

Difficult Conversations

Prepare for the conversation

It is important to prepare in advance so that you can be clear and concise. Make sure to prepare supporting examples where you can share your observations and ask questions (as opposed to leading with conclusions and emotions). For more, see the [Feedback module](#). Practice the conversation with someone you trust before holding the conversation.

Set your intention

Before holding the conversation take some time to clarify your intention for the conversation.

- What is your purpose for having the conversation?
- What do you hope to accomplish?
- What would be an ideal outcome for you, for the other person and for your relationship?

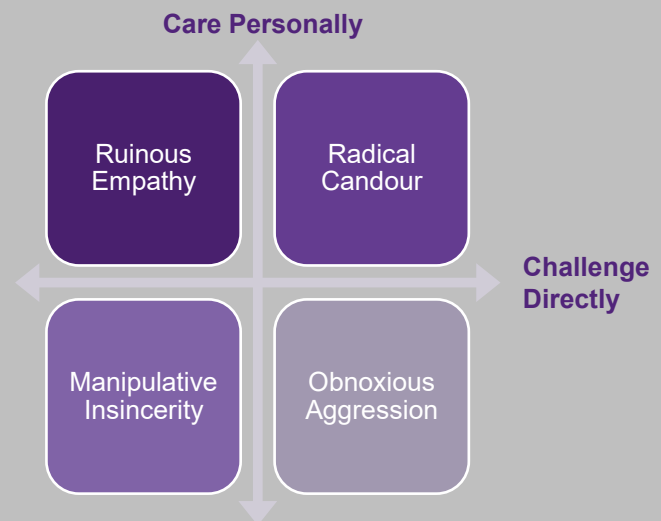
Communicating your intention during the conversation can be as helpful as the communicating the feedback itself. You can return to this intention during difficult moments in the conversation.

Radical Candour

Radical Candour is a framework developed by [Kim Scott](#) that encourages us, when delivering feedback, to show the other person that we care personally while also enabling us to challenge directly (without aggression or insincerity). Radical candour is the ability to share what you think while also showing the other person that you care for and respect them.

Further reading:

- [A HIP Approach to Feedback: How to Achieve Radical Candour](#)

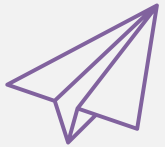


Fight



Defensiveness, confrontation, anger

Flight



Desire to leave

Freeze



Unable to act, silence

Managing emotional responses

Feedback can often trigger our defences. It can threaten our sense of status, perceptions of our self efficacy and our feelings of success. When we feel threatened we may experience fight, flight or freeze and this can affect our ability to take in information and learn from feedback.

When in conversation and the other person experiences fight, flight or freeze, they may feel that either they aren't respected or that their interests aren't considered. Do what you can to repair this misperception before continuing the conversation. Consider whether you can return to your intention or further demonstrate your care. You may find it's best to call a ten-minute break before continuing.

Finish the conversation by agreeing next steps: Who will do what, by when and how this will be followed up.