



DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

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Nobody likes to have the hard conversations. Explaining to someone that they are not meeting standards, or something as simple as they need to wear appropriate attire to work can be tough. Here is a quick guide based on ACAS suggestions to get you through the rough bits.

STATE WHAT THE ISSUES ARE AND GIVE EVIDENCE

- Tell them what the problem is using your knowledge of the situation
- Give specific examples and refer to dates, documents, work or specific instructions
- Explain the impact the problem is having on the individual, the team and the organisation.

CHECK

- If possible, you should have already spoken to the employee informally about the problem – surprises can be very hard to handle!
- If you have been monitoring their behaviour or conduct, this should have been agreed with them earlier
- If the meeting is just aimed at giving them a reminder about behaviour or conduct then stick to that – be clear about what you are doing.

ASK FOR AN EXPLANATION

- Listen to what they have to say – they may need to let off steam
- Keep an open mind and don't jump to conclusions
- Acknowledge their position and any mitigating circumstances
- Introduce your questions and explore the issues together.

CHECK

- If new evidence emerges, adjourn the meeting if this feels appropriate
- Remember that you are in control. Use your questioning techniques to avoid diversions or too much repetition
- You may have to be firm and keep restating your position
- Stay clear of emotive language and don't respond to manipulative behaviour.

AGREE A WAY FORWARD

- Ask the employee for proposals to resolve the situation

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