

O'DEAR Framework for Difficult Conversations



Office of Respectful Environments, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Need to give feedback to someone about something they did or said that maybe was sexist, racist, ableist, oppressive or insensitive? The O'DEAR framework (below) is a step-by-step way to wade into difficult conversations, ensure that your concerns are heard, listen respectfully to the other person, and exit gracefully.

<p>O Open</p>	<p>Open by stating your desire to speak with the person. Try to do this in a private space and at time when the person is not stressed or distracted, so they can focus on the conversation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I'd like to speak with you about ___" • "Do you have a few minutes to speak with me about ___?" • "We have a situation we should discuss..."
<p>D Describe</p>	<p>Describe the behaviour specifically, neutrally, and objectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "When you ___" • "When you said ___" • "When I did ___ and you ___" • "I heard from a student that ___" • "In a faculty meeting you said ___"
<p>E Explain</p>	<p>Explain the impact on your feelings and/or your work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I felt ___" [belittled, confused, lonely, frustrated, excluded, etc.] • "I [experienced, saw, heard] ___ when it happened." • "There were some colleagues who were..." [saddened, concerned, etc.] • "I had a difficult time trying to refocus after that."
<p>A Ask</p>	<p>Ask the person to clarify their perspective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "What was going on for you?" • "What were you trying to accomplish?" • "How did you feel?" • "I am curious to better understand what you were thinking in that moment."
<p>R Request</p>	<p>Request a different approach or behaviour in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I would appreciate if you spoke with me directly so we could work through it together." • "I would appreciate it if you exercised more care with your words/actions in the future." • "We are all trying to be better, and this is one area where you can work on it." • "Let's brainstorm next steps. Can you identify some strategies that might help you restore connection with your colleagues?"

