



Difficult conversation tips

Questions to consider before the conversation

- What is the difficult conversation?
- Why do I need to have this conversation? What are the facts?
- What assumptions do I have?
- How have I contributed to the situation?
- What outcome am I hoping for? What is the goal?
- When and where will I have this conversation?
- How might the person react? And how will I respond?
- What blocks me? What do I need to watch out for in myself?
- How am I feeling within myself about the conversation. How can I take the emotion out of the equation?
- What else do I need to prepare for this conversation? Whose input do I need? Who do I need to alert?
- How would I want to be treated, if someone were having this conversation with me?
- If it doesn't work, what next?

Conversation openers

- I have something I'd like to discuss with you, that I think will help us work together more effectively.
- I'd like to talk about _____ with you, but first I'd like to get your point of view.
- I need your help with what just happened. Do you have a few minutes to talk?
- I'd like to talk about _____. I think we may have different ideas about how to _____.
- I'd like to see if we might reach a better understanding about _____. I really want to hear your feelings about this and share my perspective as well.
- I've noticed a recurring conversation (conflict, disagreement, problem) we seem to have. I'd like to talk about why that happens.
- I'd like to talk with you about some things I've noticed recently. I have some observations I'd like to share with you and some of the conclusions I'm starting to draw, and then I'd be really interested in hearing your perspective.

Helpful phrases

- I'm curious about...
- Tell me more...
- I'm wondering more about...
- Help me understand...
- Walk me through...
- That's not my experience (instead of "I think you're wrong about this/that")
- What doesn't fit/work for you about this?
- What would work for you?
- Is there a different way of looking at that?
- How can we work together to change the situation?
- What support do you need?