

Tools and templates



Setting up a one-to-one conversation with a difficult employee to discuss their challenging behaviour

Unfortunately, dealing with difficult people is a part of adult life. However, when you come across a difficult employee in your business, it's essential to root out the causes of the behaviour and develop an on-going plan to assist them as:

- Difficult employees make work unpleasant for other employees
- Difficult employees can affect overall employee productivity if they are hard to work with
- Negative behaviour or comments can create a culture of negativity among staff

Working with a difficult employee

Combatting the issue of a difficult employee is two-fold: first, it is essential to establish why the employee has been behaving in a certain way; and second, to create a plan that they must stick to in order to move past their behaviour.

What is behind the employee's behaviour?

- Ask them to reflect on their own behaviour – how do they feel they have acted recently?
- Encourage them to talk about scenarios they have experienced in the workplace recently
- Do they enjoy coming to work? If not, why?
- What do they think their strengths are? Have they been able to utilise them at work?
- Has anything happened either in or out of work to trigger this behaviour?
- If so, how did that event make them feel?
- How do they feel about their overall wellbeing at this time?
- How can you help them change their behaviour in work?
- Is there any further support that they need?

Creating a plan to move forward

Although having an initial conversation surrounding an employee's behaviour is essential, a plan needs to be put in place to monitor their behaviour and assess their improvement:

- If an employee needs to take time off, arrange a leave of absence
- Set targets for the employee to obtain e.g., holding conversations with other colleagues in a social situation or attending a certain amount of wellbeing workshops
- Provide work-based objectives for them to work towards, and give credit where appropriate
- Hold regular scheduled check ins and remain transparent about how you think the plan is going
- Establish an open-door policy so that the employee can reach you if needed
- Make it clear that if there is not improvement, further action may need to be taken