



**momentum**  
CHANGING MINDSETS

## Momentum's Recommended Five Step Approach to Having a Difficult Conversation

*I feel...about...because...my preference...impact*

### Speaker's opening:

Invite the other person to have a conversation, e.g. I'd really like to talk to you about..... Is now ok for you?

#### **1. I feel / felt...**

Explain how it made you feel (e.g. I felt hurt, under attack, angry ...etc)

#### **2. About / When...**

Describe your concern using neutral, factual and unemotional language (e.g. Last week when you raised your voice in the meeting...)

#### **3. Because...**

State the reason/s for your feelings (e.g. We had never discussed this issue in private before, and we usually do...identify values where possible)

#### **4. My preference is...**

State your preference, focusing on positive outcomes for both parties (e.g. I would like the opportunity to discuss an issue like this in private, to enable us to problem solve together, rather than in a public forum)

#### **5. And the consequences for us would be...**

Potential benefits for relationship... what impact for the speaker? (e.g. This would achieve a better outcome for us both as we wouldn't feel on show in front of the remainder of the team)

### As the listener:

- Show interest in the other person – stop talking, use attentive body language, allowing time for the conversation
- Allow the person to let off steam if they need to
- If they appear really upset, take a moment to pause to keep your own reaction in check so you can focus on the speaker NOT on your own reaction
- Resist defensiveness and make your goal understanding the speaker
- Ask questions to enhance your understanding, but resist interrogation
- Reflect back what you understand – “You felt...about / when... because...preference...impact”
- Check that you have got it right – that you understand their feelings and what led them to feel that way – identify their values where possible
- Restate what you hear their need to be and problem solve options for a way forward/new learnings etc
- Thank them for raising the issue with you
- Agree on the proposed future steps or suggest alternatives

### Speaker's Closing:

- Reflect what you have heard in the listener's reply and check for understanding regarding outcomes
- Thank the listener for their time