

## Guidance – Difficult Conversation Framework and Tips

### Step 1: Think it through by asking yourself the following questions:

What might happen?

How do you feel about it?

What impact will this have on you?

What assumptions are you making?

What do you think they might be thinking?

What might you have contributed?

### Step 2: What is your purpose?

*Write below what is your purpose in having the conversation*

### Step 3: Set the stage:

Understand that there are 2 sides to every story. Communicate your goal for the conversation and invite the team member to join you as a partner. Show confidence in a positive outcome

e.g. *“Thanks for meeting with me, I think we have different perceptions on... and I’m interested in your viewpoint so that we can agree a way forward on...”*

*Write below how you might set the stage*

**Step 4: Focus on the team member:**

Ask the team member to share their perspective. Ask questions – and listen to the answers e.g.

“Shall we start by reflecting on...”

“What went well, in your opinion...”

Uncover feelings: How might they be impacted? What assumptions have they made?

**Write below how you might focus on the team member**

**Step 5: Help the team member understand you:**

Share your side of the story. Describe your thoughts and feelings. Explain your intentions. Be clear, calm and specific. Keep it on track. E.g.

“My sense is...”

“My perspective is...”

“I wanted to bring this issue to your attention....”

“I wanted to raise awareness of...”

**Write below how you might help the team member understand you**

**Step 6: Agree on where you are now**

**Step 7: Work for an agreed solution**

**Step 8: Next time – next steps to take**



## Best practice Steps – Useful Tips!

### Do...

Choose a suitable time and place

State your intent up front

Stick to the facts

Be clear about next steps

Use a calm tone, positive body language

Avoid Personal, emotive language

Use neutral language

### Don't....

Start sentences with "You"  
"You never make deadlines" →  
" The missed deadlines impact on the team's reputation" or  
'We need to talk about why the deadline was missed.'

Make assumptions or jump to conclusions

Let emotions get in the way – stay focused and objective. Concentrate on facts and not hearsay