



Difficult Conversations Part One

Workbook

A Promoting Excellence Online Course

This is part of a series of online courses
available from Promoting Excellence
Leadership Consultants.

Date the course started:

Date completed:

Name:

Workplace:

Role:

HOW THE COURSE WORKS

The Promoting Excellence Certificated 'Difficult Conversations' Course consists of two Parts, each with a series of Modules, containing slides with videos, together with a workbook containing materials, tables, and plenty of space for your notes and observations to key-in onscreen. All is available for you to download and either retain or print as you wish.

Taking them together, they will lead you, on a modular basis, through the whole of our Promoting Excellence 'Difficult Conversations' Course and will conclude with a certificate for each Part that you can download to show you have successfully completed the training and have been officially certificated by Promoting Excellence Limited. Your name can be typed onscreen into those certificates, which can then be retained and saved for future reference as PDFs - or they can be printed off, to be framed or filed, as you wish. Part One is an introduction to the concepts and certifies you at PromEx Introductory Level. Part Two contains practice and reflection and certifies you at PromEx Master Level. You can study just Part One, or both Parts One and Two - as you wish - using the same login ID and password.

Each part, and each module has video narration, so it is best to complete the course(s) in a location where sound will not disturb others around you. The course is linear, so you should start by downloading and completing the Introduction, followed by Module ONE, Module TWO, and so forth. Your password and login ID gives you access to the full course, and in most cases for a full year from purchase, so you will not need to rush, but can work methodically. Some downloads are quite large - up to 50MB or so - so you should only download the module upon which you are currently working, before progressing to the next one. Downloading all modules together in one go will put excessive load on the document server and could temporarily deny your colleagues their own access to the documents.

If a module has any additional worksheets, diagnostics or bonus materials, these are listed onscreen in your course download page, in the order you will need to download them. Not all courses, and not all modules have worksheets or handouts, but where they do, they are listed on that page for you to download and use.

IS THE COURSE FOR AN INDIVIDUAL OR A GROUP?

The course has been written for use by both individuals and small groups. An individual will need to reflect upon some of the ideas raised, and to jot down their thoughts in the workbook - perhaps to discuss with a 'Critical Friend'. Or the individual may like to then discuss their ideas with peers, or a competent leader. A small group, on the other hand, will find benefit in discussing the ideas and issues raised as a group, and perhaps agreeing on some joint actions.

AIMS

- To improve self-confidence and competency in dealing with critical one-to-one conversations.

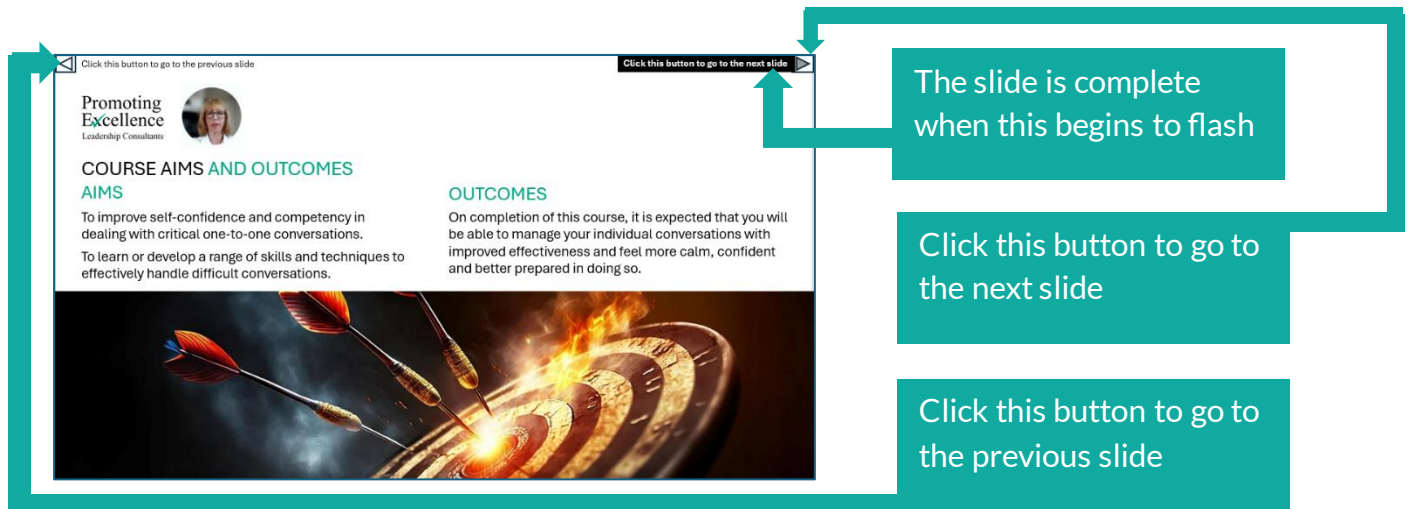
- To learn or develop a range of skills and techniques to effectively handle difficult conversations.

OUTCOMES

On completion of this course, it is expected that you will be able to manage your individual conversations with improved effectiveness and feel more calm, confident and better prepared in doing so.

SOME HOUSEKEEPING POINTS

In each module, you can go forwards to the next slide by clicking on the button in the **top right** corner of each module-slide. To signify that a slide is fully completed and ready to advance, the button-label will flash. You can also go backwards to look again at any slide you have completed. To do that click the button in the **top left** corner. When going back through slides, their videos (if any) will not automatically play - but you can play them by clicking on them)



The slide is complete when this begins to flash

Click this button to go to the next slide

Click this button to go to the previous slide

If you are viewing this course on an iPad, please choose the option 'Download', rather than 'View'. Download gives you the full file (remember you need the Apple iPad MS-PowerPoint app, free to all Microsoft 365 subscribers. It is best to download and run that PowerPoint App first).

The Downloaded MS-PowerPoint app will be saved into 'Files' on your iPad and will then auto-run if you have the MS-PowerPoint App already downloaded and it has been run already at least once. The iPad & Android versions of Adobe Acrobat do not support PDFs with embedded calculations, so it is best to complete your diagnostics and workbooks on a PC or a MAC. Overall, the use of a PC or MAC is definitely recommended for the best experience.

Technical support on device configuration options can only be provided by your ICT department. The course has been tested and certified as running on PC (Windows 10, Windows 11, with Office 365 (v25-01 tested), but the course should work equally well on an up-to-date MAC with MS-Office.

Adobe Acrobat Reader is required to complete diagnostics and workbooks. Versions embedded into browsers may not have all features of Acrobat Reader and may not automatically score diagnostics for you, for example.

All modules are in Microsoft 'PowerPoint Show' format.

This workbook can be completed on-screen and saved as you wish.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS WORKBOOK, AND YOUR NOTES AND ANSWERS ARE NOT SAVED UNLESS YOU SAVE THE WORKBOOK. WE RECOMMEND YOU SAVE IT TO YOUR LOCAL DOCUMENTS FILE ON YOUR PC OR MAC, BUT ANY DIRECTORY IN WHICH YOUR ICT DEPARTMENT REQUIRES YOU TO SAVE DOCUMENTS WILL BE FINE.

Remember that Adobe Acrobat Reader (a free download from Adobe) is required to complete diagnostics and workbooks. Versions embedded into browsers may not have all features of Acrobat Reader and may not automatically score diagnostics for you, for example. Please check with your ICT department before downloading and installing the free Adobe Reader.

YOUR COURSE IS PRESENTED BY THE VIRTUAL JACKIE CHRISTIE.

JACKIE CHRISTIE IS A CONSULTANT FOR PROMOTING EXCELLENCE LTD.

Following a highly successful career, Jackie has a wealth of experience, delivering training and coaching in leadership and management to various sectors. Additionally she is a published author of books relating to leadership & management, with a recognised post-graduate qualification in leadership and management.

