

Difficult Conversation Prep Sheet

Prepare the facts before the emotion enters the room

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BEFORE THE MEETING

What is the purpose of this conversation?

What have I directly observed - dates, examples and impact?

What assumption might I be making?

What does the employee need a fair opportunity to explain?

Difficult Conversation Prep Sheet

Keep the discussion specific, fair and workable

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CONVERSATION STRUCTURE

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1. Open clearly

Explain why you are meeting and keep the opening neutral.

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2. Describe facts

Use specific examples. Separate observed behaviour from opinion or hearsay.

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3. Listen

Ask open questions, allow a response and do not fill every silence.

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4. Agree the next step

Be clear about expectations, support, responsibility and review dates.

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5. Record accurately

Write a factual note and confirm any action that was agreed.

MY INTENDED OUTCOME

What should be clearer by the end of the meeting?

Pause and seek HR advice before the meeting if the issue may involve discrimination, harassment, whistleblowing, health or disability, safeguarding, dismissal or another formal process.