



How to have sensitive conversations at work.

There may be times when it is necessary for a manager to have a sensitive conversation with an employee at work. This could be about a number of topics including an individual's performance or concerns about their mental health. It is important to remember that performance can sometimes be impacted by physical and mental health difficulties or by unexpected life changes. It is therefore essential that any conversation is conducted sensitively and thoughtfully. You may want to refer to module 4 for some further guidance on communicating well with colleagues.

The information below can help remind you of some essential actions you can take to make the employee feel as comfortable as possible discussing their difficulties. You can then work together to find solutions that can help the employee to continue in their role, get the support that they need, and thrive at work.

Do ...

- Choose an appropriate time and place where you won't be disturbed.
- Make sure you have enough time and that you tell the employee how long you have for the meeting.
- Be clear about confidentiality and who you will need to share the information with.
- Avoid making assumptions.
- Encourage the other person to talk and make sure you really listen.
- Be careful with the tone of your questions (non interrogating, just exploring).
- Let the other person explain in their own words how their issues present and what support/reasonable adjustments they may need.
- Remain positive and reassuring!