



Difficult Conversations Part Two

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 Two is further learning, with practice and reflection and certifies you at PromEx Master Level. Part One should be studied before Part Two and certifies you at PromEx Introductory 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.

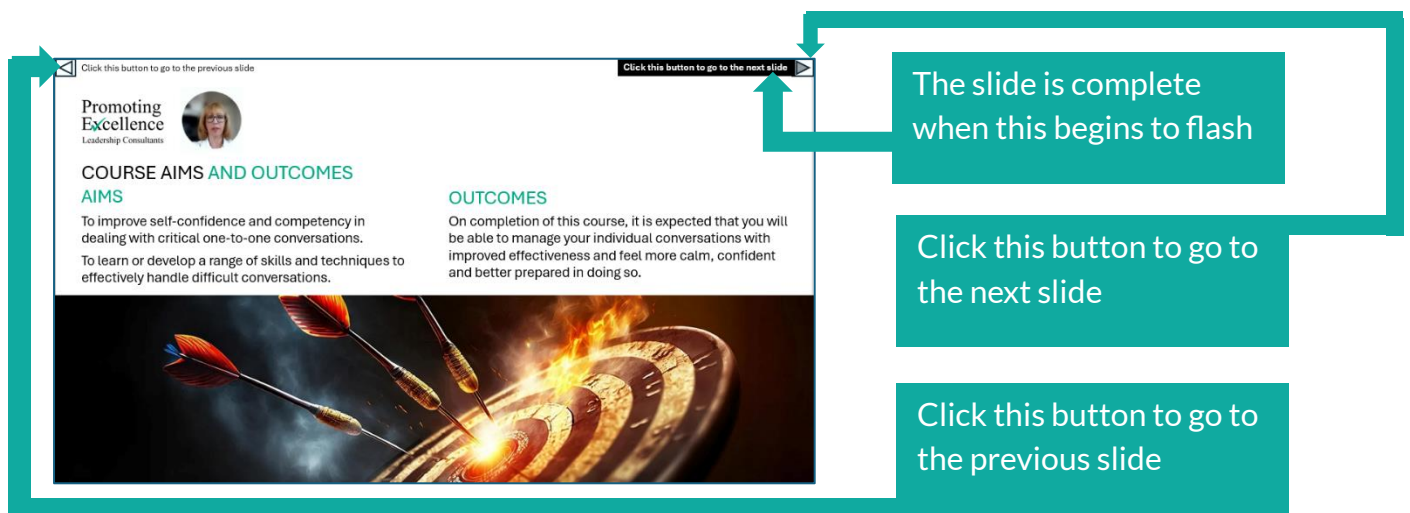
- To learn or develop a range of skills and techniques to effectively handle difficult conversations.

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. You will have reflected and honed your learning sufficiently to be certified at Promoting Excellence Master Level.

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

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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.

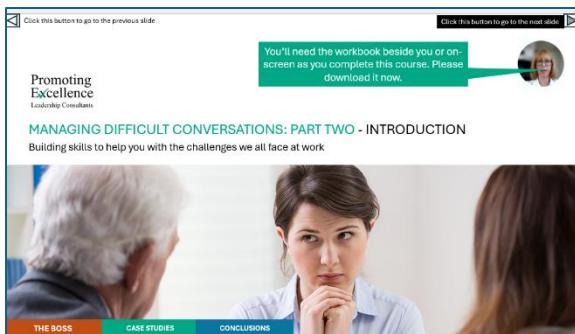
INTRODUCTION

Resources Required

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

This Workbook

The course begins with a short Introductory Module.

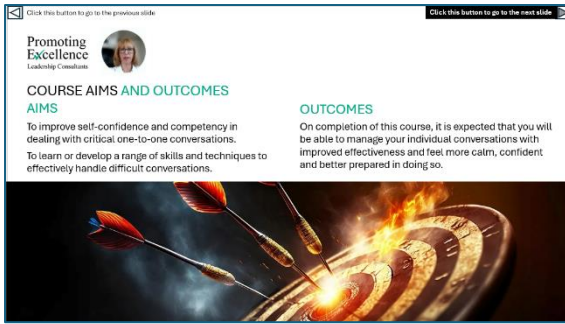


The ability to handle difficult conversations is an essential part of effective leadership and management. It is widely recognised that the most influential form of communication is on a one-to-one basis.

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 3 modules in the Advanced Master (Part Two) course, following directly on from the 5 modules you studied in the Introductory course (Part One) – plus each part has its own Introduction and Certification.

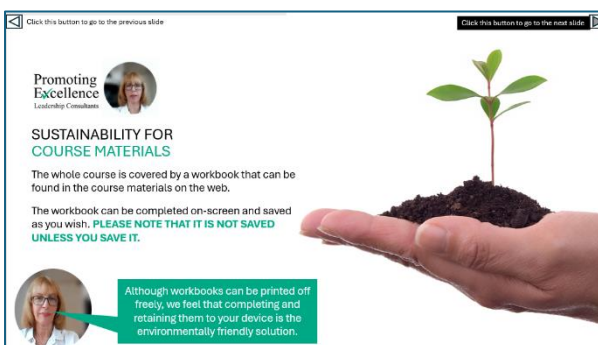
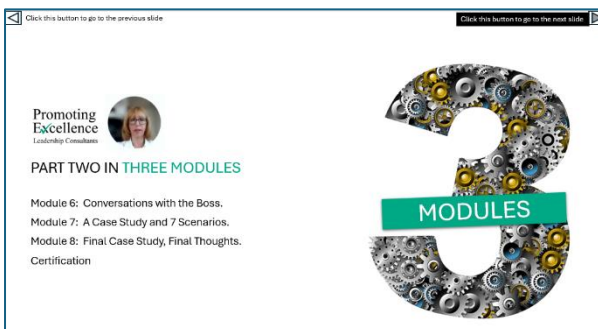
The 3 modules in this course are: -

Module 6: Conversations with the Boss.

