

How to Have Hard Conversations

"I notice..."
Stick to facts: Observable, specific, morally neutral. Remove interpretation and emotion.

"Could you help me understand?"
Genuine curiosity puts you on their side. Really listen and empathize.

"I'm concerned because..."
Calmly and clearly share your concern. Highlight impact. Keep it short. Connect it to things they value. Pause. Listen for agreement.

"We need to find a solution. What do you think would help?"
Invite them to co-create the solution with you. Push for specifics. Make a plan to follow up.

Why it works:
Puts you on the same side.
Reduces power dynamics.
Reduces defensiveness.
Developmental approach.
Empowering.
High buy-in to solutions.

What could derail it:
Waiting too long to start.
Locked in negative perception.
Not sticking to facts.
Not really listening.
Failing to follow up.
Your own issues and fears.

Guarantee:
The quality of your relationships with your staff will improve.
You will start to see strengths and notice improvement.
You will stop dreading hard conversations.

Action Plan

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Ready for a discovery call?