WE NEED TO TALK
Navigating Through Difficult Conversations At Work

BACKGROUND

As leaders, having difficult conversations is an inevitable part of managing people. These conversations may involve addressing performance issues, conflicts, or delivering sensitive feedback. According to a Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) study, 92% of employees believe negative feedback effectively improves performance when delivered appropriately. While they can be challenging, handling difficult conversations effectively is vital for effective team management, fostering growth and development, and maintaining a healthy work environment.

ACTION STEPS

Prepare and Choose a Setting
Before a tough conversation, prepare. Clarify the aim, acquire pertinent facts, and list your main points. Choose a private, neutral place for honest and open conversation.

Lead with Empathy
Practice empathy throughout. Show genuine interest in the other person's perspective. Actively listen and let them talk without interruption. Focus on habits, not people, and speak respectfully.

Provide Solutions & Support
Involve the person in problem-solving. Share lessons learned from your experiences. Give constructive criticism and provide ideas for improvement. Offer support and resources to help them develop.

Follow Up and Give Feedback
After the chat, ensure the person understands the actions or expectations. Partner with them to monitor progress, provide feedback when necessary, and provide help with regular check-ins.

TAKEAWAYS FOR SUCCESS

Mastering the art of difficult conversations takes time and patience, but leaning into these conversations can create a culture of open communication, trust, and growth within your team. When handled with empathy, these conversations can lead to personal and professional development and strengthen relationships within your team.