Module 7: A Case Study and 7 Scenarios.

Module 8: Final Case Study, Final Thoughts.

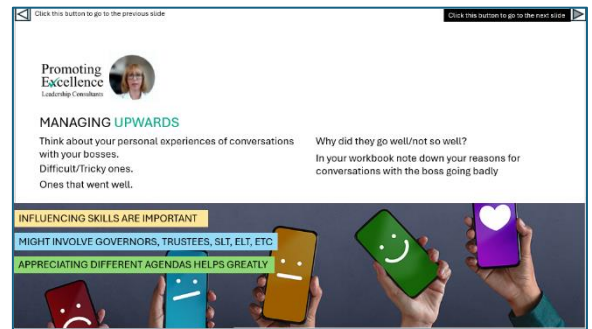
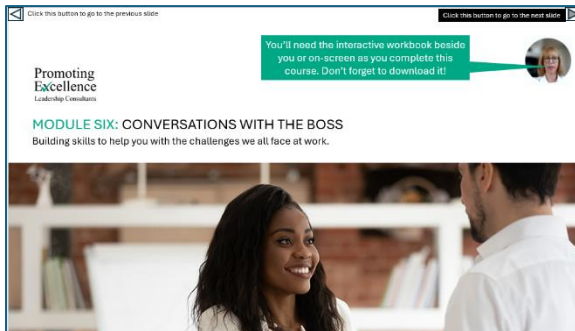
Certification.



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

MODULE SIX: CONVERSATIONS WITH THE BOSS

- Resources Required
 - MODULE SIX Slides – Conversations With the Boss.pptx (ppsx file)
 - This Workbook



Think about your personal experiences of conversations with your bosses. Consider difficult/tricky ones - ones that went well and ones that didn't go so well. Why did they go well/not so well?

Why did any past conversations with line managers, Heads of Department, or any leaders in your organisation not go so well?

My notes:

Thinking about conversations that did go well look at the next slide where you are asked to provide some advice to successfully manage upwards. Where you are working in pairs or groups we suggest you collate a full list of joint-points.

My notes:

ADVICE WHEN MANAGING UPWARDS

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ADVICE WHEN **MANAGING UPWARDS**

What are 3 pieces of advice you can give to help others manage upwards successfully?

If you are working with others you may wish to discuss possible suggestions, or if working alone, perhaps ask a trusted friend.

Note down your advice in your workbook



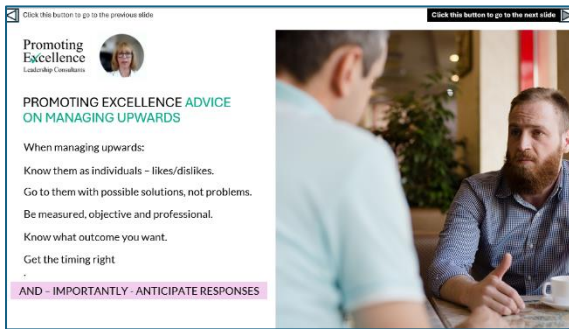
What are 3 pieces of advice you can give to help others manage upwards successfully?

If you are working with others you may wish to discuss possible suggestions, or if working alone, perhaps ask a trusted friend.

Our suggestions are on the next page.

My notes:

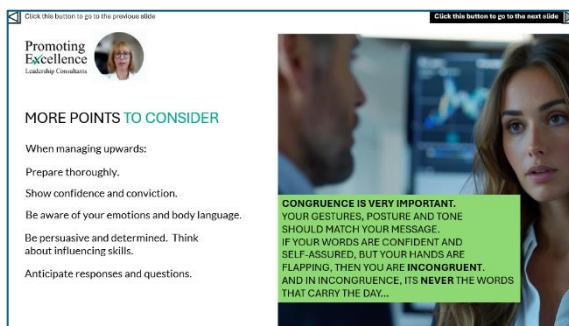
OUR SUGGESTIONS



When managing upwards:

1. Know them (the bosses) as individuals – likes/dislikes.
2. Go to them with possible solutions, not problems. For every item – every issue – you take to your boss, take a suggested solution (even if it doesn't work). Its great practice to coach your own team(when they are able to) to do this with you, as their boss too.
3. Be measured, objective and professional.
4. Know what outcome you want.
5. Get the timing right.

And – importantly - anticipate responses and questions.

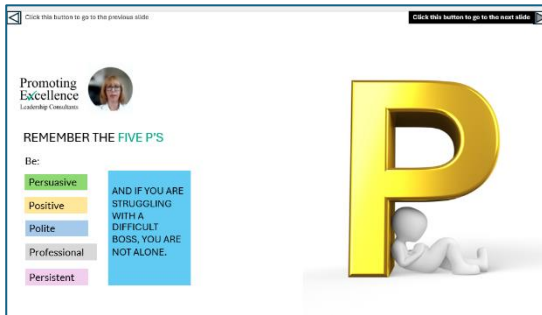


When managing upwards, also:

- 1.Prepare thoroughly.
- 2.Show confidence and conviction.
- 3.Be aware of your emotions and body language.
- 4.Be persuasive and determined. Think about influencing skills.

My notes:

REMEMBER THE FIVE P'S



Be:

1. Persuasive
2. Positive
3. Polite
4. Professional
5. Persistent

My notes:

At the end of Module Six – Test Your Knowledge

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TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Can you state 5 points to remember when trying to manage upwards?
What are the '5 Ps'?



