

# General principles and tips for during a difficult discussion

*Diplomacy in a hierarchy* webinar notes  
2 September 2020

- Is this bullying/harassment?  
Yes = escalate
  
- Is there overt and immediate threat to patient/staff safety?  
Yes = escalate

- It's fine to disagree; however, don't be disagreeable
- Addressing conflict respectfully almost always improves a relationship



- Managing a difficult conversation with a colleague or boss is an important workplace competency
  - You won't always get it right
  - Reflect on it like learning any new skill
  - Be happy to receive feedback
- Behave as you would hope to if the tables were turned
  - You'll learn from this experience and it'll shape how you respond to these issues when you're the boss

- Be kind to yourself
  - Difficult conversations generate difficult emotions
  - You are human, not a robot, and will make mistakes
  - Having a perfect exchange is unrealistic
- Don't catastrophise if things don't immediately go your way

# Assume:

- You may have overlooked something, as others may have
- Others have good intentions



Do you have an appropriate balance of **stating your view** (and explaining the data that has resulted in your view) and **asking questions** to try to understand how they have reached their view?

The Systems Thinker. Productive conversations: using advocacy and inquiry effectively. Leverage Networks, cited 4 August 2020.

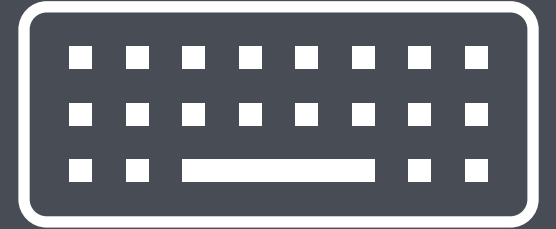
- Consider framing the conversation around either:
  - Patient care
  - Unmet learning need
- Ensure your language is professional
  - Would a third party reading a transcript of the conversation regard your comments as helpful and professional?



- Be prepared to end a conversation if it deteriorates
- Make emotions explicit
  - Acknowledge them as legitimate
  - Ask about underlying reasons for them



- Document your concerns and actions
  - Brief note soon after
  - Record date, time and what said
  
- Don't over worry though!



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