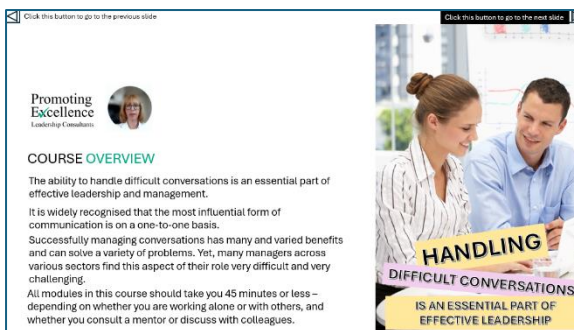
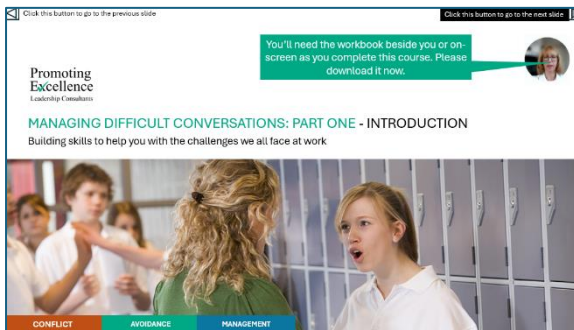
INTRODUCTION

Resources Required

INTRODUCTION slides: Managing Difficult Conversations
Part 1 - Introduction (ppsx file)

This Workbook

The course begins with a short Introductory Module.

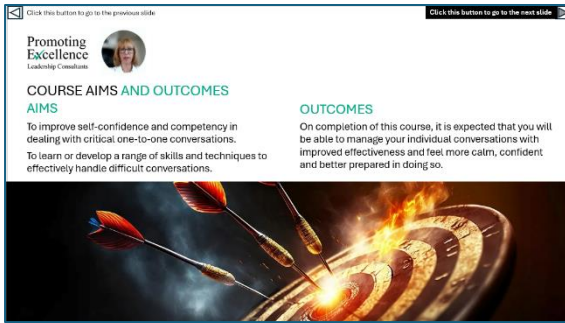


The ability to handle difficult conversations is an essential part of effective leadership and management. It is widely recognised that the most influential form of communication is on a one-to-one basis.

Successfully managing conversations has many and varied benefits and can solve a variety of problems. Yet, many managers across various sectors find this aspect of their role very difficult and very challenging.

All modules in this course should take you 45 minutes or less – depending on whether you are working alone or with others, and whether you consult a mentor or discuss with colleagues.

Please note that you can follow slides from the video in this workbook by their headings on screen. All work sheets can be downloaded separately and should be used alongside this workbook.



There are 5 modules in the introductory (Part One) course, and a further 3 modules should you decide to study the Advanced Master course (Part 2) – plus each part has its own Introduction and Certification.

The 5 modules in this course are: -

Module 1: What is a Difficult Conversation?

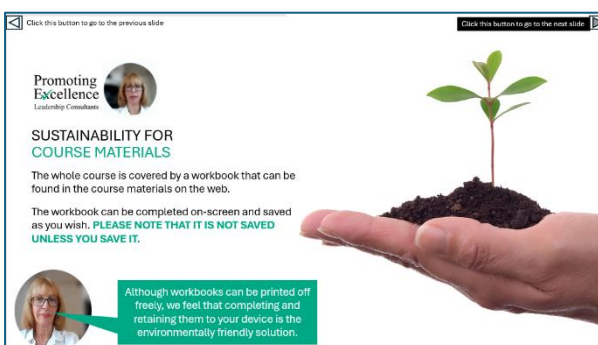
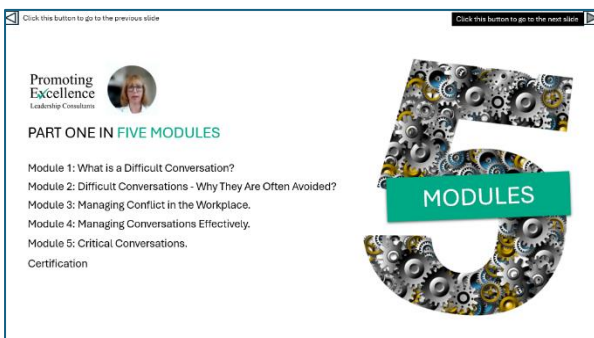
Module 2: Difficult Conversations - Why They Are Often Avoided?

Module 3: Managing Conflict in the Workplace.

Module 4: Managing Conversations Effectively.

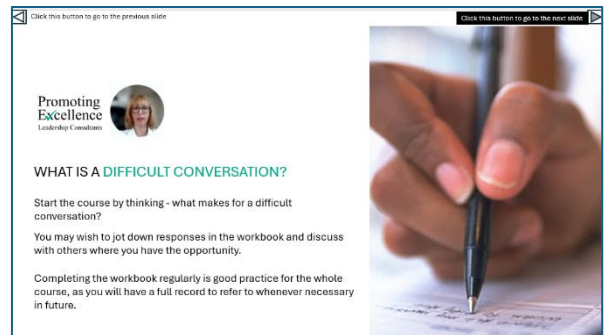
Module 5: Critical Conversations.

Certification.



Although workbooks can be printed off freely, we feel that completing and retaining them to your device is the environmentally friendly solution.

MODULE ONE: WHAT IS A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION?



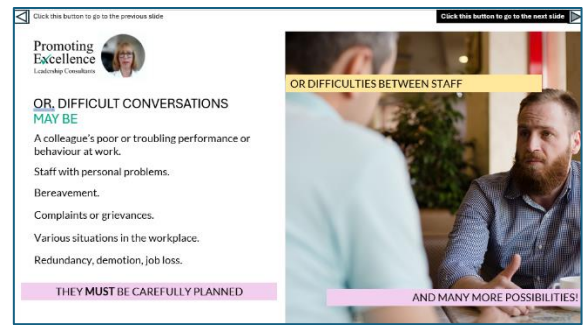
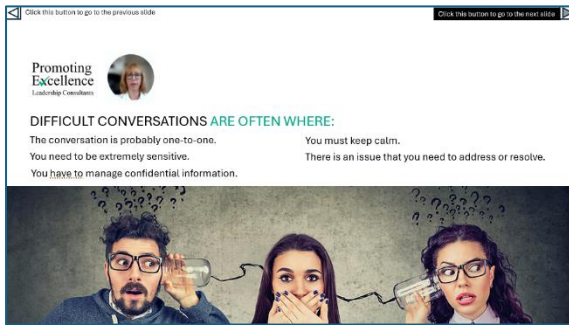
WHAT IS A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION?

What is a Difficult Conversation? You may wish to jot down your ideas and discuss with others where you have the opportunity.

N.B. Completing the workbook regularly is good practice for the whole course, as you will have a full record to refer to whenever necessary in future.

My notes:

OUR DEFINITION



Difficult conversations are often where:

1. The conversation is probably one-to-one.
2. You need to be extremely sensitive.
3. You have to manage confidential information.
4. You must keep calm – especially where a calm atmosphere is difficult because of what is being discussed, when it is being discussed, or the emotional state of the person with whom you are talking.
5. There is an issue that you need to address or resolve, especially where the person with whom you are talking does not regard the issue in the same terms as you, or the organisation does.

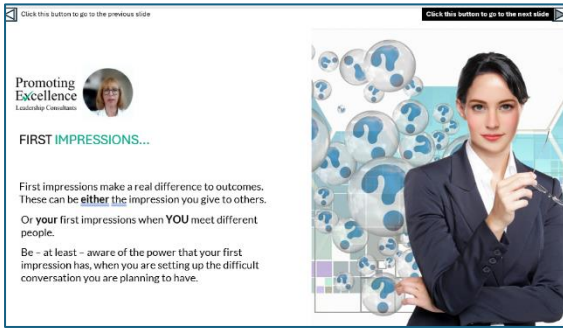
Or difficult conversations may be about:

1. A colleague's poor or troubling performance or behaviour at work.
2. Staff with personal problems.
3. Bereavement.
4. Complaints or grievances.
5. Various situations in the workplace.
6. Redundancy, demotion, job loss.
7. Difficulties between staff.

They **MUST** all be carefully planned.

My notes:

FIRST IMPRESSIONS



Experts in human behaviour say that first impressions make a real difference to outcomes. These can be either the impression you give to others, or your first impressions when YOU meet different people.

