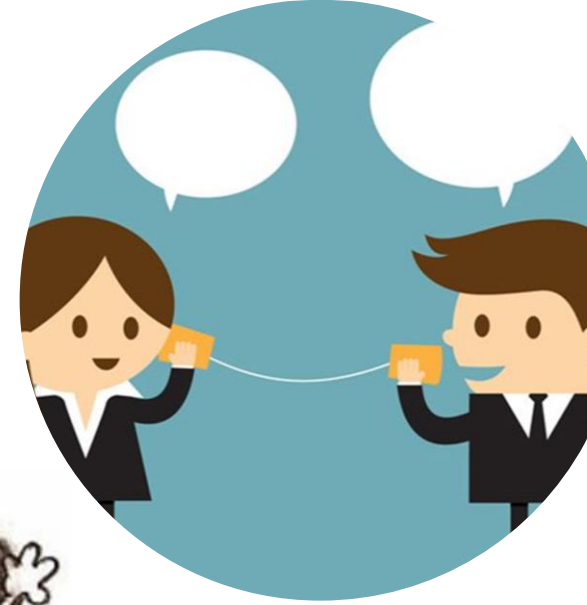


Having difficult Conversations Guidance



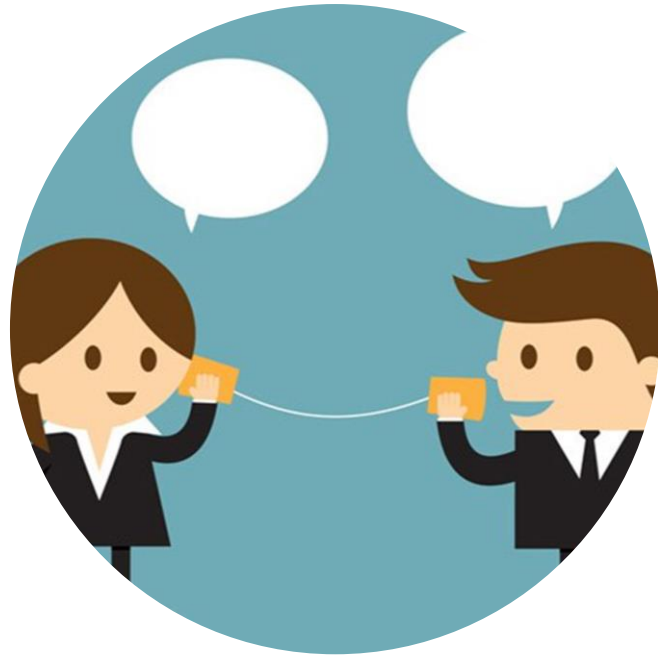
Dudley Safeguarding
People Partnership



Don't put it off

Raise the issue as soon possible, deal with it, don't put it off.

Difficult conversations have the potential to become increasingly problematic if not dealt with promptly.



Prepare

- Take some time to think things through; what are the main points you need to make? How can you best say, what you need to say?
- If you know the person isn't going to agree with you, also prepare some examples and factual information to support what you are saying.
- Identify strengths the person holds that you might highlight in this conversation. Have some ideas about how they might draw on these strengths to move through and beyond the difficult conversation.
- Make use of supervision - Address any tensions or fears you hold about the difficult conversation, raise any gaps in your knowledge or skills.
- Consider and provide for the person's communication and support needs to take part in the conversation.
- Once fully prepared, arrange an appropriate place and time to hold the conversation.



Practice

- You may find it helpful to role play the scenario with a colleague or manager. This will help you to develop a range of possible responses to the challenges you anticipate.
- Busy day-to-day practice may mean this is not possible, however try at least to rehearse the conversation in your mind; in particular, how you will open the conversation and the key points you need to make.



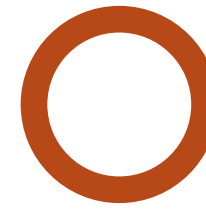
During the conversation

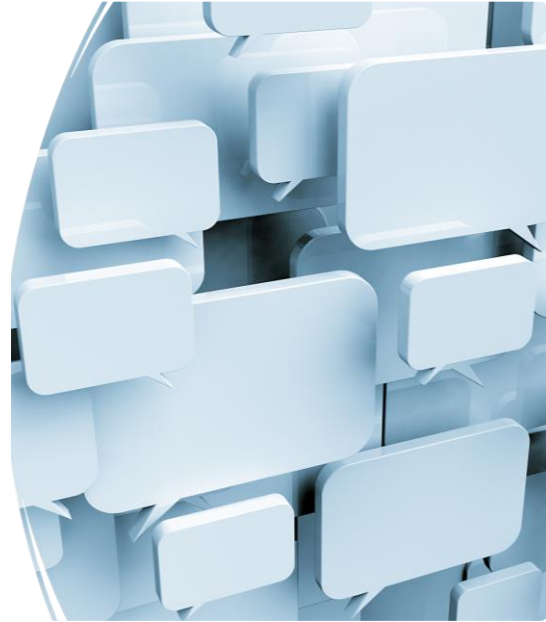
- Keep the agenda focused on the topics you need to discuss. Stay focused on the needs of the person at risk
- Keep the conversation open, using open questions which begin with phrases such as "Why do you think...", "Help me understand why...", or "Explain to me ..."
- Share what you need to and then listen and be empathetic. Always be diplomatic. Be open to the other person's view and interpretation of the situation.
- Stay objective, keep your calm, and listen carefully and considerately to what they have to say. Give them time to speak. Allow spaces for silence; allow emotions to be expressed. Remember that a lot of communication is based on body language.



Decisions

- Almost always with difficult conversations, there is a 'now what?' that needs to be answered. Be clear on the reasons for any particular outcome and allow them to reflect on the positive aspects for all parties involved.
- You may need to suggest some time out to reflect on the conversation.
- Acknowledge any disappointment someone may have.





Reflection

- Reflect on your approach:
 - what worked well?
 - what might have been done differently?
- Consider how you will be able to build upon this conversation in your next meeting with the person.

The image features a light gray background with several white Scrabble tiles. A horizontal row of tiles in the lower half spells out the word "INTUITION". Above this row, various other tiles are scattered, including letters like 'I', 'N', 'T', 'U', 'I', 'T', 'I', 'O', 'N', 'E', 'G', 'A', 'L', 'Z', and 'M'. The tiles are slightly shadowed, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

Trust your intuition and have
courage to have the difficult
conversation

I N T U I T I O N