

A conversation structure

You have conversations every day, so they probably feel natural to you. However, sometimes at work we have to have difficult conversations which need more thought.

Whether it's the topic of the conversation or the person we're having it with that makes it difficult, it's good to have some tools to manage the conversation in the best way.

Here's a structure you can follow to give your conversation the best chance of success.

Start the conversation by putting the other person at ease. Choose a comfortable, appropriate setting and ask them some open questions.



Give them your ideas and ask them to share theirs. Ask lots of open questions to encourage their input so it's a two-way conversation.



Narrow down the options from both of your ideas. Remember that they might want to deal with the situation differently to how you would.



Agree the next steps. It's not essential for them to be happy with the agreement, but they should be on board with it and have clear direction with how to action it.



Check for understanding. End the conversation by making sure everyone is aware of their role and what their follow-up actions are. It's a good idea to offer further support if it's needed too.