Whatever the case, it is important in any difficult conversation to be aware of your – and the person with whom you are talking's – body language. The starting point in this is to understand what forms a communication can take.

We communicate:

1. With our words.
2. With our facial expressions.
3. With our posture.
4. With our position in relation to the person with whom we are talking.
5. With our tone of voice.
6. With our gestures.

We believe it's important to consider each of these briefly and note a couple of points about each.

Our Words

This is the part of communicating in difficult situations that we worry about most and spend the most time on. There is no doubt at all that the words we say matter greatly. However, if the person to whom we are talking senses a difference between the words we say and our gestures, the tone of our voice, our facial expression, our posture or our position, then the words we use will not carry the weight we expected them to.

The words matter most, but **ONLY** when we have achieved 'congruence' – our 'body language' (the sum total of all the features listed above) is congruent with (in line with) the words we are speaking.

Where there is incongruence, the message given is a 'mixed message', with the incongruent behaviour taking precedence over our words.

As an example, imagine saying 'I love you' to a loved one. But with a scowl on our face. What message would be **actually** received? 'I love you'? 'I don't love you'? Or confusion – erring towards the latter?

Or saying, 'That's really interesting to me.' But saying it, slouched in your chair with your eyes half closed. Would the person to whom you are talking feel you were **actually** interested?

How about saying 'I'm very confident about that.' Whilst flapping your hands around wildly? Or saying the exact same sentence, in a quiet voice that could barely be heard?

In every case, the message given is of incongruence, and **the incongruent body language takes precedence in the mind of the person with whom you are talking, rather than the words you say.**

All of which does not mean that the words don't matter – they matter a great deal, and where the message is complicated, we recommend you prepare a bullet-point list of the main points you would like to cover in advance of your meeting. No, the words do matter a lot. But **ONLY** when delivered in a manner congruent with their content. You do not need to 'act'. And if you do, it will almost always be spotted and seen as another incongruence – your words seeming insincere. It is important that you practice a continual check on your body language to be sure you are not sending out 'mixed messages'.

Our facial expressions.

When checking for congruence, it has been demonstrated that a person engaged in conversation spends more than four fifths of their time looking at the person they are speaking, but in a very small area of their person. That is a triangle, bounded by their two eyes and their mouth. The research to show this involved using camera capture devices, looking at the eyes – and specifically the pupils – of those engaged in conversation, and then plotting where, exactly, their gaze fell on the other person.

That 'eye-mouth triangle' is where we spend most of our time looking when we are in conversation, and as it is the centre of our vision most of our time, the facial expression of those to whom we speak is the most important part of ensuring they are congruent. Similarly, it is most important that our own facial expression is congruent with our own words.

To demonstrate the importance of the eye-mouth triangle, look at the picture below. Who is it?



Most people have little difficulty in identifying former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, even though 90% of what we are seeing is upside-down, and we haven't ever seen Margaret Thatcher standing on her head.

Next, look next at the picture below:



Here we have the same picture as on the previous page but amended slightly.

Now, 90% of the subject's head in this new picture is 'correct'. Just 10% (by area photographed) is upside down, but this 10% consists only of the two eyes and the mouth – the bounding-points of the eye-mouth triangle.

Because we are so used to looking first, and mainly, at the two eyes and the mouth, the second picture appears, to most people, far more 'wrong' than the first one, even though the second picture, in percentage terms, is actually far more 'correct'. We can see, therefore, that the eye-mouth triangle is very important to our understanding of how things should be -and that in conversations we spend most of our time looking at it. Our facial expressions, predicated on that same triangle, are therefore very important in achieving congruence, and thus belief in the words spoken.

Our Posture and Gestures.

There's quite a lot of misinformation concerning posture. 'Experts' often tell us that one way of sitting means one thing, whilst another means something else. Most posture, in truth, is about achieving comfort – a position in which a person feels comfortable. The exceptions are those that are obvious – resting one's head on a table suggests sleep, or total disconnection from whatever conversation ought to be occurring. Similarly for closing one's eyes – even moreso if accompanied by snoring!

The seasoned observer looks not for absolutes, therefore. Sitting with arms folded is not, as some suggest, necessarily a 'blocking' position. The seasoned conversation practitioner, if we might use the phrase, is looking for **changes** in posture. A sudden and major change in posture will almost always derive from a feeling of no longer being comfortable. It is for the practitioner to decide if that derives from tiredness, muscle fatigue, or from sudden discomfort with what is now being discussed.

Gestures are, again, important for congruence.

THE FIRST THIRTY SECONDS

Consider research back in the early 2000's concerning recruitment interviewing. A group of professional HR staff were interviewing candidates for a technical role in an insurance company. The interviews were stopped after 30 seconds, and 50% of the interviewers were asked for their opinions regarding the candidates – rating them on a range of competencies and including whether they thought them serious candidates for the role. The other 50% of the interview panels were asked questions (after the 30 seconds) about the comfort of the room and the process before the interview had started.

At the end of the interview, ALL interviewers were asked the same questions as the first group. There was excellent correlation between ratings – interviewers generally agreed on the suitability of the candidates, and to a lesser degree – but still reasonable for an interview process - on the candidates' competencies.

The ratings of those who had rated after 30 seconds correlated extremely well with their ratings after the completion of the interview, and also with those who had not rated after 30 seconds.

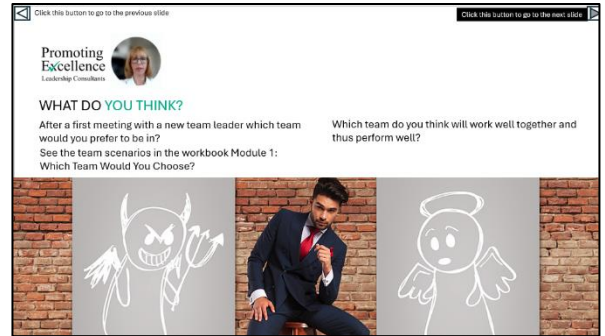
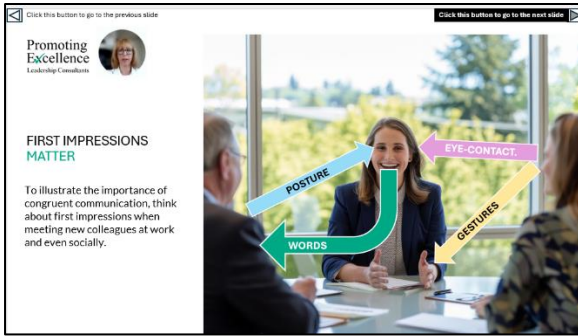
This all suggests that we often make considerable judgement on others early in a conversation, even after just 30 seconds – and even when we are trained to follow a process of evidential discovery that took a further 45 minutes.

First impressions really do matter.

Be – at least – aware of the power that your first impression has, when you are setting up the difficult conversation you are planning to have. We'll consider first impressions a little more on the next page.

My notes:

MORE CONSIDERATION OF FIRST IMPRESSIONS



Think about a first meeting and the importance of initial impressions.

Here is just that scenario – a meeting and opening conversation with a new team leader. However, here are two potential new team leaders. Answer the questions below. Decide who would you wish to work with and why?

Team 1: Dr Morgan

This new team leader introduces himself as Dr Morgan and tells his new team that he has a PhD in maths. Then he states that he expects them all to work very hard to achieve his aim of a top report in the next inspection/audit.

Team 2: Salima

This new team leader has the right qualifications for the job, but she doesn't mention this as she introduces herself as Salima. Then she asks the team to introduce themselves.

Salima says that she is really pleased to be appointed to the position and hopes that together they will make significant improvements to the department.

What are your first impressions? Is there positive and negative to both approaches? Note the importance of communication upon first meetings!

Which Team Would You Choose? Why?

My notes:

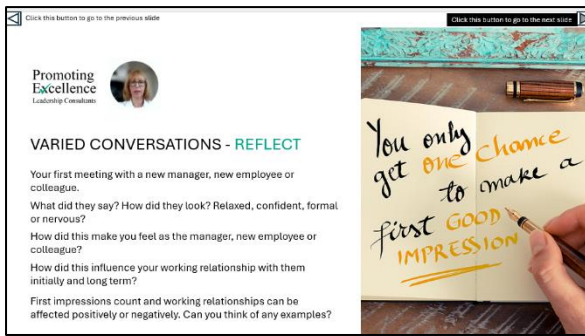
Which team do you think will work well together and perform well? Why? Can you really tell?

