

Challenging Conversations

Anxiety in many ways is a normal part of life.

When it impacts our ability to sleep, enjoy life or perform at our best, try these tips.

1. Preparation is critical. Take time to consider what you hope to achieve by raising the issue.
2. Manage emotion. If you are holding off strong emotion, first write everything you wish you could say in full form and don't hold back. Then cross out things that are unhelpful or in the past or unrelated, and reframe the others to be clear but reasonable.
3. Give choices as to when and how the conversation occurs
4. Remember that progress is not linear. Expect things may seem to go backwards before they go forwards, and stay calm
5. Share your intention "I want to understand what was behind your reaction in the meeting today."
6. Ask "What happened from your perspective."
7. Give a 'brief back of what you just heard, including thoughts and feelings they've just shared'.
8. Be specific about your own perspective and experience, focusing on what you'd like to see instead "If you feel overloaded I need you to raise it with me directly, as early as you can so we can make decisions together."
9. Remember defensiveness, anger and blame are protective responses. If you can, see it as a need for reassurance rather than a reason to escalate.
10. Focus your time on a creating a shared future state rather than the past.