

# Difficult conversations without the fallout



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£28.5 billion



## FACTS AND FIGURES – WORKPLACE CONFLICTS

- ➔ Most common topic of conflict is capability and performance
- ➔ Next most common topic of conflict is personal disagreements and relationship issues
- ➔ Over half of people who reported conflict experienced stress, anxiety or depression as a result
- ➔ People most commonly resolved conflict through discussion



*Why bother?*



## AI provided Cross Case Themes...

1. Lack of clarity about purpose - meetings drift (RTW → capability → exit), employees don't understand what is being decided
2. Conversations happen too late (or not at all) - Issues escalate into formal disputes, Tribunal sees avoidable breakdowns
3. Poor documentation of discussions - “He said / she said” undermines employer position, evidence becomes the deciding factor
4. Mixing support and sanction - blurring informal support with formal action creates legal risk



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ❓ Why are difficult conversations important in the workplace?
- ❓ How can leaders prepare for a difficult conversation?
- ❓ What strategies help ensure a positive outcome?
- ❓ How should leaders handle emotional reactions?
- ❓ What if the conversation does not resolve the issue?



*If you're uncomfortable having  
the conversation now, you'll be  
more uncomfortable managing  
the issue later*



Most employment disputes don't start with bad intent – they start with silence, delay, or mixed messages.



Avoidance doesn't  
remove risk





# Scenario

A man and a woman are in a dark studio. The man, on the left, is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and light-colored cargo pants. He is gesturing with his right arm towards the woman. The woman, on the right, is wearing a light-colored long-sleeved top and light-colored cargo pants. She is looking towards the man. The background features a brick wall with several arched doorways. There are several spotlights on stands in the background, illuminating the scene.

5 POINT PLAN...

# Purpose

“I want to talk about X because it’s affecting Y”



5 POINT PLAN...

# Facts

What behaviours/performance/capability  
have you observed?



5 POINT PLAN...

# Impact

Who is impacted and in what way?



5 POINT PLAN...

# Listen

What questions are you going to ask?



5 POINT PLAN...

# Actions

What needs to change and by when?



**SAY THIS...**

On three occasions this month...

When X happens, the impact is Y

Let's be clear about expectations going forward

**...INSTEAD OF THIS**

You always...

Your attitude is the problem

This is just how it is



## HANDLING EMOTION AND DEFENSIVENESS...

Acknowledge Emotion ————— “I can see this is frustrating”

Stay neutral and calm ————— Don't mirror escalation

Bring it back to facts and expectations ————— Give clarity



Kindness and niceness  
aren't the same thing



A close-up photograph of two hands clasped together in a firm grip. The hands are positioned in the center-right of the frame. The hand on the right is wearing a silver ring on the ring finger. The background is a solid, light blue color. The text "One commitment" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the lower portion of the hands.

**One commitment**

Any  
questions?





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