My notes:

What can leaders learn from this exercise? Is either approach sufficient by itself?

My notes:

VARIED CONVERSIONS - REFLECTION



The screenshot shows a presentation slide from 'Promoting Excellence Leadership Consultants'. The slide title is 'VARIED CONVERSATIONS - REFLECT'. The text on the slide asks for reflection on a first meeting with a new manager, employee, or colleague, covering aspects like their appearance, feelings, and the impact on the working relationship. A sticky note is placed over the right side of the slide, featuring the handwritten text: 'You only get one chance to make a first GOOD IMPRESSION'.

Click this button to go to the previous slide

Click this button to go to the next slide

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VARIED CONVERSATIONS - REFLECT

Your first meeting with a new manager, new employee or colleague.

What did they say? How did they look? Relaxed, confident, formal or nervous?

How did this make you feel as the manager, new employee or colleague?

How did this influence your working relationship with them initially and long term?

First impressions count and working relationships can be affected positively or negatively. Can you think of any examples?

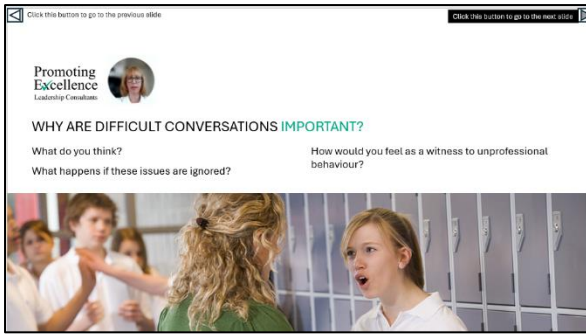
You only get one chance to make a first GOOD IMPRESSION

Consider your first meeting with a new manager, new employee or colleague.

1. What did they say? How did they look? Relaxed, confident, formal or nervous?
2. Did/ how did this make you feel as the manager, new employee or colleague?
3. Did/ how did this influence your working relationship with them initially and long term?
4. First impressions often really do count and working relationships can be affected positively or negatively. Can you think of any examples?

My notes:

WHY ARE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS IMPORTANT?

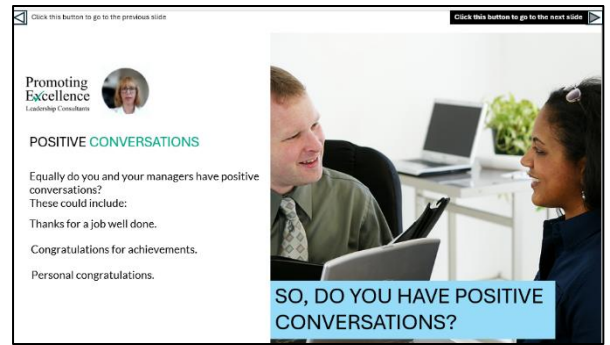
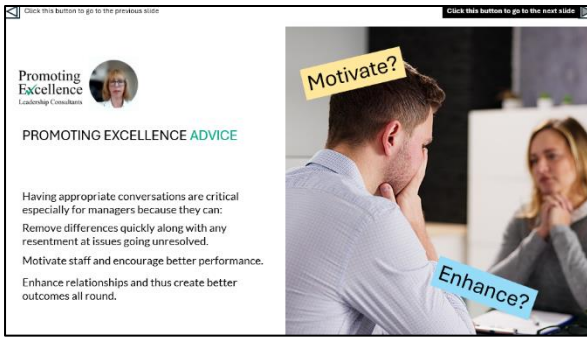


Whilst all conversations matter. Why is it particularly important to address issues as they arise?

What happens if issues are ignored? How would you feel witnessing unprofessional behaviour that is not resolved? Jot down your ideas and then see the next page for our suggestions.

My notes:

PROMOTING EXCELLENCE'S SUGGESTIONS



Having appropriate conversations is critical especially for managers because they can:

1. Remove differences quickly along with any resentment at issues going unresolved.
2. Motivate staff and encourage better performance.
3. Enhance relationships and thus create better outcomes all round.

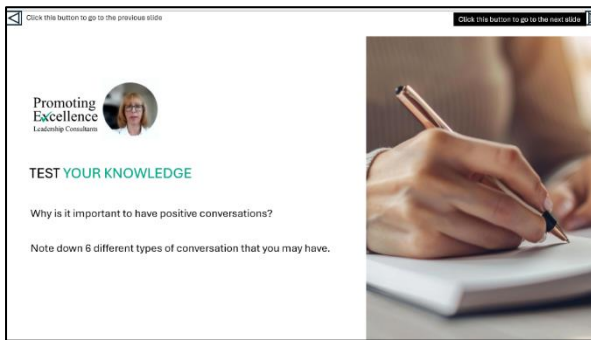
Equally, do you and your managers have positive conversations?

These could include:

1. Thanks for a job well done.
2. Congratulations for achievements at work, or professionally.
3. Personal congratulations. Are there any caveats here? What must you take care regarding if you have these?

My notes:

At the end of Module One – Test Your Knowledge



1. Why is it important to have positive conversations?

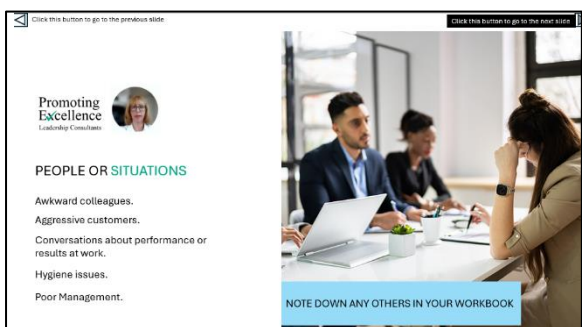
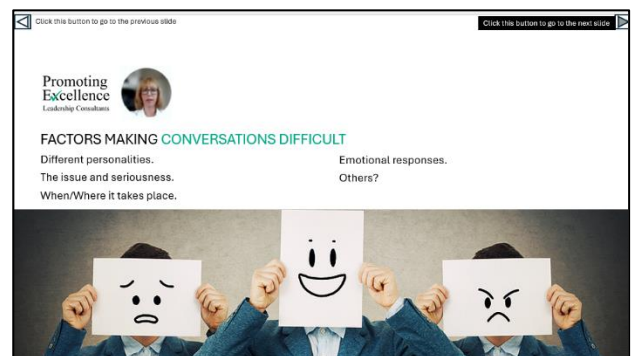
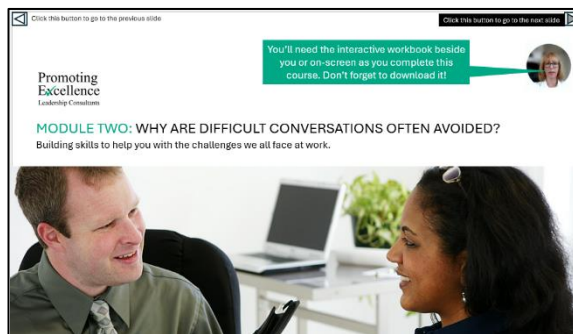
My notes:

2. Note down 6 different types of conversation that you may have.

My notes:

MODULE TWO: WHY ARE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS OFTEN AVOIDED?

- Resources Required
- MODULE TWO Slides – Why are Difficult Conversations Often Avoided.pptx (ppsx file)
 - This Workbook



What factors make a conversation difficult for YOU?

We'll have some suggestions on the next page.

My notes:

SOME SUGGESTIONS

Factors making conversations difficult might include:

1. Different personalities – who may see things in different ways, or approach tasks, situations, and people in different ways.
2. The issue and its seriousness.
3. When/where it takes place.
4. Emotional responses – from either or both parties to the conversation.

Can you think of any others?

My notes:

What people, or situations do you find difficult? Again, we will put some suggestions on the next page.

