

Change management – supporting others

Conversation guide

As a leader, you play a critical role in the successful implementation of change in the workplace. Regardless of the size or perceived impact of change, research has shown that we all respond to change in similar way, which are categorised as:

- Denial
- Resistance
- Exploration
- Commitment.

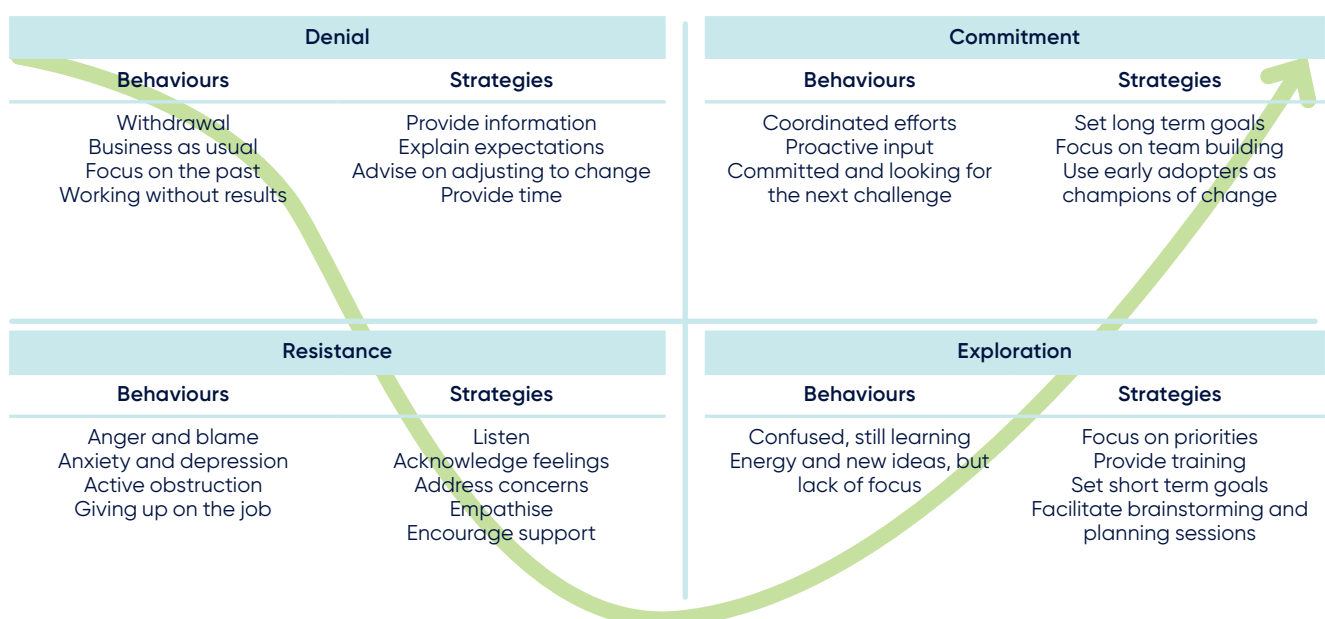
Introducing change and preparing for the conversation

Every individual in your team will respond differently to change. Before you begin a discussion, here are some suggested strategies for addressing behaviours or the way people are feeling.

Introducing the change

- Where it is appropriate, it is best to inform the whole team of any changes at once in a team meeting or at a group morning tea.
- Plan out how you are going to start the discussion about the change. It might be something along the lines of:
 - “As you are aware, the business is growing and it is taking a long time to milk the cows on our current platform. We have decided that we are going to split the herd into two which will mean that we will run two shifts. I understand that this might cause you to be concerned about changes to your work hours and personal lives but I will discuss this with everyone individually and together we will find a solution. The new shifts will commence in four weeks”.

Figure 1 Change curve



- It is best to explain the reason for the change, what the **actual** change will be, how it will **affect** them, the **time frame** and emphasise that you **understand** that it will affect people.
- As soon as part of the change affects people personally, this conversation should be had 1:1 and in private. For example, if a person is to be made redundant this must be discussed privately. During the private conversation you can discuss how the rest of the team should be told about the person who will be leaving the team. The conversation principles are the same for a 1:1 discussion: reason for the change, the actual change, how it will affect them, the time frame and understanding.

Connecting with your team - opening the conversation

- It is important to have meaningful conversations to assess where each of your team members is on their change journey and explore what they need in order to move forward.
- Reach out to your team members – “I wanted to check-in with you about the <recent change>. How are you feeling about it?”

