

Better conversations. Better outcomes.

When the going gets rough: better conversations with clients during life transitions

In a lifetime, one will more than likely experience a life-changing event: birth of a child, the death of a spouse, loss of a job, inheritance, retirement, health crisis or divorce. Managing transition can be challenging, especially if done alone. No matter the triggering event, the pressure or trauma that occurs can hinder a person to make sound financial decisions.

How do you go about offering guidance to those experiencing emotional and financial transition? What do you do? What do you say?

The financial advisory business is all about trust and relationships. Learning how to have a better conversation with clients in transition can have a positive impact on both your client and your practice.

Start by using LERA™ (listen, empathize, reframe and act) with your clients:



Listen

Each individual client has different needs and concerns that must to be addressed. Listen carefully to those concerns keeping top of mind the practical, emotional and family impacts in order to identify the best way to serve your client.

"You probably have a ton of things going through your mind right now. Tell me what your biggest concern is."



Empathize

Convey to your client that you "get it." Recognize the impact of grief and emotions on your client's ability to make financially sound decisions.

"This is probably a really difficult and crazy time for you right now. Take it slow and do only what needs to be done now. I'm here to help."



Helping you engage in better conversations that drive better outcomes is at the very heart of who we are at BMO Global Asset Management. And we do that by providing you with ideas, access and ease.

- **Ideas** — Unique insights into wealth planning and financial decision making.
- **Access** — To our investment teams and industry experts.
- **Ease** — Making it easy to put ideas and access into action.

Let's start better conversations!



Reframe

Create awareness by sharing facts about the non-financial side of the transition. Use past experiences with other clients as examples.

"I've worked with a number of clients that have gone through a similar experience. We discovered a number of key items during that time that I'd like to share with you."



Act

Tie in the financial aspects to non-financial side as an action step.

"All of these "life things" we've been talking about also have financial implications. Let's talk about how these fit with your financial plan and make sure we have everything covered."

LERA is a trademark owned by Dr. Amy D'Aprix, an internationally renowned expert on lifestyle issues relating to retirement, aging, caregiving, and family dynamics.

Bottom line

All life transitions are not equal. While some lead to new and exciting things, others are extremely stressful and emotional. It is essential that you help your clients prepare as much as possible for these transitions. Help your clients take a more proactive approach in preparing for potential issues by following the 3-step planning process:

1. Contemplate/explore what they want – have a plan B in the event to address the potential issues
2. Create a plan – both non-financial and financial
3. Have an essential conversation with important people

"I've found that there is so much to think about when planning for the future – retirement, college, vacation, etc. This is why you should utilize a formal planning process. Doing so helps you become aware of the potential issues to think about and possibly explore some options, put a plan together to address those things, and then talk with other family members."

Keep in mind that not only are these opportunities to create strong connections with your clients and their families, but it can also help deepen your relationships.

? Continue the conversation

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Visit the Advisor Resources section on the BMO Global Asset Management Viewpoints website at [bmogam.com](https://www.bmogam.com). Sign up for the Better Conversations Newsletter for additional ideas to power your practice and exclusive, behind-the-scenes content at [bmogam.com/betterconversations](https://www.bmogam.com/betterconversations).

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