My notes:

PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS COMMONLY FOUND DIFFICULT

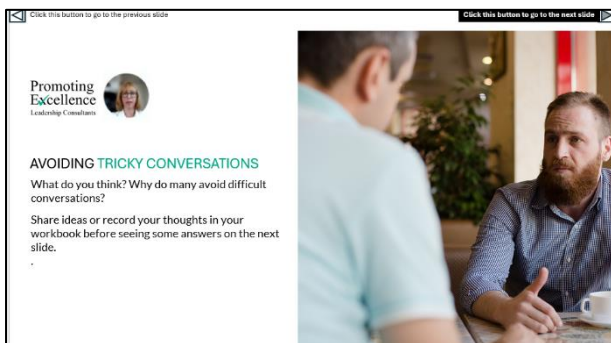
Awkward colleagues. (What is it about them that is awkward for you? If you name them, remember to keep this document safe and secure from prying eyes). Promoting Excellence will not be held liable for any consequences of not doing so.

1. Aggressive customers.
2. Conversations about performance or results at work.
3. Hygiene issues.
4. Poor management.

Can you think of any others?

My notes:

AVOIDING TRICKY CONVERSATIONS

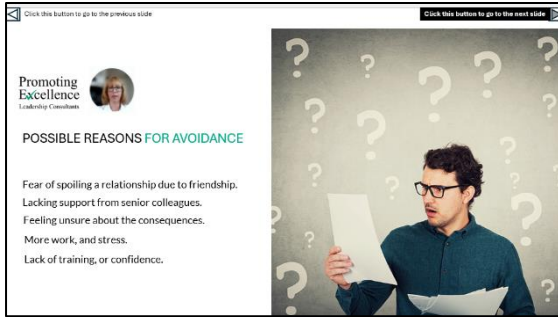


The screenshot shows a presentation slide with a white background. At the top left, there is a small logo for 'Promoting Excellence Leadership Consultants' with a circular profile picture of a woman. The main title 'AVOIDING TRICKY CONVERSATIONS' is in green. Below it, the text asks 'What do you think? Why do many avoid difficult conversations?' and prompts the audience to 'Share ideas or record your thoughts in your workbook before seeing some answers on the next slide.' On the right side of the slide, there is a photograph of two men in a meeting; one man is seen from the back, and the other is a bearded man in a blue shirt gesturing with his hand. Navigation buttons at the top of the slide read 'Click this button to go to the previous slide' and 'Click this button to go to the next slide'.

What do you think? Why do many avoid difficult conversations? We'll list some reasons on the next page.

My notes:

OUR SUGGESTIONS



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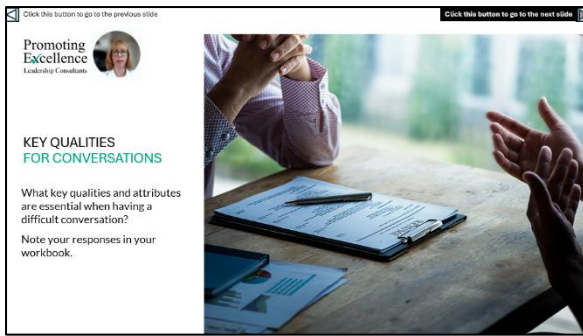
POSSIBLE REASONS FOR AVOIDANCE

- Fear of spoiling a relationship due to friendship.
- Lacking support from senior colleagues.
- Feeling unsure about the consequences.
- More work, and stress.
- Lack of training, or confidence.

1. Fear of spoiling a relationship due to friendship.
2. Lacking support from senior colleagues.
3. Feeling unsure about the consequences.
4. More work, and stress.
5. Lack of training, or confidence.

My notes:

KEY QUALITIES FOR CONVERSATIONS



Imagine you are watching a difficult conversation taking place. The person leading the conversation does need to have certain qualities in order for the conversation to progress successfully.

What attributes or qualities do you think would be required?

My notes:

KEY LEARNING POINTS

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KEY LEARNING POINTS

Difficult conversations with colleagues go to the top of your to-do list.
Leaving that difficult conversation will only make it harder, and can make the situation worse.

Be aware of your how your behaviour impacts on others.
Be aware of your body language and tone of voice.
Use evidence.

WHAT IS YOUR PRIORITY ACTION AS A RESULT OF THIS LIST?

DEALING WITH PEOPLE IS OFTEN MESSY

ESPECIALLY FOR UNPLANNED DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS, DEVELOP A RADAR THAT IS SENSITIVE TO OTHERS

BE AWARE THAT EVERY DIFFICULT CONVERSATION HAS ITS OWN UNIQUE ELEMENTS

Difficult conversations with colleagues go to the top of your to-do list.

Leaving that difficult conversation will only make it harder and can make the situation worse.

Be aware of your how your behaviour impacts on others.

Be aware of your body language and tone of voice.

Use evidence.

Dealing with people is often messy.

Especially for unplanned difficult conversations, develop a radar that is sensitive to others.

Be aware that every difficult conversation has its own unique elements.

What is your priority action as a result of this list?

My notes:

CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

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CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

FIVE MAIN CAUSES OF ANXIETY, WORRY, OR FEAR

- Not knowing how the other person will respond – 43%
- Not being able to get a point across clearly – 31%
- Being in a confrontational situation – 29%
- Getting upset or emotional – 29%
- The other person getting upset or emotional – 21%

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All data is taken from a One Poll survey of 2,000 UK respondents run between 11th and 13th May 2015

Chartered Management Institute

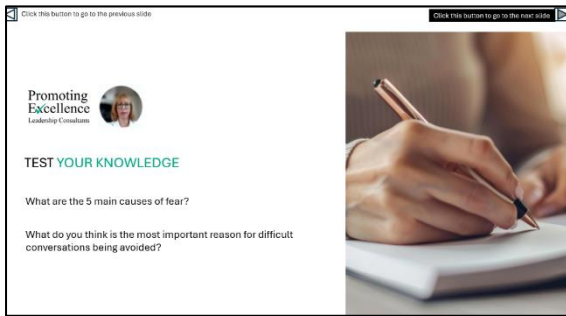
All data is taken from a One Poll survey of 2,000 UK respondents run between 11th and 13th May 2015

Five main causes of anxiety, worry, or fear:

1. Not knowing how the other person will respond – 43%
2. Not being able to get a point across clearly – 31%
3. Being in a confrontational situation – 29%
4. Getting upset or emotional – 29%
5. The other person getting upset or emotional – 21%

My notes:

At the end of Module Two – Test Your Knowledge



1. What are the 5 main causes of having fear of a conversation?

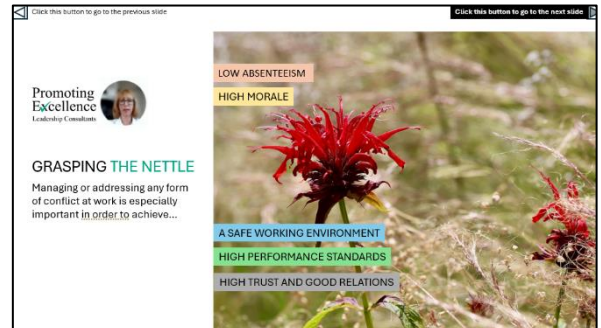
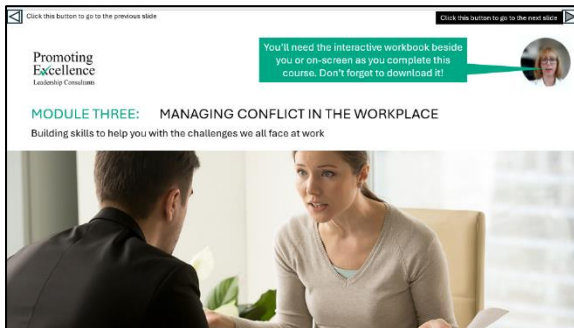
My notes:

2. What do you think is the most important reason for difficult conversations being avoided?

My notes:

MODULE THREE: MANAGING CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE

- Resources Required
- MODULE THREE Slides – Managing Conflict in the Workplace.pptx (ppsx file)
 - This Workbook



Managing or addressing any form of conflict at work is especially important in order to achieve...

