

# Difficult Conversations with Employees

PAC Pearls from the Women's Dermatologic Society

Difficult conversations can be stressful for everyone involved, especially with employees. However, avoiding these conversations won't make the problem go away. By not addressing the issue, you may be enabling negative behavior and allowing it to affect others. Follow these tips from the WDS Practice Advisory Committee (PAC) for all stages of having difficult conversations with employees.

## Before the Conversation

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Before the conversation, identify what corrective actions or problems to address. However, resist the urge to publicly correct the employee. Having a private conversation creates an opportunity to show respect and sensitivity regarding the difficult topic. If possible, be sure to have an office manager present to provide support.

## During the Conversation

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During the conversation, ensure you have a clear plan to convey the issue, set expectations for future behavior, and outline a concrete action plan.

### *Convey the Issue*

- Give examples for behaviors that need to be amended or adjusted
- Be specific and factual
- Use the first person observations (e.g. "I've Noticed")

### *Set Expectations*

- Listen to your employee
- Work together for a resolution
- Convey clear expectations for the desired outcome

### *Concrete Action Plan*

- Outline actions that need to be taken to achieve the desired outcome
- Develop clear consequences if the plan is not implemented
- Document every meeting

## After the Conversation

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After a set period of time, follow up to ensure the action plan is being adhered to. Revisit matters that were discussed and see if the employee still has challenges or barriers to overcome. Once the issue has been resolved, praise your employee publicly. This reinforces the desired behavior through positive recognition.

The **Women's Dermatologic Society (WDS) Practice Advisory Committee** supports WDS members at any stage of their career looking to manage or start their own practice by offering resources on navigating the practice environment. Visit the **WDS Blog** for more tips and advice.