

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS



One of the most challenging aspects of supervision is having a difficult conversation with an employee. This is especially true when the conversation requires providing constructive or disciplinary feedback to an employee. Avoiding the conversation is a frequently used technique which ultimately has detrimental effects on the employee/department.

When facing a difficult conversation, consider the following six-step strategy for success:

Step 1: Identify the Appropriate Time to Provide Feedback

Ensure you have the employee's full attention; ensure privacy

Step 2: Use a Gentle Approach

Explain that you need to discuss an issue/concern; acknowledge that the conversation may be difficult for you and/or the employee

Step 3: Provide Direct Feedback

State the concern; allow the employee to respond

Step 4: Describe the Impact of the Behavior

Explain how this impacts "the big picture"

Step 5: Provide Expectations for Future Behavior

Describe acceptable behavior moving forward

Step 6: Follow-Up & Provide Ongoing Feedback

Revisit the issue; recognize improvement or discuss further, if needed

BEST PRACTICES

- Take Time to Prepare
- Don't Use a Script
- Ensure Privacy
- Provide Examples
- Don't Argue
- Be Specific with Your Expectations
- Offer Praise & Recognize Improvement

Interested in learning more about difficult conversations? Register for the upcoming training series *What Every JMU Supervisor Needs to Know* [here](#)