During the conversation

- Listen empathetically, be authentic in your interactions, but remain positive about the change.
- Ask – “How can I support you through this change?”
- Based on their response, think about where they are on the change curve and which strategies you could use to help them move forward.

Finishing the conversation

- Thank them for their honesty and openness.
- Record any agreed actions, and if there were any questions you couldn't answer, make a note to follow up.
- Organise to have a further conversation.

When you communicate and support the change, it shows that you are taking accountability, as well as visibly and actively supporting it.

Using the Dairy Capability Guide to support change management

The Dairy Capability Guide can be very helpful in providing a framework around introducing changes in the workplace. The following sections provide a guide on capabilities for interacting with, communicating and leading employees:

- People management
- Professionalism
- Communication
- Leadership
- Critical thinking for decisive action.

The Dairy Capability Guide can be found here thepeopleindairy.org.au.

If you would like to consider doing Dairy Australia's extension programs Managing People and Farming with My Team, please contact your Regional Services team.



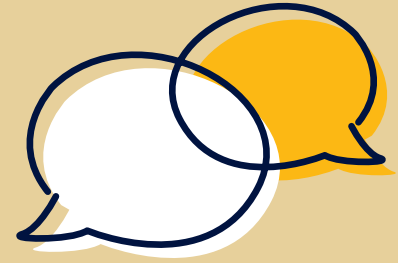
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Difficult conversations

Conversation guide

It can be hard to bring up difficult or sensitive issues with someone. Having the courage to address these issues can create an opportunity to develop better working relationships for everyone. Here are a few steps to support you.

Preparing for the conversation

- Recognise if a conversation is needed. What has led to the need for a difficult conversation with your staff member? Have they been distracted or not their usual self at work which is impacting their performance, the workplace or their wellbeing? Has their performance or behaviour changed? Have they not responded to feedback that has previously been provided to them?
- If so, think about possible reasons why they may be behaving this way. Reasons for behaviour or performance changes might include:
 - Staff changes or new routines at work
 - Staff shortages
 - Issues at home
 - A stressful season (wet, dry, high feed prices etc...)
 - Personal health issues.
- Check-in with yourself - are you feeling confident to have the difficult conversation and be able to listen carefully to what your employee might say? Are you in a suitable mindset to listen to criticism if that is how the employee is feeling? If not, what support do you need? Do you need to wait until you have finished important jobs so that you are not rushed and distracted? At the end of the employee's shift when they are tired and may be rushing to get home is also not a good time to have a difficult conversation.
- Decide what outcome you want from the conversation
 - be clear on the purpose and what you want to achieve. Do you want the employee to improve their behaviour? Be more punctual? Work more efficiently?

- Check your facts and gather any relevant information. Facts and information should include dates and times if possible, observations and/or specific examples relating to the issue you need to raise. It is important not to base the conversation on rumours and hear-say. If you do need to repeat something you have heard second hand, be objective such as "your colleagues have expressed concern about...".
- Choose an appropriate time and place for this conversation, ensuring there won't be interruptions. You could have the conversation as a "walk and talk" so that the conversation doesn't feel as intense or formal.
- Think about questions the employee may have and how you would respond. Empathise, put yourself in their shoes and show that you understand this is difficult for them. You might say, "I get that you don't want to have this conversation" or "I know this is difficult to talk about..."
- Manage your emotions. As difficult as it is, model the behaviour you want to see in them. That means being open, curious and calm rather than defensive, aggressive and upset.
- Write yourself some notes for the conversation, and make sure the other person has time to prepare for it too.

Opening the conversation

- Explain why you want to have the conversation. Make your positive intention clear - it's about wanting to improve the situation and finding a better outcome for both of you, not blame and accusations.
- You could approach a difficult conversation along these lines:
 - "Do you have some time for us to catch up this afternoon or tomorrow? I've noticed you've been a little distracted recently and wondered if there's anything I can do to help. I noticed your reaction

about the <recent change activity> and I'd really like to chat to you about how you're feeling. I really want to hear what you're thinking about <the recent change activity> and share my perspective as well."

- It is important that the person is given notice about the conversation and doesn't feel ambushed. If they feel ambushed, they will become defensive and close down.