1. Low absenteeism
2. High morale
3. A safe working environment
4. High performance standards
5. High trust and good relations

My notes:

REASONS FOR CONFLICT

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REASONS FOR CONFLICT

Disagreement or lack of clarity regarding resources.
Shortage of resources – lack of equipment or staff.
Personality clashes – differing interpersonal styles.
Unclear understanding of what is required – misunderstandings on progress, on standards, etc.
Unclear goals or disagreement on goals, or on priorities within those goals, or unclear Roles.
Resistance to change, or pressing onward with change without embedding the benefits of it, or training for it, or listening to feedback about it.
Differing values – clashes on what matters and how, and why.

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Are these familiar? In your team? In your work?

Reasons for conflict in the workplace may include:

1. Disagreement or lack of clarity regarding resources.
2. Shortage of resources – lack of equipment or staff.
3. Personality clashes – differing interpersonal styles.
4. Unclear understanding of what is required – misunderstandings on progress, on standards, etc.
5. Unclear goals or disagreement on goals, or on priorities within those goals, or unclear Roles.
6. Resistance to change, or pressing onward with change without embedding the benefits of it, or training for it, or listening to feedback about it.
7. Differing values – clashes on what matters and how, and why.

Are these familiar? In your team? In your work?

My notes:

28

CONFLICT TASK

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CONFLICT TASK

In your workbook answer the following:

What is the main issue causing conflict in your workplace?

What outcome would you like to see?

What is the effect or impact of the issue?

What can you do to reduce the tension or conflict?

1. ISSUE → 2. OUTCOME → 3. EFFECT-IMPACT → 4. ACTION

Think about any areas of conflict in your workplace.

1. What is the main issue causing conflict in your workplace?

My Notes:

2. What outcome would you like to see?

My notes:

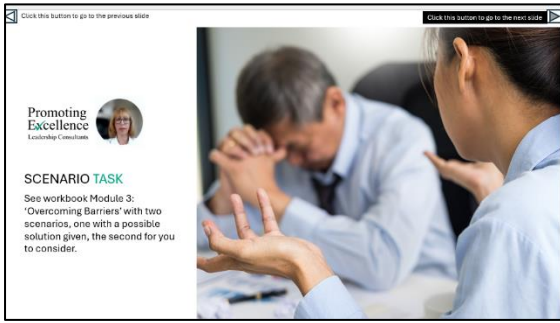
3. What is the effect or impact of the issue?

My notes:

4. What can you do to reduce the tension or conflict?

My notes:

SCENARIO TASK



'Overcoming Barriers' - Difficult Conversations

Here are two scenarios.

Please read the first one with a possible solution given, and then for the second one consider how it could be resolved.

SCENARIO 1

In your team you have a popular colleague who is prone to 'gossip and unprofessional remarks' about people in the workplace. You are concerned about tackling this issue because it may affect your colleague's morale and motivation.

However, you are aware others are worried about confidential and sensitive issues being discussed in an unprofessional manner.

Possible solution:

You must address the issue. Take advice from a trusted, critical friend as to how you should go about it. Plan and prepare in some detail where and what time the meeting will take place, what you will say and what questions you will ask. Ensure you have evidence of specific examples of the gossip and unprofessional remarks.

Finally prepare yourself emotionally as this might be difficult and envisage an ideal outcome.

My notes:

SCENARIO 2

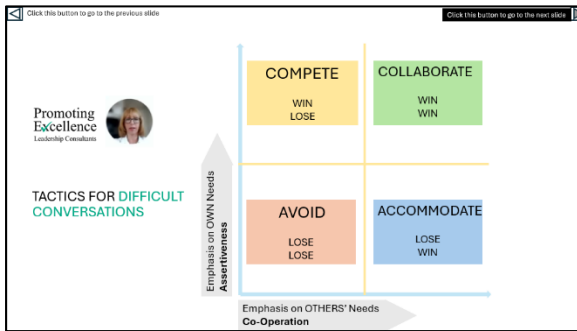
What would you do if faced with this dilemma?

You are aware that one of your team has a problem with personal hygiene. Concerns have been raised with you by others within the team, colleagues from outside the team and other stakeholders.

How would you handle this conversation?

My notes:

THE THOMAS-KILMANN CONFLICT MODEL



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THOMAS AND KILMANN

By competing in a conflict situation, you may win but how will the loser feel? How will future relationships be affected?

By avoiding the situation, you will both lose – can you think why in the workbook?

If you accommodate, rather than deal with an issue you lose. How could this affect the management of a team?

Collaboration is usually the best option long term.

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Model defines the main ways that individuals respond to conflict. In the 1970's, Dr Thomas and Dr Kilmann, created the model that shows how individuals can either act e.g. assertively or cooperatively during conflict situations. Both men stress, however, that people behave differently in different conflict situations and therefore cannot be categorised as one set type i.e. assertive or competing etc.

The Thomas-Kilmann Model also outlines the pros and cons of various conflict approaches. A 'collaborating' approach works well for long-term, quality decisions that address underlying issues. A 'competing' approach is useful for quick and decisive actions, whereas an 'accommodating' approach helps preserve harmony over decision-making.

Why is avoiding the issue never the right thing to do?

My notes:

MORE ON THE THOMAS-KILMANN MODEL

By competing in a conflict situation, you may win but how will the loser feel? How will future relationships be affected?

My notes:

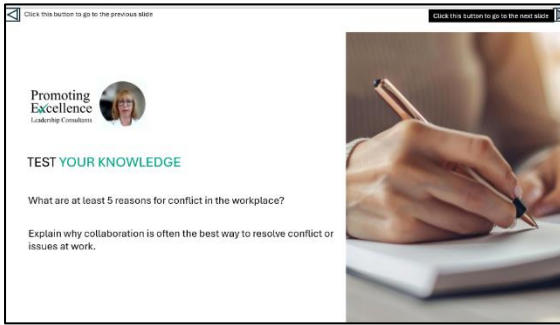
If you accommodate, rather than deal with an issue you lose. How could this affect the management of a team?

My notes:

Collaboration is usually (but not always) the best option long term. When might collaboration not be useful?

My notes:

At the end of Module Three – Test Your Knowledge



1. What are at least 5 reasons for conflict in the workplace?

My notes:

2. Explain why collaboration is often the best way to resolve conflict or issues at work.

My notes:

MODULE FOUR: MANAGING CONVERSATIONS EFFECTIVELY

- Resources Required
- MODULE four Slides – Managing Conversations Effectively.pptx (ppsx file)
 - This Workbook

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Click this button to go to the next slide

You'll need the interactive workbook beside you or on-screen as you complete this course. Don't forget to download it!

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MODULE FOUR: MANAGING CONVERSATIONS EFFECTIVELY
Building skills to help you with the challenges we all face at work.



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Strategy	Why does it not work?
Imposing a solution	
Avoiding the issue	
A quick fix	

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WHAT WORKS, WHAT DOESN'T WORK, AND WHY?

The best way to resolve difficult situations is through properly-conducted, one-to-one conversations. We can learn a lot from conversations that did NOT go so well. Please think about possible answers and then record them in your workbook



WHAT WORKS, WHAT DOESN'T, AND WHY?

The best way to resolve difficult situations is through properly-conducted, one-to-one conversations.

If you were writing a handbook on 'Why People Don't Delegate' and 'What to Avoid when Empowering Others', what would you include?

We can learn a lot from conversations that did NOT go so well.

Please think about possible answers and then record them online here.

My notes:

Consider now the three strategies below. Why might they not work?

Strategy	Why does it not work?
Imposing a solution	
Avoiding the issue	
A quick fix	

Some possible answers are on the next page

PROMOTING EXCELLENCE'S SUGGESTIONS

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POSSIBLE ANSWERS

IMPOSING A SOLUTION - Perceived as bossy and autocratic or little ownership on the part of colleagues or team members.

A QUICK FIX - A very temporary and short-lived solution.

AVOIDING THE ISSUE - Likely to lead to bigger problems.



IMPOSING A SOLUTION -

Perceived as bossy and autocratic or little ownership on the part of colleagues or team members.