1. Can you state 5 points to remember when trying to manage upwards?

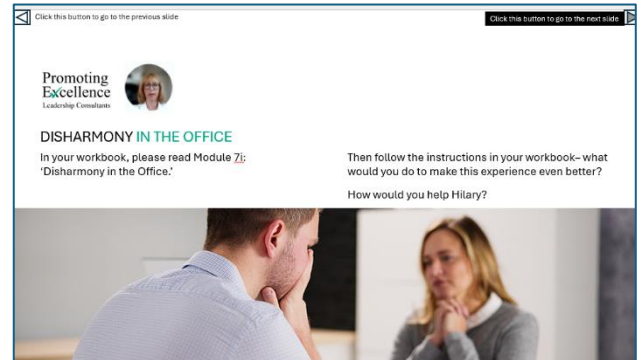
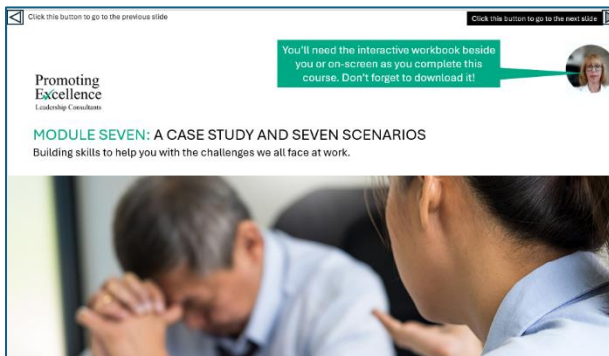
My notes:

2. What are the five 'P's'?

My notes:

MODULE SEVEN: A CASE STUDY AND SEVEN SCENARIOS

- Resources Required – MODULE SEVEN Slides – A Case Study and Seven Scenarios.pptx (ppsx file)
- This Workbook



Module 7i: Disharmony in the Office

Hilary and her line manager

Hilary is committed and loyal, respected for her hard work, her conscientiousness and her personal integrity. However, she finds dealing with conflict difficult.

Two of Hilary's staff - Amy and Julia, have had a long-standing disagreement between themselves which is having a negative effect on morale in the wider team. Amy is dominant and sarcastic. Julia is inclined to sulk and talks about Amy behind her back. Both colleagues are experienced and competent in their roles.

Hilary is very upset about the situation, which is affecting the whole atmosphere and undermining morale within the team. She has already had two separate, informal conversations with each of the colleagues, but there has been little improvement with the situation.

Hilary has asked the senior manager for help to resolve the situation.

The senior manager holds a meeting with Hilary to try to resolve this situation. Imagine you are Hilary – firstly, what outcome do you want?

My notes:

If you are working alone think carefully about how you might approach that conversation before answering the next task. If you are working with others discuss possible ways to conduct the conversation.

Next, imagine you are the senior manager.

How would you conduct the conversation to best advise Hilary how to deal with the situation?

List the steps you would take along with any advice to help Hilary.

My notes:

Finally, what actions should Hilary take?

My notes:

SOME KEY LEARNING POINTS FROM THE CASE STUDY

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KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Don't take over, empower where a colleague needs to develop their skills and attributes e.g. Hilary in dealing with conflict.
- Have evidence, and objectivity to avoid confusion or challenges about the situation
- Remember you may need a formal procedure in some instances

ALWAYS THINK ABOUT THE OUTCOME YOU WANT BEFORE YOU THINK ABOUT THE ACTIONS NEEDED. A GOOD 'INNER QUESTION' IS TO CONSIDER 'WHAT DO I WANT TO BE DIFFERENT, AS A RESULT OF THIS CONVERSATION?'

Don't take over, but rather empower, where a colleague needs to develop their skills and attributes e.g. Hilary in dealing with conflict.

Have evidence, and objectivity to avoid confusion or challenges about the situation.

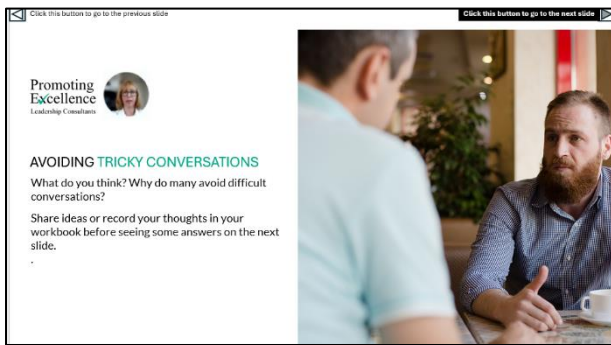
Remember you may still need a formal procedure in some instances.

Always think about the outcome you want before you think about the actions needed.

A good 'inner question' is to consider 'what do I want to be different, as a result of this conversation?'

My notes:

SEVEN REAL LIFE SCENARIOS



Read through the real-life scenarios below and choose the most relevant for you. At the end of each scenario there is space for you to answer the three questions:

- What would you do?
- Suggested course of action?
- Learning outcomes?

If you want to complete all or more of the scenarios you may wish to continue working on this module in a separate session.

SCENARIO 1: “Smokescreen” - What’s the problem?

You are the Senior Manager and handle employee/ industrial relations. A hardened union official has been making increasing use of the grievance procedure and coming directly to you with a raft of grievances concerning everyday management issues. You believe that many of the grievances are non-issues or have minimal substance.

If nothing else, meaningful dialogue with relevant managers could have been resolved these issues without the need for a written grievance and therefore formal grievance hearings. You also believe that the union official is adopting a tactic to keep you (or the management team) on the back foot. This is to create confusion and avoid your attention on other management issues that you believe may be in the best interests of the organisation but will require change.

