

Confronting Difficult Situations and Correcting Behavior

Use this guide as a resource to address potentially uncomfortable situations so that you may have a constructive conversation on issues that may have a negative impact on the employee's success.

DESCRIBE OBSERVED BEHAVIORS

Don't interpret the behavior or attribute value or motive to it. Simply describe what you have observed (be honest and specific, but deliver the message in a civil and respectful manner). For example:

Say this:	NOT this:
"I observed in the meeting that you didn't sit at the table with the rest of the group, your eyes were frequently closed and you did not respond to questions related to your assignments."	"You were rude in the meeting by ignoring everyone."

DESCRIBE THE IMPACT THE BEHAVIOR HAS ON THE TEAM, ON PERFORMANCE, ETC.

Explain the impact of the situation or behavior (both for the employee and anyone else involved). For example:

Say this:	NOT this:
"When you do not contribute in team meetings, your teammates take on a disproportionate amount of the work. This also disrupts the sense of teamwork, which negatively impacts our productivity."	"You need to start contributing in meetings."

COMMUNICATE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

This is the most critical step. Clarify expectations for how the employee is expected to perform moving forward. It is very important to use concrete examples for your expectations. For example:

ASK HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR EMPLOYEE

Your employee needs to know you care about her performance, career development, and you want them to succeed. Let your employee know this is a “two-way street” and you are invested in supporting her as she strives to meet your expectations. Some employees may need time to think about how to answer this question, and it is ok to let them think and come back to you with feedback, ideas, etc. To enable this, you may want to schedule a one-on-one meeting within the following week dedicated to continue and how the employee will move towards success. For example:

Say this:	NOT this:
“I want you to be successful in your position, and that is why I am having this conversation with you. I am here to help and offer guidance in any way I can, but only you can decide whether or not you will make the necessary changes. If there is something you need from me that you are not currently receiving, please let me know. Why don’t you think about ways you can implement the changes needed to improve and we can talk about it again next week.”	“I expect you to improve. Otherwise, further disciplinary action will be taken.”