



### WHY DO WE PUT OFF 'TRICKY' CONVERSATIONS?

Sometimes we avoid giving feedback to team members, peers or clients because we think it will be hard, might go badly or will end in conflict. We fear ruining relationships, particularly if frustrated or angry about the situation as that might show in the way we give feedback.

### SO WHY BRAVE IT?

- The person needs to know what they could be doing better and have opportunity to work on that.
- They will realise from our behaviour towards them that something is wrong, without knowing exactly what they need to put right.
- If we let somebody repeatedly behave inappropriately before mentioning it, they can say "It's been okay until now, why are you suddenly commenting?"
- The longer we leave it, the more it builds up in our minds as something to 'tackle' and this influences our behaviour when we eventually have the conversation.

### TAKE THE EMOTION OUT OF IT:

Use the AID model, if you want people to do something constructive with your feedback:

#### Describe the specific ACTION or behaviour you witnessed

To reduce the likelihood of conflict, think about the words you will use. Avoid labelling the behaviour or accidentally using inflammatory language, especially if you are frustrated or cross. Describing exactly what occurred also makes it difficult for the other person to dispute what you are saying.

For example: with a team member or colleague - "In the meeting this morning, you raised your voice and banged your fist on the table" versus "You got aggressive earlier". With a client - "On the last four occasions my invoices have been paid after the due date" versus "You always pay late".

#### Help them understand the IMPACT of their behaviour

Ask a question to pull their energy into the conversation and help them understand why you are raising this: "What do you think the impact of that was?" If they truly don't know, despite thinking about it, describe the impact, e.g., "Nobody spoke for the rest of the meeting". With the client example above, you may choose to simply tell them the impact, "This meant I was delayed in paying my team".

#### Agree what you want them to DO in the future

Ask a question to get them thinking about a better future approach. E.g., "if you found yourself in that situation or feeling like that again, what would you do?" In the client example you might say "What do I need to do differently to ensure we are paid on time?" If they don't come up with an idea / solution, don't let them off the hook too quickly. Be ready to describe what you would like to see happen in the future. This should be a collaborative conversation so avoid a 'tell' wherever possible.

A - Action, I - Impact, D - Do or Develop



### TOP TIPS TO HELP THESE CONVERSATIONS FEEL BETTER AND BE MORE EFFECTIVE:

#### PREPARE

Think about the location, time and how to invite the person to the chat, so they don't feel scared or defensive and come ready to contribute to a 2-way conversation

#### BE OPEN MINDED

Accept you may not know all the facts and only see one side of the situation; don't go in believing that you are 'right' and they are 'wrong' or determined to 'get them to see'

#### POSITIVE INTENT

Go in wanting to find a win-win solution and help the person or situation improve

#### MINDSET

Mindset impacts our own and other peoples' behaviour; if you anticipate the conversation will be a nightmare it undoubtedly will be.

#### START WITH THE END IN MIND

... and work backwards - what do you want the person to think, feel or do at the end of the conversation? Design a conversation framework to ensure this outcome

#### BE SPECIFIC

Be ready to describe the specific behaviour or actions seen