



University Hospitals Sussex
NHS Foundation Trust

Structuring difficult conversations

Managers guidance

Why am I Making This Challenge?

- Will it contribute to the effectiveness of the team?
- Am I challenging with positive intent?
- Am I demonstrating desirable or undesirable behaviour in my method of challenge?

Starting Mind-Set

- No one sets out to do a bad job, or upset other staff.
- Everyone is doing the best they can with the resources available them
- If they were aware of the adverse impact they have on others they wouldn't choose to behave that way

SOON

Feedback/Challenge Model

NB: Always in a place of privacy, and showing due respect for the receiver of feedback

Situation

Talk about a specific event..

The event was recent – talk about it as soon as possible after it takes place

Avoid generalisation and distortion e.g. “this stuff is always happening” Or “you are always doing this”.

Observed Behaviour

Describe specifically what I saw you do or heard you say.

Not my interpretation of it, and not someone else’s report about it.

If possible give an exact description e.g. a quote

Outcome

Describe the specific outcome or impact of the behaviour.

This needs to be the actual impact, not what we believe the impact might be.

What has actually taken place as a result of the action we are discussing?

Next Steps/need to talk about it

This will depend upon who you are talking to.

Always start with an assertion that you know this would not have been deliberate.

To a direct report: this can involve questions about what’s troubling them and an agreement with the person about how they will behave in future.

To a member of your peer group who you know well: comment on it being out of character and ask what might be wrong

To a member of your peer group not known to you, or someone more senior to you: focus on the impact of their actions, and your desire to help by making them aware of their impact.