AVOIDING THE ISSUE -

Likely to lead to bigger problems.

A QUICK FIX -

A very temporary and short-lived solution.

WHAT SHOULD NEIL DO?

The screenshot shows a presentation slide with the following content:

- Top left: "Promoting Excellence Leadership Excellence" logo and a small circular photo of a woman.
- Top right: "Click this button to go to the next slide" (disabled).
- Center: A large photo of a man (Neil) sitting at a desk with a laptop. A thought bubble above him shows a woman (Susan) speaking. A sticky note on the laptop says "WHAT OUTCOME DO I WANT?".
- Left side: A vertical navigation bar with a red circle around the second item, "WHAT SHOULD NEIL DO?".
- Text on the slide:
 - WHAT SHOULD NEIL DO?
 - Neil needs to address with Susan her conduct at team meetings, which has prevented others from speaking up.
 - How should Neil tackle this issue?
 - What is the desired outcome?
 - Please discuss this if possible and then record your response in the workbook.

Neil needs to address with Susan her conduct at team meetings, which has prevented others from speaking up.

How should Neil tackle this issue? What is the desired outcome?

Suggested answers for both scenarios follow the second scenario in two pages time.

My notes:

WHAT SHOULD CLAIRE DO?

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WHAT SHOULD CLAIRE DO?

Claire, Adam's manager has noticed that he has arrived late to work most days for the last 2 weeks.

What should Claire do?

What is the desired outcome?

Please discuss this if possible and then record your response in the workbook.

Please also read Module 4: Managing Conversations Effectively in your workbook.



Claire, Adam's manager, has noticed that he has arrived late to work most days for the last 2 weeks.

What Should Claire Do?

What is the desired outcome?

My notes:

OUR SUGGESTIONS FOR BOTH SCENARIOS

Neil must:

1. Have an honest and diplomatic, coaching, conversation with Susan not forgetting to thank Susan for her valued contributions
2. Try to raise Susan's awareness of the problem and her lack of social awareness
3. Hopefully, agree a more inclusive and emotionally intelligent approach to meetings
4. Agree some ground rules with the whole team about the conduct of meetings

Desired outcome:

Susan takes responsibility and is more aware of her behaviour

My notes:

Claire must:

Arrange a confidential 1:1 conversation

Start with questions, observations and genuine concerns, have accurate evidence about punctuality over the last fortnight

Desired outcome:

Adam is open and honest, and the punctuality problem is resolved.

Respect for Clare is enhanced by showing she is caring, well organised, observant and on top of her job.

My notes:

HELPFUL AND UNHELPFUL CONVERSATIONS

[Click this button to go to the previous slide](#)



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TASK: HAVING THAT CONVERSATION

In having that conversation, it's important to be organised, observant, and in-control.

See the [workbook Module 4: Helpful and Unhelpful Conversations](#).

Discuss or complete the "Why not helpful?" and "Why helpful?" columns.



[Click this button to go to the next slide](#)

Task: Complete the 'Why not helpful?' and 'Why helpful?' columns

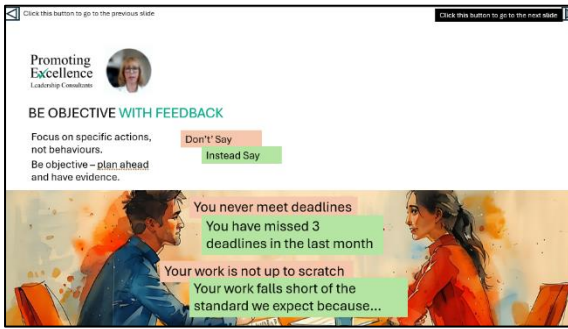
i) Examples of factors which are **unhelpful**

Factors	Why not helpful
Talking too much	
Interrupting	
Not controlling your emotions	
Evading the issue	
Imposing solutions	
Focusing upon the negatives	
Seeking a 'quick fix'	

ii) Examples of factors which are helpful

Factors	Why helpful
Active listening and hearing	
Accurate summarising of mutually agreed points	
Non-judgemental, open minded	
Positive approach	
Vision for win-win outcomes	
Intuition and insight	

REMEMBER TO BE OBJECTIVE WITH FEEDBACK



In giving good feedback, you need to be objective – specific, so the person to whom you give that feedback knows what to do with it.

Focus on what has been done, not on personalities.

Say 'this item of work didn't meet the specification we agreed', rather than 'You are no good at this'. You are NOT here to criticize the person, but to point out, and help rectify the disparities in their work to that required.

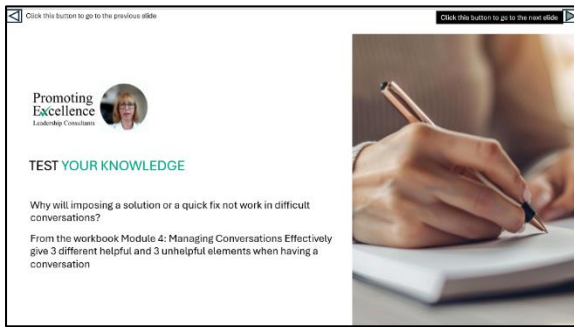
So, focus on specific actions, not behaviours.

Be objective – plan ahead and have evidence.

1. Don't say, 'You never meet deadlines.' Say, instead, 'You have missed 3 deadlines in the last month.'
2. Don't say 'Your work is not up to scratch.' Say, instead, 'Your work falls short of the standard we expect because...'

My notes:

At the end of Module Four – Test Your Knowledge



1. Why will imposing a solution or a quick fix not work in difficult conversations?

My notes:

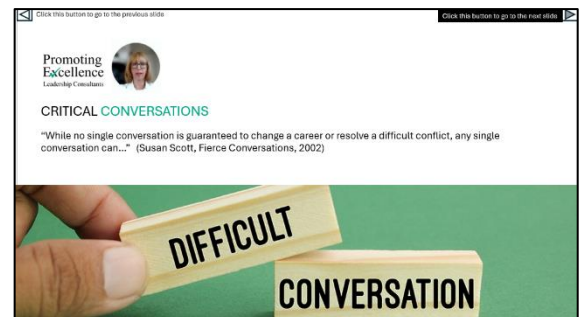
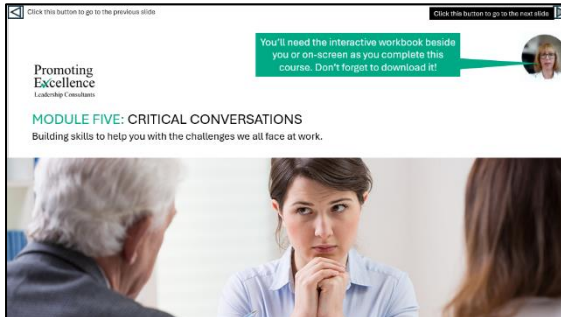
2. Give 3 different helpful and 3 unhelpful elements when having a conversation

My notes:

MODULE FIVE: CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

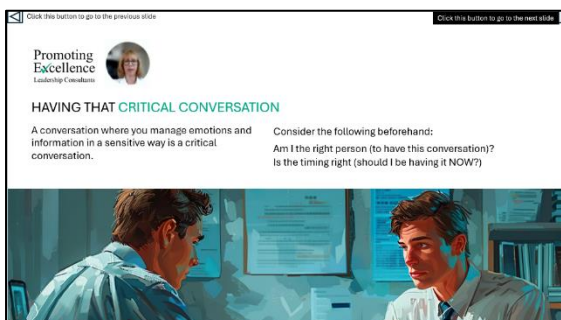
Resources Required

- MODULE FIVE Slides – Critical Conversations.pptx (ppsx file)
- This Workbook



“While no single conversation is guaranteed to change a career or resolve a difficult conflict, any single conversation can...” (Susan Scott, *Fierce Conversations*, 2002)

HAVING THAT CRITICAL CONVERSATION



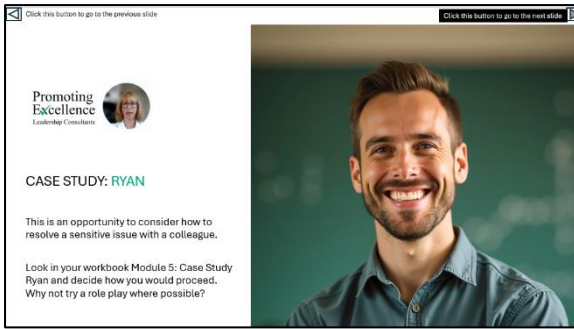
A conversation where you manage emotions and information in a sensitive way is a **critical conversation**.