A result of the high volume of grievances is that the union official is taking time out of his core role for grievance hearings, which is causing some day-to-day operational problems.

What would you do?

My notes:

Suggested course of action?

My notes:

Learning outcomes?

My notes:

SCENARIO 2: “Seen it all before” - What’s the problem?

Des is a long-serving manager in your team who has survived a compulsory redundancy programme. He continues to obtain good results in terms of achieving his own targets. However, there is now more flexibility expected from managers going forward and a need to adapt to new ways of working. The organisation has adopted a model for continuous improvement which involves cross representational teams working on projects to tackle key business issues.

Your management team is driving this new approach but two of your managers have approached you in the last couple of weeks to complain that Des continues to work in the way he always has and have found him quite cynical and uncooperative when they are working hard to make the changes required.

What would you do?

My notes:

Suggested course of action?

My notes:

Learning outcomes?

My notes:

SCENARIO 3: “Persistent Problem” - What’s the problem?

Julie has been with the organisation for around 2½ years. She successfully passed her probationary period although her performance and attendance were satisfactory rather than exemplary. After about 12 months she began to have frequent short-term absences. The reasons for her absences seem to be varied and do not point to one underlying medical condition.

As her line manager, this is becoming increasingly frustrating as her frequent absence is causing operational difficulties, and you can see the increasing pressures on the team - who are already stretched. Your organisation does have an Attendance Management Policy, but this is not generally implemented as staff absence is not an issue.

You have had previous conversations with Julie outside of her return-to-work interviews and whilst these have improved her attendance for short periods she cannot maintain an acceptable level of attendance. Julie is currently absent and due to return to work on Monday morning.

What would you do?

My notes:

Suggested course of action?

My notes:

Learning outcomes?

My notes:

SCENARIO 4: “I am being bullied” - What’s the problem?

You are a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Gill has approached you to say that Colin, her line manager and a member of the SLT, has been bullying her for the last 6 months. She believes this is because of her applying for the position to which he was appointed. You line manage Colin and ultimately made the decision to recruit him in preference to Gill for the post.

Gill shares various examples where she has been left out of decisions that would have included the rest of the team, she also says that Colin makes comments that she feels are designed to undermine her in front of the rest of the team. When they are alone together, he makes inappropriate comments about her blonde hair and permanent suntan.

You are aware that Colin has a natural tendency towards a command management style and his sometimes-abrupt nature has previously brought him into conflict with others. Gill has not approached Colin herself to share her views and at this point she is not prepared to speak to him. Her husband who works in HR for a national engineering company has advised her to keep a diary of incidents and Gill says that unless Colin is dealt with, and his bullying stops she will have no option but to leave.

What would you do?

My notes:

Suggested course of action?

My notes:

Learning outcomes?

My notes:

SCENARIO 5: “Just not cutting it” - What’s the problem?

You have known Sally for more than 10 years, having studied with her brother at university. She, and her brother, remain in your social circle of friends. You encouraged Sally to come and work for your current employer, and she has been happy there and highly regarded by others. You have appointed Sally to a management post, because as a team member she was a star performer, and you believed she had the energy and enthusiasm to take the team forward.

However, you have come to realise that you have overestimated her talent. She is working extremely hard to be a success, but she is just not ‘cutting the mustard’. You have discussed this openly with Sally, and she is aware of the shortfalls in her performance. You have provided mentoring and support for Sally, but this has not bridged the gaps in her performance. She is struggling and the strain on her is starting to show.

What would you do?

My notes:

Suggested course of action?

My notes:

Learning outcomes?

My notes:

SCENARIO 6: “Here’s one we prepared earlier” - What’s the problem?

You are a manager and have been asked to investigate a serious claim of bullying by a member of staff against their own line manager.

That manager is a valued colleague, and if the claim is upheld it will have serious consequences for the manager’s career.

During your investigation, you have interviewed both the staff member with the complaint and another two witnesses to a specific incident. You know the witnesses to both be “close” to the complainant and when taking statements, you suspect that there has been collusion between the three. How do you know who to believe?

What would you do?

My notes:

Suggested course of action?

My notes:

Learning outcomes?

My notes:

SCENARIO 7: “It’s going all the way” - What’s the problem?

You are the Vice Principal in a school or college and Chair a disciplinary hearing following an investigation into the alleged gross misconduct of an employee who has been suspended from work with pay. You know that the employee is contending the allegations of gross misconduct as they are close friends with the local trade union official. You suspect that any action you take will be appealed and ultimately end up in an Employment Tribunal.

You are not entirely satisfied with the quality of the investigation that has been carried out and would have expected a more comprehensive investigation with stronger evidence to underpin the findings.

This member of staff has had ongoing performance issues that have been managed by his Departmental Head.

You are under pressure to get this done as soon as possible as the Departmental Head and the Principal want it resolving. Privately, the Principal has told you this is so that she can recruit a new member of staff for the benefit of everyone.

What would you do?

My notes:

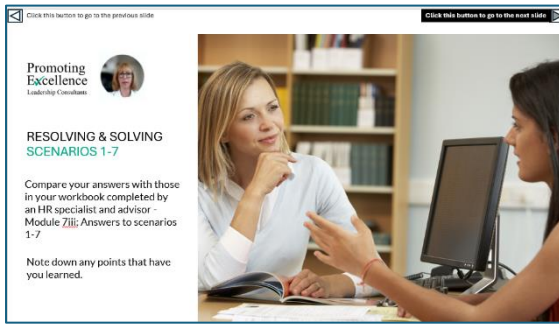
Suggested course of action?

My notes:

Learning outcomes?

My notes:

RESOLVING THE SEVEN SCENARIOS



Compare your answers with those below. These have been completed by an HR specialist.

