



Difficult Conversations Tips

When preparing for the conversation, remember:

- This should be an open, frank conversation one-on-one, in private.
- Face-to-face is more effective than telephone or email as the employee can see the matter is being taken seriously.
- Sitting opposite of someone with a table in front shows formality, however, sitting next to someone can be less threatening.
- Don't rush!
- Allow time for a break to gather your thoughts or obtain more information.
- Give yourself some breathing space after the meeting, as you could be emotionally drained.

When giving feedback:

- Invite clarifying and confirming questions; maintain two-way communication.
 - Immediate impulse can be to reject, ignore or disagree with what you are hearing.
 - Clarify by seeking additional information about what has been said and/or why.
 - Confirm by stating your understanding of what has been said and why.
- Ensure you are listening to understand rather than merely listening to respond.
- Acknowledge the other's concerns; listen for what may be difficult for them to change.
- Follow up to help them with new approaches; change is seldom straightforward.

When receiving feedback:

- Listen calmly; avoid over-explaining.
- Work hard to see the other's perspective and ask questions to clarify as needed.
- Assume good intentions - check your assumptions.