

Bringing up a Concern

Too often, team members don't express concerns about behavior or attitudes of others, due to a fear that things will get worse. In truth, the opposite is often the case when the issue is approached in a respectful, caring manner, and in the spirit of collaboration and growth. Very often, a quick conversation about the many concerns that come up at work will prevent the build-up of resentment that can occur when issues are slid "under the rug" or are vented to a third party.

The objective of the worksheet below is to integrate and practice the seven steps of bringing up a difficult issue. The steps are:

1. Share your observation.

Use sentences that begin like: I noticed..... or When you did _____.

2. Check for mutual understanding or ask clarifying questions.

Was that your experience? or Do you know what I mean?

3. Pause and LISTEN

You don't have to agree with the person's rationale, but it is important to demonstrate an understanding their point of view. Too often we go into a conversation with our own objective or agenda and, though we hear what the person is saying, we are not listening.

4. Share the expectation or the standard that describes what should have been done.

We agreed that.....

5. Check for understanding.

Is that your understanding of what we decided? or How do you see it?

6. Pause and LISTEN to their response.

7. Agree upon a plan for next time, or what needs to be done next.

Ok, let's make a plan for what to do next time.

Remember

The goal is to build trust. Make sure to have the conversation in private and that any sensitive issues discussed are not to be discussed with team members not originally involved in the conversation.

Listening is key. Two of the seven steps are pausing and listening.

Keep an open mind. Come to the conversation with the intent to understand rather than prove a point.

Avoid using judging or blaming language. Use behavioral statements. Describe what you saw, heard, or observed objectively rather than through your point of view or with your "story."

For example:

You came into the exam room before I was finished with the foot exam and asked me to leave.

Rather than.....

You were in a rush, as usual, and kicked me out before I could do my job.