Note down any points you have learnt – or that you wish to highlight.

SCENARIO 1: “Smokescreen”

HR Suggested course of action

- Face the problem. If you do not act now, it will get out of control and draw your energy away from pursuing your goals.
- You are the right person. However, don't be isolated. Inform HR of what you plan to do.
- Prepare – know your grievance procedure – the stages.
- Ultimately the goal is to reduce the number of grievances being raised. First goal to highlight issue and concern with union official – get him to have to think. Start with a 1:1 conversation.
- Stick to the facts - do not pass judgement on the validity of the grievances.
- Focus on the issue not the person. Establish the high volume of grievances. Point out that time spent handling these grievances is not beneficial for college or the staff and does not lend itself to a healthy working relationship.
- Know the person you are dealing with. Expect confrontation – challenge - grievances a result of the way things get done round here !
- Stick to the facts – do not get bogged down in specific grievances - question the process the union official is following e.g. bypassing Stage 1 which is to raise the concern with a line manager.
- Agree action/ way forward – union official needs to follow process – must raise issue at Stage 1. Gain agreement.

If agrees...

1. monitor and expect to see reduced number of grievances reaching your desk.
2. Do not accept any grievances that have not been via immediate line manager first (unless they concern the line manager themselves).

If does not agree...

- Involve HR and request meeting with union officials (e.g. regional official). Must be face-to-face
- Be prepared. Same brief as 1:1
- Know who you are dealing with (do you have a working relationship with regional official?)
- Remember, in raising the volume of grievances directly with the Senior Manager it is creating work for the regional official also. This may distract from their own goals in consulting for or negotiating for change to the benefit of their members.
- Be prepared to listen and explore – the relationship with the regional official will be key in affecting your desired outcome.
- Agree a way forward. Ideally regional official will speak to your local official and remind them of the process.
- Even if regional official is not in agreement. Record outcome of meeting in writing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Work on your relationship with union officials. A quiet word at the first sign of concern may nip issues in the bud.
- Use union officials as a sounding board for how feel about issues.
- Get buy in. Involve HR – don't need to do it alone.
- In the 1:1 you are looking t make a point – restrict conversation. Stay in control. Conclude meeting if union official is not behaving appropriately.
- In the meeting with the regional official be prepared to listen and explore.
- Action Plans – way forward should concentrate in future behaviour.
- Hold your nerve – what I am doing is right for the college - don't worry – what have you got to lose?

My notes:

SCENARIO 2: “Seen it all before”

HR Suggested course of action

- It is your team – you need to deal with this
- If you don't do it know you will allow Des to think that the status quo is acceptable – and your team may become increasingly demotivated and maybe disillusioned with your leadership.
- Recognise the issue for what it is - for the new approach to work, the “Des” issue, is an obstacle that must be overcome.
- Prepare – your outcome is to change Des's behaviour going forward.
- Speak 1:1 with Des in private. You need to be both open and frank. Do not over- or underplay the situation.
- Be clear about the purpose of the meeting 1) the importance of the project for the school and your commitment to it and 2) concerns about Des' commitment to the project and how his behaviour adversely affects the project.
- Be clear – tell Des what the problem with his behaviour is using your knowledge of the situation
- Give specific examples and draw in observations and comments from other team members.
- Listen to what Des has to say. You are looking for an explanation.
- Keep an open mind and don't jump to conclusions.
- Explore the issues together.
- Ask Des for proposals to resolve the situation. Discuss the options.
- Restate the kind of behaviour/ commitment you expect.
- Inform Des that his contribution to the project will be a goal on his personal objectives going forward and you will appraise this as part of his performance.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- If you don't do it and soon you will allow Des to think that the status quo is acceptable – and your team may become increasingly demotivated and maybe disillusioned with your leadership.
- Being clear allows you to control the meeting
- Remember to focus on the behaviour and not the person.
- There may be a difference of opinion. That's OK. You may have started out being quite expansive and objective. However, you are the manager – you may need to make a judgement and decision and share that along with your expectations going forward with Des.
- By making the issue an objective that will be appraised you are highlighting the importance of the project and Des will have less option to ignore your conversation and carry on regardless.

My notes:

SCENARIO 3: “Persistent Problem”

HR Suggested course of action

- You have raised your concerns with Julie before, and they have not had the desired outcome.
- Now is the time to get into a process. Hence, you need to know your policy and require advice from HR.
- Work with HR to establish the facts i.e. collate Julie’s attendance history.
- Conduct a return-to-work interview on Monday morning establishing the reasons for Julie’s current absence and enquiring about her wellbeing.
- Inform Julie you will be holding a further meeting as the first stage on the Attendance Management Policy and looking at her attendance history. Provide Julie with a copy of the Attendance Management Policy.
- Conduct meeting (with HR support) if no experience or lack confidence.
- Do not question the validity of Julie’s sickness or illness.
- Point out the shortcomings in her attendance history as per the requirements of the Attendance Management Policy.
- Give Julie opportunity to comment, discuss absence history.
- Be prepared for anything from Julie e.g. disclosure of underlying medical condition, family circumstances, being bullied. (Take guidance from HR).
- Explore with Julie - consider involvement of Occupational Health or reasonable adjustments that can be made to her role, working days, time if appropriate.
- Set out expectations of her attendance going forward
- Write to confirm outcome of meeting

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Dealing with a persistent absence problem outside of process leaves the option of corrective action down to the individual and there is no consequence.
- Dealing with a persistent absence problem in an accepted process gives a clear structure for you to deal with the issue, sets out clear expectations of the individual and whilst designed to be corrective in nature will ultimately lead to a dismissal if the attendance cannot be improved over sustained period of time.

