

Before the Conversation

Take five minutes to prepare for a conversation you have been putting off.

1 Check how you are arriving

Notice your mood and pace. What would help you listen and speak clearly?

2 Separate the facts from your interpretation

Write what you saw or heard. Then identify the meaning you have added.

3 Choose a useful purpose

What needs to be clearer or different afterwards? Choose an outcome you can work on together.

4 Prepare an opening and a question

Name the issue respectfully. Ask what you may be missing, then make room for the answer.

A WORKED EXAMPLE / A SHARED BOOKING CHANGED

What I know: Tuesday's booking moved from 10 am to 11 am. I saw the change after confirming 10 am with the client.

What I am assuming: My colleague does not care about keeping me informed.

A possible opening: "Can we look at Tuesday's booking change? I want us to agree how we keep each other updated. How did the change come through?"

Prepare to be curious. Your first explanation may be incomplete.

Use this for everyday work issues. Serious concerns need your workplace's reporting and support processes.

[READ MORE / Fair Work Ombudsman: A manager's guide to difficult conversations](#)

Plan your conversation

Type into the boxes or print this page. Use brief notes and your own words.

1. What happened? What did I directly see or hear?

2. What am I assuming? What else might explain it?

3. What would a useful outcome look like?

4. How could I open the conversation?

5. What question will help me understand their perspective?

6. When and where can we talk? What would help us participate?

7. Afterwards: what did we agree, and when will we check in?

Want your team to practise conversations like this?

Explore workshops and programs: danielhallsco.com.au/contact

Created by Dan Halls, Human Skills facilitator and practising emergency nurse.