

Tips on ways to have difficult conversations

» Identify the issue that you want to discuss

- Be clear on what the purpose of the discussion is
- Identify the benefits for yourself and the other person in having this conversation
- Identify what the consequences will be if you don't have the conversation and there is no change in the situation

» Think about what you want

- What do I want to get across and achieve by having this conversation
- What are the main things I want to say
- What is a reasonable outcome for me

» Look at it from the other person's perspective

- What will they want to achieve from the conversation
- What emotions may they be feeling
- What may they do to stall the conversation
- What may be a reasonable outcome for them

» Handle your emotions

- Hold the conversation when you can state how you feel without the emotion taking over the discussion
- If you find yourself becoming emotional and the emotion leads your words, stop the conversation and offer to come back to it when things are calmer
- If the other person is becoming emotional and you are unable to have a proper discussion, stop the conversation and offer to come back to it when things are calmer

» During the meeting

- State what you would like
- Be open about the way the current situation makes you feel
- Show respect for the other person's views
- Avoid blaming yourself or the other person
- Don't get caught up arguing your respective positions – focus on the future
- Listen
- Recognise that you see things differently and look for a state that is ok for both parties
- If the conversation breaks down, be prepared to break and come back to it at a different time
- Where possible, agree some actions to move you forward