During the conversation

- Keep an open mind, be empathetic and genuinely seek to understand their point of view.
- Spend more time listening than talking.
- Answer their questions honestly. If you don't have answers, take it as an action item and commit to a response. If it's something confidential or sensitive, be transparent about that and let them know that's the reason you can't share it yet.
- Be prepared to stop the conversation if either of you need a break and reschedule if required.

Finishing the conversation

- Summarise the conversation and agree on actions, including any additional support the employee may require.
- Reinforce why having the conversation is essential and make it clear what choice or action you will take if they refuse to engage. This is not about making threats, it's about being honest and clear about what their decision means for you.
- Arrange a follow up conversation.
- Thank them for their honesty and openness.



Using the Dairy Capability Guide in a difficult conversation

The Dairy Capability Guide can be very helpful in providing a framework around difficult conversations. Here are some ways it can be used to support a conversation with your employee:

If the employee has not seen the Dairy Capability Guide before, have the difficult conversation with the employee as outlined above. Later in the conversation, show the employee the relevant section of the Dairy Capability Guide which has the behaviours and capabilities that you are seeking improvement on. For example:

"The Dairy Capability Guide is a document that we are going to introduce on the farm. It has different sections, and today we have been talking about chemical handling which relates to the Agrichemicals section. Under this section it says that a person at a 2IC level should:

- Supervise the safe and effective preparation, application, storage and transportation of agrichemicals.
- Report any hazards and near misses in the use of agrichemicals, making recommendations for risk assessment processes and mitigation in standard operating procedures.
- Maintain accurate recording of the use of agrichemicals as required.

Moving forward, I would like you to follow the Dairy Capability Guide to ensure that we tighten up reporting of chemical incidents. This is also a requirement of our policies and procedures which has not been followed".

If the Dairy Capability Guide has been implemented on farm and the employee is familiar with it, it could be referred to in the following manner:

"As you are aware, your position relates to the Ensure and Advise capability level in the Dairy Capability Guide. The capabilities at this level relating to chemical handling are:

- Supervise the safe and effective preparation, application, storage and transportation of agrichemicals.
- Report any hazards and near misses in the use of agrichemicals, making recommendations for risk assessment processes and mitigation in standard operating procedures.
- Maintain accurate recording of the use of agrichemicals as required.

This means that you need to report chemical incidents, which is also included in your position description and our policies and procedures."

For further support in managing employee performance and to view the Dairy Capability Guide, go to thepeopleindairy.org.au or contact your Regional Services team.

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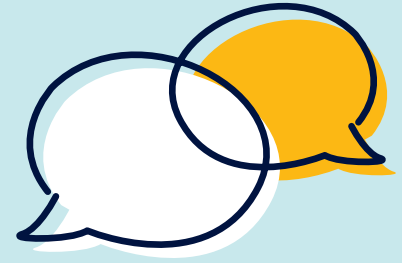
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Giving feedback

Conversation guide

Giving regular feedback is important for the success of any team and is an essential skill in all our roles. However, it takes practice to give feedback in a way that's valuable to the other person.

Using a structured approach can help by making sure the feedback is authentic, timely and specific. For example, the Situation, Behaviour, Impact (SBI) approach involves clarifying the following key steps:

Situation - The specifics of what you're referring to (e.g. when, where).

Behaviour - What you observed your team member do or say.

Impact - How their actions have impacted you, or members of the team.

The aim of feedback is to improve performance. There are two types of feedback to offer:

- Reinforcing (do more of this) and
- Redirecting (instead of this, do that).

Ideally, there should be more reinforcing behaviour with examples of good work and success than redirecting behaviour. If there is too much redirecting feedback given without sufficient reinforcement feedback, the employee may not receive the feedback well.

Preparing for the conversation

Reinforcing feedback

Reinforcing feedback is a gift, and can be given anytime, anywhere – just make sure it's specific.

Redirecting feedback

To have a useful redirecting feedback conversation, the person needs to be in the right headspace. You might open by saying "I'd like to talk about how <particular task or activity> went. When would be a good time?"

During the conversation

- Be open and honest and provide examples.
- Be curious – questions can help the other person to reflect, learn and identify opportunities or solutions (eg. "How do you think this morning's milking went? Why?")
- Be willing to understand why things might have happened (context) or to see things from their perspective and reassess your feedback if appropriate.
- Give the other person time to reflect. Don't expect them to respond immediately, especially if it's the first time they've heard the feedback.
- Remind the person of the positive intention of the feedback and your commitment to support them in any way you can.
- If either of you gets defensive or hostile, pause the meeting and wait until emotions are under control to continue the discussion.

