

Healthy Conflict, 4.2: The Approach

Summary

- As humans are constantly predicting, the way difficult conversations and feedback are initially approached really matters.
- The space you are in creates a tone. Spaces around other colleagues can lead to embarrassment; formal spaces like offices have particular top-down power dynamics. Neutral spaces away from the traditional working space can be useful, as they make for more human-to-human interactions (rather than the defensiveness of protecting our professional-to-professional identities).
- Body location can also set a tone - sitting face-to-face might set up a more oppositional encounter. Walking together avoids that oppositional stance and can create more openness.
- Leaning into developmental and suggestive language is more likely to create a collaborative response than anything that sounds formal, blameful, or directive. For example, *'Can we have a chat about your learning?'* is more supportive than *'We need to talk about improvements'*; similarly, *"How do you feel about trying to do it differently?"* is more supportive and explorative than *'You need to change.'*

Exercises

- 1) Think about difficult conversations you've had (these could be personal or professional, depending on what you are comfortable with). Was there anything in the way that conversation was approached or the environment it was in that could have been improved?
- 2) What would you do differently next time?

Resources and links:

- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28481583/> Paper on the value of walking when in difficult conversations

Evaluation:

We would really appreciate your feedback through these short questionnaires on the videos and their usefulness. Your feedback will help us improve future content.

Prior to watching the videos



After watching the videos