- By including HR you should get the appropriate support and guidance with how to deal with anything Julie decides to “throw” into the discussion.
- When using procedures such as Attendance Management Policy you need to use them fairly and consistently with all.
- Using your discretion within such a procedure should be an exception rather than a norm.

My Notes:

SCENARIO 4: “I am being bullied”

HR Suggested course of action

- It is your team in which the manager that Gill has made allegations about sits, so you are the right person to deal with this.
- Remove your personal feelings to one side. If you genuinely believed the allegations are unfounded the best way to protect Colin is to deal with the allegation quickly and take them seriously.
- It is critical to focus on the behaviour and not the people involved.
- If you have no experience you must get advice from HR.
- You will have a Dignity and Respect at Work Policy or procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment.
- Deal with by the book.
- Many such procedures allow you or another relevant person to essentially “mediate” between Gill and Colin as a first step only if Gill is happy for you to progress in this way.
- In any discussion with Colin he needs to be clear about why Gill is unhappy with his behaviour. You must remain non-judgemental.
- Colin then has the opportunity to reflect upon his behaviour and change his behaviour if he feels there is a need to.
- If he rejects that his behaviour is inappropriate then Gill is likely to progress to a more formal step of the procedure in which Colin’s behaviour and the allegations will be investigated.
- As a line manager if you have attempted to act as a mediator you should appoint another member of staff (ideally independent of the team and appropriately trained) to manage the investigation.
- Upon the outcome and findings of the investigation – follow procedure.
- If the allegations are upheld organise an appropriate disciplinary hearing

- If the allegations are unfounded, it does not mean that Colin's behaviour should not be monitored
- If the allegations are deemed to be malicious then it may be appropriate to take disciplinary action against Gill.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Allegations of bullying, harassment, discrimination etc. must be dealt with seriously and given immediate attention.
- Some form of mediation between the two is more likely to result in changed behaviour and a win-win situation rather than any formal investigation in which usually someone wins, and someone loses.
- You have to believe that Gill genuinely wants Colin's behaviour to change and is not seeking "compensation".
- Due process and support and guidance from HR is imperative.
- It is critical to be non-judgemental and focus on the allegations, the behaviour and not the person.
- If outcomes are challenged (appealed) by either Colin or Gill then the process will be scrutinised.
- Failure to deal seriously, quickly and in process will put Colin at risk and may leave Gill an open route to go to tribunal e.g. (and it's certainly hinted at), a claim for constructive dismissal.
- Ignore at your peril.

My notes:

SCENARIO 5: “Just not cutting it”

HR Suggested course of action

- You made the decision to recruit Sally to her current position, and you are her current line manager.
- Ask yourself about the impact on not addressing the shortfalls in her capability.
- You have tried to make it work but is now the time to get into a process ?

Option 1

- You want Sally to recognise that she is not going to meet the level of capability you require and make her own decision to step down.
- However, you must prepare for an open and frank conversation with her. Inform your line manager and HR of your intentions. Is there an option for Sally to step down. Can her pay be red circled etc.
- Hold a 1:1 meeting and clearly set out your understanding of the situation.
- Treat Sally with dignity and respect.
- Explore her feelings regards the situation.
- Explain the options open to you. Explain the reality of following a procedure to manage her capability.
- Explore her feelings.
- Encourage her to decide.
- If no decision, the take control and decide. Put into process (Option 2)

Option 2

- You need to know your policy/ procedure for managing performance/ capability and require advice from HR.
- Prepare, establish the exact reasons for why Sally’s performance falls short or how her capability does not meet the required standard.
- Catalogue what has been said and done to support her to date.
- Conduct a meeting with Sally and explain purpose of meeting – to support her to raise her performance to the desired standard or if not achieved reach a decision to discontinue her in her current role.
- Provide Sally with a copy of the policy.
- Conduct meeting (with HR support) if no experience or lack confidence.
- In summary, pint out gap, explore with Sally what support she needs to bridge gap and agree timeframe in which to reach expected standards (with review).
- Write to conform outcome of meeting.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Option 1 if handled correctly treats Sally with dignity and respect.

- You must focus on the performance and not the person or your relationship.
- Dealing with difficult issues but openly and with respect can build respect from you as a manager and leader of people.
- Dealing with a capability problem that is not going away in an accepted process gives a clear structure for you to deal with the issue, sets out clear expectations of the individual and is a fair and consistent way of working with Sally to give her very opportunity to bridge the gap.
- If Sally did decide to challenge any future decision you make then you can fall back on a robust and accepted procedure that you followed to make your decision.
- Failure to recognised procedures will invalidate your decision whether you believe it to be the correct one or not.

My notes:

SCENARIO 6: “Here’s one we prepared earlier”

HR Suggested course of action

- Keep within process
- Take advice from HR
- Remain objective and non-judgemental. Do not let emotion cloud your judgement.
- Re-interview all three. Prepare your questions beforehand.
- When inviting them to another meeting give an instruction that they should not discuss the vents with anyone else in the meantime
- Clearly state the significance of the investigation and the impact that the findings may have on people lives.
- Go over each person’s account of events again.
- Probe for inconsistencies. Selective use of open and closed questions.
- Point out inconsistencies in their previous statement or with another’s statement.
- Use long silences to encourage the interviewee to keep talking.
- Adjourn if necessary
- Stay with it until you are happy you have covered all the bases.
- Ultimately, it’s OK to ask any of the 3 whether they have discussed their version of events with any other member of staff.
- Ultimately as the Investigator you can record in your findings that you have found evidence of collusion or that you suspect collusion but have been unable to evidence.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- As an Investigating Manager you have to remain non-judgemental.
- Ideally you should have some form of training.
- Be prepared – it helps you to stay in control and get at the information you want.
- Never accept a statement without probing
- You need to refine your skills of both questioning and listening.
- You need to be patient and be prepared to remain silent and adjourn meetings if you need time and space to think.
- Do not be afraid to ask direct questions
- Do not be afraid to repeat questions.