Finishing the conversation

- Ask them to summarise back to you to check their understanding.
- Make a note of any agreed actions or next steps.
- Thank them for their openness and reiterate your support in helping them act on the feedback.

Using the Dairy Capability Guide when giving feedback

The Dairy Capability Guide can be very helpful in providing a framework when giving feedback to employees. Here are some ways it can be used to support a conversation with your employee:

If the employee has not seen the Dairy Capability Guide before, provide feedback to the employee as outlined above. Later in the conversation, show the employee the relevant section of the Dairy Capability Guide that your conversation around feedback has been based on.

For example:

"Today I have provided you with feedback on your communication with other staff members. The Dairy Capability Guide is a document that we are going to introduce on the farm and it has different capabilities and expectations in it. I know that you are only seeing this for the first time but it is a resource that we are going to start using on farm.

"There is a section on communication that relates to our conversation today."

"I would like you to concentrate on the first three columns for now and I will start to discuss this with other staff members too. What are your thoughts on the information in the first three columns? Do you think you can build your communication around others based on these three columns? Would you like further training to feel more comfortable with different communication styles?"

If the Dairy Capability Guide has been implemented on farm and the employee is familiar with it, it could be referred to in the following manner:

"As you are aware, the Dairy Capability Guide includes capabilities that we aspire to reach on farm. Moving forward, I am asking you to model your communication around the first three columns in the table below."

"What are your thoughts on the information in the first three columns? Do you think you can build your communication around others based on these three columns? Would you like further training to feel more comfortable with different communication styles?"

For more information on the Dairy Capability Guide, visit thepeopleindairy.org.au or contact your local Regional Services team.



Example from Dairy Capability Guide

Task	Follow	Apply	Ensure and advise	Initiate and influence	Set strategy
Verbal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak at the right pace and volume for immediate team members. Listen and ask questions to check understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on key points and speak in plain English. Clearly explain and present ideas and arguments. Listen to others to gain understanding and ask appropriate, respectful questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly explain complex concepts and arguments to individuals and groups. Create opportunities for others to be heard, listen actively, and encourage others to express their views. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create opportunities for others to contribute to discussion and debate. Manage complex communications that involve understanding and responding to multiple and differing viewpoints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak in a highly articulate and influential manner. State the facts and explain their implications for the farm business and key stakeholders. Anticipate and address key areas of interest for others.
Body language and non-verbal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of body language and facial expressions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor own non-verbal cues and adapt where necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor others' non-verbal cues and assist others to adapt where necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust style and approach to optimise outcomes and engagement of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust style and approach to optimise outcomes and engagement of others.

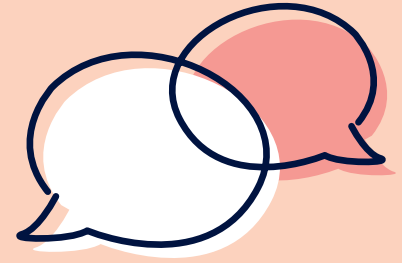
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Inclusive conversations

Conversation guide

Being inclusive in your conversations demonstrates that you respect all your team members, leading to stronger, more trusting relationships. An inclusive environment allows everyone to be their best selves and will result in a more engaged and motivated team.

An inclusive conversation should consider a range of factors such as the language you use, your means of communication, team members' individual preferences, and your leadership style so that everyone has the same opportunity to fully participate.

Preparing for the conversation

- Think about when and where you are having the conversation or meeting. Is it at a time when people are reasonably able to attend? Can everyone see and hear? Is the venue suitable (for example, a pub might not be suitable for some cultures or religions or employees who are under 18 years old).
- Provide enough notice and some detail about what you're discussing – Is it a standard team meeting? Are you discussing some on-farm changes? Is there an external speaker (eg: vet, agronomist)?
- Check-in with yourself about any phrases or terminology you use so that you aren't accidentally leaving anyone out or making people feel uncomfortable.
- Don't make assumptions about the people in your team. Ask whether anyone has any questions and if anyone looks confused, follow up with them individually later on.

- If a team member has disclosed that they are a member of the LGBTIQ+ community, or are someone with a disability, prior to the meeting you can respectfully ask what terms they use to describe themselves, and then use those terms.

