



I need to have an important conversation, what can I do to prepare?

Successful conversations are the outcome of good preparation and planning. This includes being clear on what you wish to communicate and what outcome you are seeking. Creating a script and rehearsing the conversation is particularly helpful.

What is a script?

This is a document created to ensure the conversation is specific to the situation you are facing and to help you personally communicate your message clearly. It will also include any technical elements of your conversation that you may need to refer to e.g. Introduction (reason for conversation), key messages, opportunity for person to respond, supporting elements if needed, agreed outcome etc.

Seek some assistance from your manager or support staff listed in the toolkit if you are doing this for the first time or are unsure what to do.

Before the conversation or meeting, consider:

- What is the purpose of the conversation or meeting and what are you wanting to communicate? e.g. Are you concerned with the person's performance? Are they not acting in line with the RCH Compact? Are you concerned about their wellbeing?
- Consider if there is any information you need to prepare e.g. Fact checking, emails, samples of work etc.
- What is the best day, time and location? Is privacy important?
- How have people been notified of the meeting?
- If there is any information you wish for people to read prior to the meeting?
- If there are any issues that need to be considered for anyone involved?
- Are there personal or work-related concerns that impact how you deliver your message or approach to the meeting?
- Is this a difficult conversation or message to communicate?
- Have you sought advice from support staff such as Human Resources (HR) or your manager about this conversation?
- Do you have a script or notes prepared for the conversation? See your manager or HR to help you prepare.
- Have you rehearsed or practiced the conversation?

During the conversation

Follow the script you have developed, this will help in managing the meeting particularly when it is a difficult or challenging topic. Other tips:

- Stick to the facts, don't make too many assumptions and keep an open mind.
- Be friendly, open, and listen to what the other person has to say.
- Managing emotions can be challenging for you and the other person/people involved. It is helpful to seek some advice about the ways to manage this from HR or your manager.

After the conversation or meeting

- Does the conversation need to be documented? See file note and meeting record document template in the toolkit.
- Do you need to follow up with the participant/s with the outcome in an email, letter or in person?
- Outline your future expectations.
- Ensure you keep this confidential.

What other resources are available to me?

- The RCH Compact pledges.
- Safe and Positive Workplace Behaviours procedure and flowchart.
- Safe and Positive Workplace Behaviours toolkit, including FAQs and contact lists, templates, examples of scripts.
- Fair Work Australia Guide to having difficult conversations – manager and employee guides.

Who can I contact for assistance?

- Your manager or more senior manager.
- Your HR partner or human.resources@rch.org.au
- The Workplace Health and Safety team.
- Peer Support.
- Employee Assistance Program – Manager Assist Program.

rch.org.au/people-and-culture