My notes:

SCENARIO 7: “It’s going all the way”

HR Suggested course of action

- If you are not satisfied with the quality of the investigation having been presented with the findings and believe that key questions have not been asked, ask the investigating manager to re-open the investigation to seek the relevant information.
- Delay the disciplinary hearing if necessary. Inform both the member of staff and the employee representative of your action. It is in their best interests to obtain all the facts.
- Be strong and ignore the pressures to get it done. Being rushed may lead to compromising the disciplinary action you take.
- Prior to any disciplinary hearing ensure relevant procedures have been followed and adhered to.
- Failure to follow procedure can lead to a finding of unfair dismissal at an Employment Tribunal.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

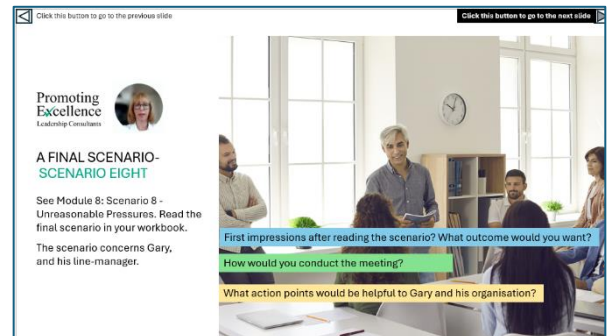
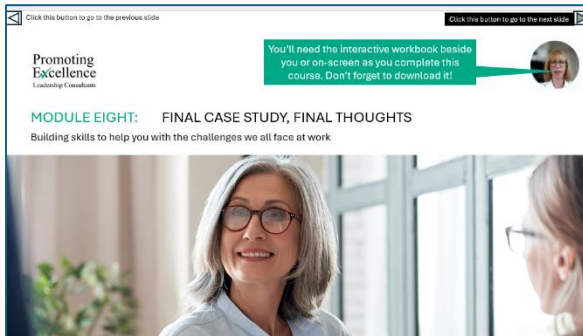
- Ideally you should have some form of training in Handling Disciplinary Hearings
- Ensure you have the full range of facts – you do not want to be re-opening the investigation at the disciplinary hearing
- You are there to consider the findings of the investigation and any mitigating circumstances.

- Ensure things have been done according to procedure. As a minimum refer to the ACAS Code of Practice 1 - Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and Discipline and Grievances at Work: The ACAS Guide.
- Prior to any Employment Tribunal there will be an appeal to a dismissal. This would be heard by the Principal / Person at the Head of the Organisation.
- Do not worry about what may happen in the future – deal with the facts before you fairly.
- 71% of claims to an employment tribunal were withdrawn/ settled in 2011/12. Source: Ministry of Justice Employment Tribunals and EAT Statistics 2011-12.

My notes:

MODULE THREE: FINAL CASE STUDY, FINAL THOUGHTS

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



Scenario 8 - Unreasonable Pressures

What's the problem?

Gary is concerned about his workload, as he seems to be working more and more hours. He has a long backlog of work and can rarely take a break. Also, his team are becoming disillusioned with ever-increasing demands, which are sometimes contradictory or involve duplication of work. The team is responsible for site maintenance and security, and they often feel taken for granted and vulnerable to many conflicting demands.

Having spoken to his line-manager, who was sympathetic and understanding, saying all the right things, the pressures continue to mount with no concrete actions taken to address the situation.

Gary is increasingly frustrated, and more concerned, and decides to have a second conversation with his line-manager. This time he takes an audit of his and his team's workload and examples of the unreasonable demands.

1. First impressions after reading the scenario? What outcome would you want?

My notes:

2. How would you conduct the meeting?

My notes:

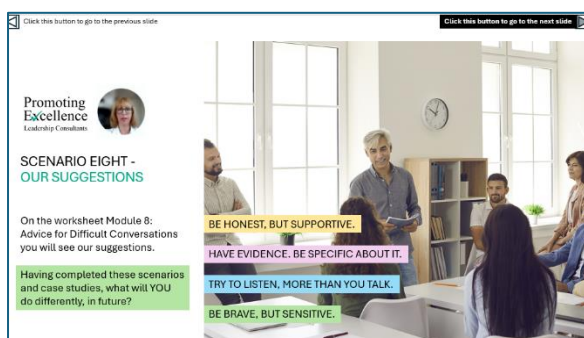
3. What action points would be helpful to Gary and his organisation?

My Notes:

Finally, do you agree:

The win-win outcome envisaged would be if there is a formal agreed appraisal of workload and a support strategy to reduce pressure on Gary and his team.

My notes:



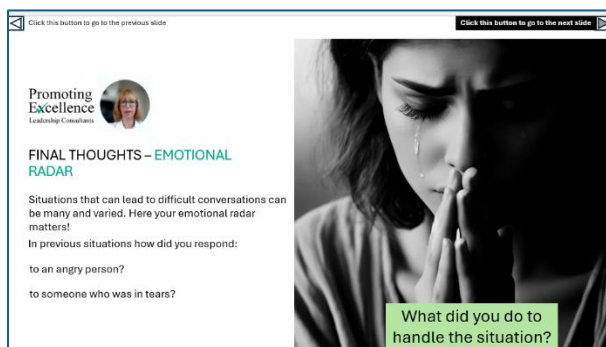
Be honest, but supportive.

