

CONDUCTING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Engaging in conversations about difficult topics can feel overwhelming. When they happen in the work environment, set aside a time and place, set boundaries, and follow these guidelines.

COME PREPARED

—

EMPHASIZE INTENT

—

EXERCISE COMPASSION

—

ALLOW SILENCE

—

LISTEN ACTIVELY

—

CALL ON MARGINALIZED VOICES

—

TOLERATE IMPERFECTION

—

REFLECT AND ACT

COME PREPARED

- Do your homework and encourage others to do the same
- Arrive with questions you'd like to cover
- Set boundaries for the conversation

EMPHASIZE INTENT

- Assume that participants are there to learn and grow

EXERCISE COMPASSION

- Power conversation with compassion rather than blame

ALLOW SILENCE

- Create opportunities for others to speak
- Pose another question or talking point

LISTEN ACTIVELY

- Don't interrupt
- Ask for clarification
- Redirect the conversation with a question

CALL ON MARGINALIZED VOICES

- Engage participants individually
- Check for real-time comments

TOLERATE IMPERFECTION

- Redirect the conversation if necessary
- Follow up offline when needed

REFLECT AND ACT

- Reflect on the conversation and decide how to take action