

Outline for Difficult Conversations

Initial Goals for Meeting:

- A. Build rapport with the student – need to show that you care
- B. Explain why you are meeting with the student
- C. Describe the behavior and its impact, specifically
Example: I noticed that you leave class early sometimes, which has resulted in you missing a couple of the chapter quizzes, and I'm concerned about whether you are feeling okay or if something more is going on to prevent you from staying for the whole class.
- D. Listen to the student's response and perspective
 - 1. Avoid becoming defensive or this WILL become personal and unproductive
 - 2. Ask clarifying questions
 - 3. Offer compassion and empathy when called for, but do not counsel

Moving the Conversation Forward to Resolution:

- A. Discuss what appropriate behavior looks like and provide examples
- B. State your expectations for future behaviors
- C. Discuss the consequences if the behavior does not change
 - 1. Academic penalties
 - 2. Meeting with the Chair, Dean, AVP of Academics, or office supervisor
 - 3. Referral to the Student Conduct System
 - 4. Referral to GST
 - 5. Campus Pastor (for concerns related to faith and spirituality)
- D. Offer resources to promote success:
 - a. Offer ways you will assist with the success strategies
 - i. Regular meetings for extra help, support, and accountability
 - ii. Quick, post-class "check-ins"
 - b. Suggest campus resources, such as LRC, Counseling, peer study groups

Ending the Conversation with Clarity and Certitude:

- A. Re-state key expectations and consequences (but do not re-hash the issue)
- B. Ask if there are any other questions
- C. Inform student of follow-up measures, such as an email or letter to document the conversation
- D. Set a time to discuss progress and feedback

When it all goes wrong...

Sometimes our very best efforts do not result in positive outcomes. It might be time to call in someone else to help facilitate a second meeting or pursue other options after consulting with your chair or dean, a peer, a GST member, or conduct officer.