.
 - Not a conversation
 - Short and to the point
 - Quadrant 1 vs Quadrant 2 discipline
 - Appropriate consequences for the behaviors
 - Does not shame, blame, punish
 - Is separate from the investigation

Documentation

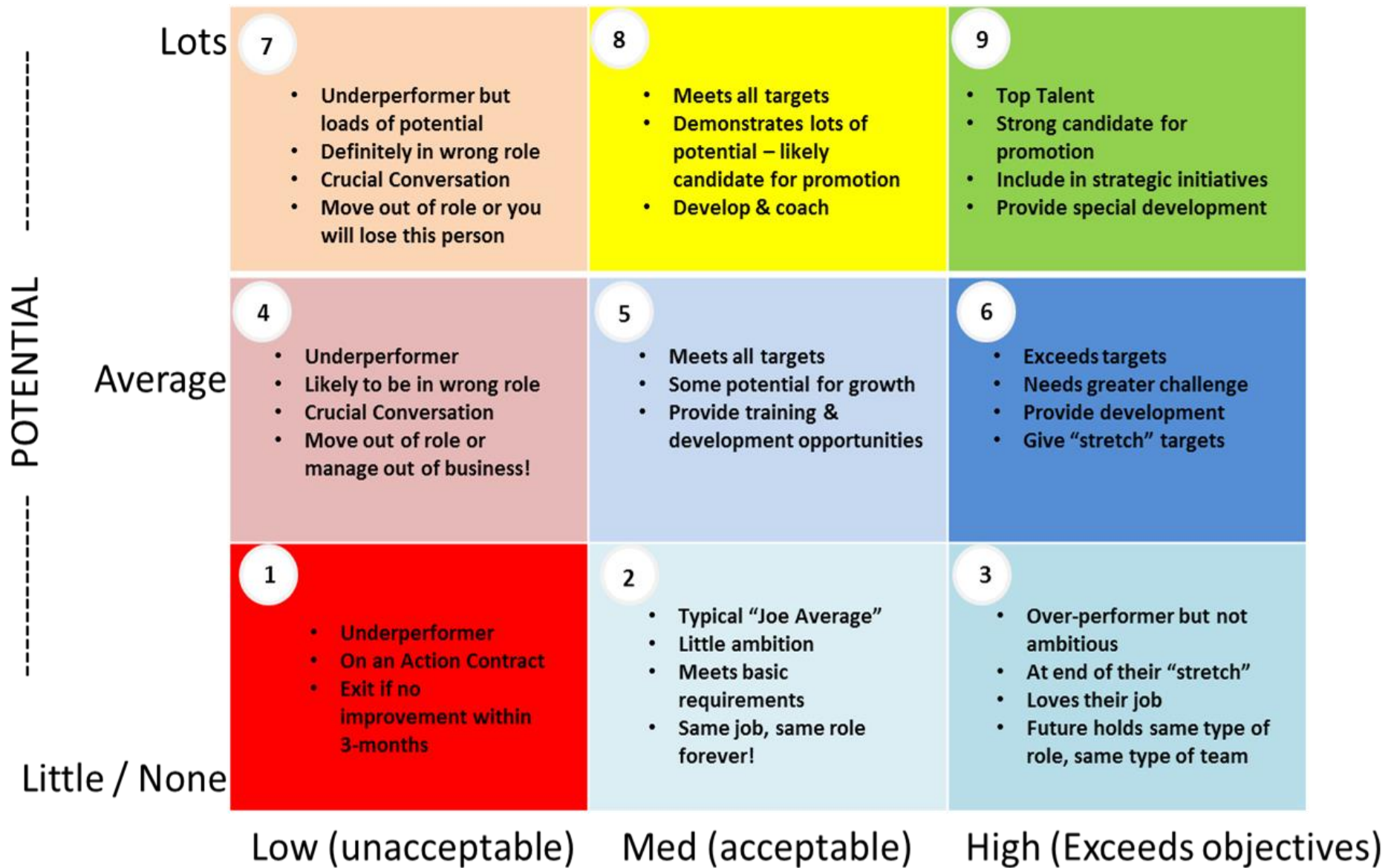
- Pre and post conversations
- Email version
- Communication log vs personnel file
- Verbal vs written warnings

What about....

- The big words
- Lawsuits
- Social media
- Recording
- Them bringing someone with them
- What comes after they are gone
- Personal problems

Why even take the chance?

- The Risks
- Positives
- The influencer effects



Questions?

What else do you need to reach your leadership goals?



ORH Announcements

ORH Rural **EMS Leadership** series, and **EMS Billing/Coding** educational webinar series

Links to past webinars can be [found here](#)

Links to **upcoming** webinars are in this **ORH News** release, [found here](#)

New Rural EMS Webinar: **Topic: The EMS Buprenorphine Roadmap and Rural EMS Agencies**
[Oregon Public Health Institute](#) and the **[Bridge Center](#)** | September 11 | 10:00 a.m.
([Register here](#))

Next ORH Community Conversation | September 17 | 12:00 p.m.
Topic: How CHWs at Rural Hospitals and Clinics Are Improving Health Outcomes
([More information here](#))

October 7-9, Bend, OR | 43rd Annual Oregon Rural Health Conference
([More information here](#))

ORH Rural EMS Scholarship Program | Reopening in September 2026 | Applications accepted on a rolling basis ([More information here](#))

Oregon Rural Health Excellence Award | Nomination application deadline August 31st ([More information here](#))

- ❖ Oregon Rural EMS and MIH meeting place and resource site dedicated to addressing your workforce recruitment & retention needs. It's a closed site. [Request access here](#). (Note: There is a brief delay as your email must be added for login privileges.)
- ❖ Additionally, to be updated on specific ORH EMS resources, complete [the SharePoint form](#) and select your particular areas of interest.
- ❖ Please email any other topics or questions you would like to see addressed in future webinar sessions to Joan at fieldj@ohsu.edu

Thank you!

Joan Field
Rural EMS Program Coordinator
fieldj@ohsu.edu