



## Productive conversations

No matter who starts the process, the principles of a productive conversation are the same.

### **Take time before talking.**

When someone behaves badly towards us, it might be tempting to respond or retaliate straight away. This is sometimes appropriate, but most people need time to settle their emotions and think about what happened.

### **Prepare for the conversation.**

These conversations are important and must be well-prepared. Think about your key points and write them down. Get a second opinion from your manager or a trusted colleague if you are not sure if your points are reasonable.

### **Be assertive.**

Assertive communication is polite and honest. Say what you mean, but do it respectfully. **Never** shout or use offensive language in these conversations.

### **Stick to the plan.**

You have thought about what to say, so don't stray off script. If you are worried about this, use some notes to keep you anchored. If the other person says something you weren't expecting, tell them you would like to pause. Re-convene after you have had time to process what they said.

### **Don't record the conversation.**

It is illegal to record a conversation without the other person's permission. Recording also escalates the issue and increases the risk people will stop listening during the conversation.

### **Give the other person time to think.**

The other person might not be expecting this conversation. This means you are prepared, but they aren't. Give them time to process what you say and don't expect them to respond properly straight away. Don't be afraid of a bit of silence, even if it seems awkward.

### **Don't expect an apology.**

The other person might see your point of view and acknowledge it or apologise straight away. But they might not. Be ready for them to be defensive and not agree with you. Don't worry if you don't reach agreement, it is more important that you say what you intend.

### **Don't drag the conversation out.**

The conversation is finished once you have said what you planned, and have given the other person a chance to respond. Don't drag it out waiting for a neat and happy resolution. Just thank the other person for listening and go back to work.