Have evidence. Be specific about it.

Try to listen, more than you talk.

Be brave, but sensitive.

FINAL THOUGHTS – YOUR EMOTIONAL RADAR.



Situations that can lead to difficult conversations can be many and varied. Here your emotional radar matters!

How did you / how would you respond to someone who was angry with you at work whilst having a difficult conversation?

My notes:

How did you / how would you respond to someone who was emotional or in tears whilst having a difficult conversation with you at work?

My notes:

FINAL THOUGHTS – YOUR EMOTIONAL RADAR. (2)

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FINAL THOUGHTS – WHEN FACED
WITH ANGER

In a violent storm people would take shelter. Give angry people time to calm down. Reschedule the meeting, if possible.

Confronting them or responding angrily yourself will only make matters worse. Anger begets anger.

Remain calm and keep your dignity.



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FINAL THOUGHTS – WHEN FACED
WITH ANGER (2)

Be professional, determined but emotionally aware.

Slowly and quietly say their first name and gradually build up the volume (to a normal level) – this can have a disabling effect on their anger and chance to bring awareness back to the situation.

If you feel unsafe – withdraw or step back and let the anger dissipate. 'I can see how upset you feel. Let's reschedule this meeting so we can work on a solution together.'



When faced with anger:

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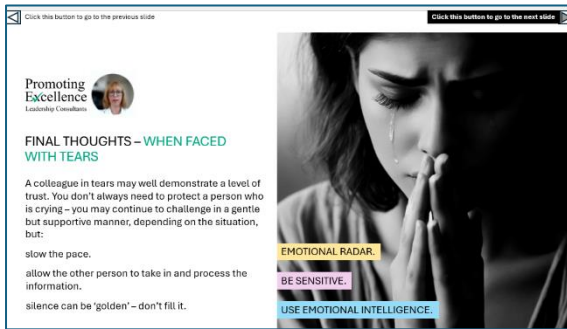
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My notes:

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When faced with tears:



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FINAL THOUGHTS – WHEN FACED WITH TEARS

A colleague in tears may well demonstrate a level of trust. You don't always need to protect a person who is crying – you may continue to challenge in a gentle but supportive manner, depending on the situation, but:

- slow the pace.
- allow the other person to take in and process the information.
- silence can be 'golden' – don't fill it.

EMOTIONAL RADAR.

BE SENSITIVE.

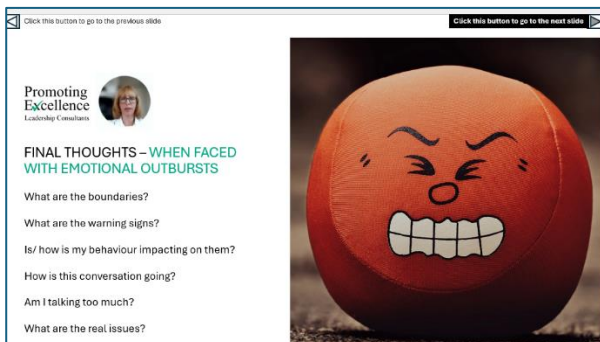
USE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

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1. Slow the pace.
2. Allow the other person to take in and process the information.
3. Silence can be 'golden' – don't fill it.

My notes:

When faced with emotional outbursts:



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FINAL THOUGHTS – WHEN FACED WITH EMOTIONAL OUTBURSTS

What are the boundaries?

What are the warning signs?

Is/ how is my behaviour impacting on them?

How is this conversation going?

Am I talking too much?

What are the real issues?

What are the boundaries?

What are the warning signs?

Is/ how is my behaviour impacting on them?

How is this conversation going?

Am I talking too much?

What are the real issues?

My notes:

REMEMBER THE BOUNDARIES

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REMEMBER THE BOUNDARIES

Dealing with emotional situations can be messy. The focus is the person at work and the impact on the organisation and whom it serves.

Do not play the amateur psychologist or social worker by getting too involved in family issues, personal or medical problems.

Refer elsewhere for advice if/ where necessary.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR BOUNDARIES?

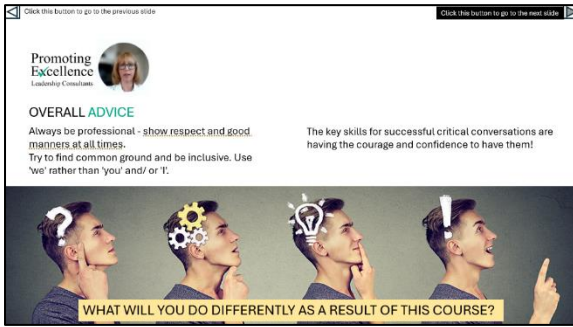
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Refer elsewhere for advice if/ where necessary.

My notes:

FINAL ADVICE



1. Always be professional - show respect and good manners at all times.
2. Try to find common ground and be inclusive. Use 'we' rather than 'you' and/ or 'I'.
3. The key skills for successful critical conversations are having the courage and confidence to have them!
4. Be aware of expected standards of professionalism in your sector
5. Be honest, have evidence to hand
6. Be supportive, listen and be open to change but don't over promise
7. Allow the colleague to offload, know the law, and get any complaints in writing
8. Ensure clarity of job role and don't ignore the positives
9. Listen more than talk and remember - there are two sides to every problem
10. Be brave and honest but don't demoralise. Try to motivate
11. Be challenging and try to encourage self-awareness
12. Get to know them as a person found the full background (empathy) before raising sensitive issues.

What advice can you add?

What will you do differently in future when having difficult conversations?

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 – you must get to it on the slide at the end of Module Eight.

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



The willingness to have difficult conversations is a sign of emotional intelligence and strong leadership.

