# Managing difficult conversations

# Things to think about when you need to have a difficult conversation

## Addressing the problem:

* what is a difficult conversation?
* when should I speak to my supervisee?

## Prepare and plan in advance:

* gather information
* check your organisation's policies
* think about how you will approach the conversation and the desired outcome
* choose a location for the meeting that will be free from interruptions

## Communication skills and techniques:

* stay in control – you don’t want the conversation to turn confrontational and emotions to run high. You don’t know how your supervisee will respond
* be open and honest with your supervisee
* make sure you are asking the right questions and that you are prepared to listen as part of the discussion
* body language and rapport are important to ensure your supervisee feels comfortable

## Structuring the conversation:

* prepare what you’d like to cover
* solutions, follow-up action and support

# Checklist

Are you the right person to be having the difficult conversation?

Make sure you’re approachable, so members of your team can come to you with a difficult matter

Create a safe environment to listen to your supervisees

Be open and honest during supervision sessions, not just when you need to have a difficult conversation

Prepare before the conversation

Seek training in having difficult conversations, if needed

Pick an appropriate place and time. This may sometimes mean that it might be a ‘quick word’ at the first sign something is wrong

Be clear about what you want to say and why

Allow your supervisee to have their say and to explain

Work on your communication skills – this is important to clearly convey what the issues are and what needs to be resolved

Focus on your tone of voice