Consider the following beforehand:

1. Am I the right person (to have this conversation)?
2. Is the timing right (should I be having it NOW?)

My notes:

A CASE STUDY: RYAN



This is an opportunity to consider how to resolve a sensitive issue with a colleague.

How would you handle this?

Arriving at work one day a colleague, Ryan, who is in your team, is waiting for you wanting to discuss his future. Ryan was unsuccessful at a recent interview. The issues involved are quite complex and sensitive because:

1. Ryan is returning from two weeks absence with stress.
2. Ryan has recently failed to get a promotion.
3. Ryan's performance has dipped significantly in the last few months.

What would you say to Ryan as his line manager?

My notes:

SOME SUGGESTIONS AND THOUGHTS

The ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) refer to the 'now or never' moment. Learn to instinctively recognise when this moment arises.

Issues occur without warning; it is best to:

1. Deal with things proactively and initially informally where possible
2. Be close to your team and stay connected to colleagues to see any potential issues from the start
3. Be approachable and ready to listen – gain colleagues' trust
4. 'Grasp the nettle' in a timely fashion, or 'nip problems in the bud.'

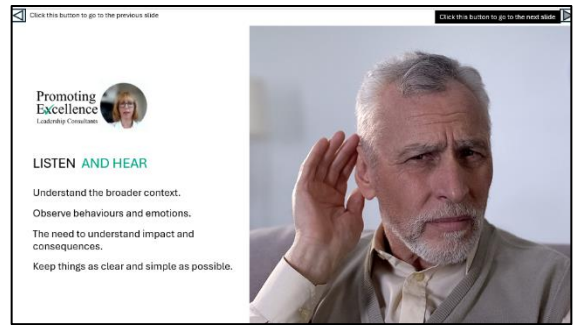
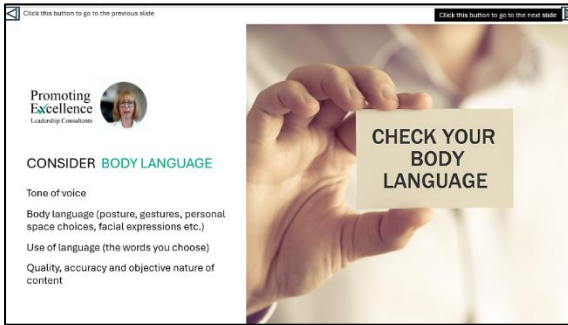
Take care:

1. Emotions may be running high
2. Be aware of the potentially negative outcomes, impact and consequences of the conversation
3. Professionally – think of the significant benefits

Recognise the dangers of being too affiliative, becoming entangled in gossip and losing objectivity by focusing on personalities and not the underlying issues.

My notes:

REMEMBER BODY LANGUAGE – LISTEN AND HEAR



Consider body language:

Tone of voice.

Body language (posture, gestures, personal space choices, facial expressions etc.).

Use of language (the words you choose).

Quality, accuracy and objective nature of content.

Listen and Hear

Understand the broader context.

Observe behaviours and emotions.

There is a need to understand impact and consequences.

Keep things as clear and simple as possible.

My notes:

A FRAMEWORK FOR A PURPOSEFUL DIALOGUE

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FRAMEWORK FOR A DIALOGUE

Look in the workbook where there is a range of information & advice.

Module 5: Framework for a purposeful dialogue.

Who could be a possible role model for you? Why?

Please read the information and record your answers.

Where can you improve your difficult conversations?

Highlight key elements that are appropriate to you:

Planning and preparation	
Understand the real issues accurately	
Take advice	
Think about the other person – potential reactions	
Consider the ideal outcome	
Practice what you are going to say	
Allow sufficient time and think about the timing	
Get the environment/location right	
The conversation	
State the issues clearly and honestly	
Explain why it is important	
Provide specific examples and evidence if appropriate	
Be positive and avoid blame	
Listen well	
Focus upon active listening	
Be open-minded and intuitive	
Summarise accurately to demonstrate you have been listening and hearing	
Be self-aware	

Consider opportunities	
Use coaching skills	
Ask open and probing questions	
Ask – don't tell	
Weigh up possibilities and options	
Manage silences	
Allow the time for thinking and responses	
Action planning	
Summarise again and agree the way forward	
Check for shared understanding	
Start with small steps	
Agree a timetable	
Consider if any support is needed	

Finally, in preparing for a conversation consider these six Promoting Excellence principles:

1. Be confident and assertive, without aggression. Don't be deflected away from the real issues.
2. Be yourself – don't 'play a role' but equally, remember to remain professional. This is a time for dispassionate speaking – not unduly warm and 'matey', not unduly cold and frosty.
3. Focus on the outcome. What would you like to see as a result of the conversation?
4. Don't allow difficult issues to slip by. They need to be dealt-with, not avoided. But remember the limits of your authority, and the rules of your workplace – your conversation must fit what is acceptable, proper, legal, and culturally 'what is done here'. Don't be blunt or tactless.
5. Keep your emotions in check. Remember that your body language should be congruent.
6. Remember, 'silences can be golden'.

"All the conversations in the world cruise on the crest of silence...Fill your conversations with silences during which reality may be interrogated, learning may be provoked, tough challenges may be tackled, and relationships may be enriched."

Susan Scott, 2002

An EXEMPLAR for Difficult Conversations is George Mitchell. Read his story:

George John Mitchell Jr. (born August 20, 1933) is an American politician, diplomat, and lawyer. He was appointed United States Special Envoy for Northern Ireland (1995–2001) by President Clinton and as United States Special Envoy for Middle East Peace (2009–2011) by President Barack Obama.

His role for Clinton was as a Peace Envoy in Northern Ireland prior to the Good Friday agreement. Consider the success of his approach and the way he conducted himself:

He knew and respected the history, he was even-handed, open minded and willing to be flexible

When appropriate, he was determined, resilient, tough and patient with a vision for win-win outcome, ensuring both were parties signed-up to the agreement.

In the same way...

Try to be consistently tactful and diplomatic, be professional, emotionally intelligent and aware of how your behaviour impacts on others.

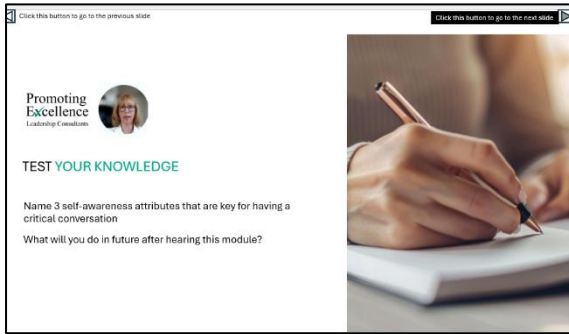
It is accepted that in the world of politics and as a Democratic Senator, Mitchell would not be a role model to everyone. That's fine – everyone doesn't have to have the same role-models.

In this spirit, then, who can you cite as successful in a critical conversation?

Why are they successful? Are they a Role Model to You? If not – who is, and why?

My notes:

At the end of Module Five – Test Your Knowledge



1. Name 3 self-awareness attributes that are key for having a critical conversation

My notes:

2. What will you do in future after hearing this module?

My notes:

WELL DONE – YOU CAN DOWNLOAD YOUR CERTIFICATE

Having completed the course, you are now eligible for the certificate. The download link is onscreen, on this slide and the final title slide. You can download your certificate at any time now, you have reached this point – we cannot re-print the link here in the workbook, however

Type your name into the 'Name' Field to personalise your certificate and then save the PDF to your device OR print it.



Part TWO – Difficult Conversations (Advanced) can be accessed using the same password and login ID. Consider whether you wish to also study for that certificate

