

MANAGING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS AT WORK

Need to discuss lackluster performance with an employee? Approach a coworker on a thorny topic? Some of the most uncomfortable conversations occur in the workplace. Below are ideas, tools and resources for handling these situations.

- **Get clarity.** Difficult conversations often stem from differing perceptions, interpretations and unclear communication.
- **Keep your mission front and center.** Consider how delaying a difficult conversation might impact your stakeholders, members and the community you serve.
- **Set expectations clearly and often for staff and board members.** Executives, set mutual expectations with your board chair. Engage the board chair and governance committee to discuss board performance expectations.
- **Provide follow-up immediately.** Discuss performance issues early and often, not just at the annual review.

For additional expert advice, try these resources we've curated for you from around the web:

- [How to get what you need from difficult conversations while keeping your relationships intact.](#) Harvard business review
- [Difficult Conversations at Work Can Lead to Breakthroughs.](#) CBC News
- [Challenging Conversations at Work and How to Manage Them.](#) Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)
- [Defending Defensiveness.](#) Nonprofit Quarterly
- [Tips for Talking about Tough Topics.](#) Psych Central

Remember to listen, empathize, and breathe! Managing difficult conversations at work is not significantly different from other situations, but the stakes often feel higher. Fortunately, we tend to be aware of workplace conflicts in advance; use that time to prepare for the discussion.

Need help improving the communication culture on your team?

WE CAN HELP!



Nonprofit resource courtesy of

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