Opening the conversation

- Avoid terms like 'guys' when you're greeting a group of people – try 'welcome everyone' or 'hello team' instead.
- Check that everyone has everything they need to participate in the conversation. For example, if you are introducing a safety app, ensure that everyone has their phone so they can download the app and work through it with you. If you are discussing a policy or procedure, ensure everyone has a copy.
- Check that everyone can see and hear and that people aren't expected to continue performing a task while running in and out of the meeting.



During the conversation

- Avoid jargon and acronyms – using these can exclude people who may not have knowledge of that subject and can also be a barrier to effective communication.
- Only mention gender, sexual orientation, religion, racial group or ability if it's relevant or required for the discussion.
- Use a person's name instead of a pronoun if you don't know how they like to be addressed.
- Don't use terms that stem from a mental health context in a derogatory way (eg. describing someone or something as 'psycho'.)
- If your conversation is with a group, take the time to make sure every member has the chance to participate and share ideas or comments.

Finishing the conversation

- Again, avoid terms like 'guys' and try alternatives such as 'thanks team' or 'see you all soon'.
- If other people have used non-inclusive language during a conversation, find a suitable time to give them feedback about it (refer to Giving Feedback Conversation Guide).

Using the Dairy Capability Guide to help with receiving feedback

The Dairy Capability Guide can be very helpful in outlining capabilities around communication in the workplace.

The following sections provide a guide on capabilities for interacting and communicating in the workplace:

- Professionalism
- Communication
- Leadership
- Critical Thinking for Decisive Action.

The Dairy Capability Guide can be found at thepeopleindairy.org.au.

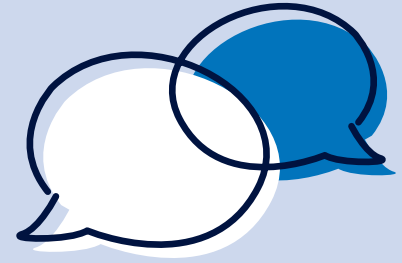
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Receiving feedback

Conversation guide

Feedback is a two-way street and it is important to realise the benefits of feedback. Although it may not feel like it at the time, there are a number of reasons why feedback is important.

Feedback can:

- Help you perform your job better.
- Identify areas where you might need to learn more.
- Help your manager understand if you are having a tough time.
- Identify areas where you excel and areas you could progress in.
- Identify areas where you might need support.
- To receive feedback effectively, it is important to listen with an open mind and remember that feedback helps you find opportunities to learn and grow.

Preparing for the conversation

- Whether you or the other person has initiated the conversation, think about what you want to get out of the feedback discussion, and how you can contribute to the conversation.
- Keep an open mind as to the benefits of feedback and learning opportunities that it can bring.
- Remind yourself of any feedback you've had previously and think of examples you could use to show how you implemented that feedback.
- Review your goals and your development areas to see which areas you would most value receiving feedback about. You might be interested in receiving feedback from your team members as well as your manager.

Opening the conversation

- Remember that the other person (even if it's your manager) may find providing feedback daunting.
- If it's not a good time or place for you, let the other person know, and suggest an alternative. "I need to repair some fences before I shift the cows. Can we meet tomorrow morning instead so that I can concentrate better on our discussion?"
- It's important to make sure your body language reflects that you are open and ready to learn what you can from the feedback conversation.

During the conversation

- Listen to the feedback. Our first instinct is often to react, so it's important to develop the habit of just listening first.
- If you are tempted to jump in and speak, take a pen and paper with you. If something comes up that you want to reply to, jot down a key word to remind you to go back to that point when you have the opportunity to speak.
- Be open-minded and receptive to suggestions – we all have room to learn and grow. Feedback is designed to help you perform better, it's not a personal criticism.
- If you find yourself becoming defensive or stressed, practice stress management techniques: take a deep breath and let it out slowly.
- If you really disagree, are angry or upset, wait until your emotions are under control to reopen the discussion. This will also give you a chance to gather your thoughts so that you can communicate your perspective clearly. If you get angry, upset or defensive, ask if you can take a break from the conversation and meet again at another time.

Finishing the conversation

- Summarise what you have been told to check that you understood the feedback correctly.
- If you're not sure how to act on the feedback, ask for ideas.
- Show appreciation to the person providing feedback – it will strengthen your relationship and build open communication between you.

Using the Dairy Capability Guide to help with receiving feedback

The Dairy Capability Guide can be very helpful in outlining capabilities around communication in the workplace. The following sections provide a guide on capabilities for interacting and communicating in the workplace:

- Professionalism
- Communication
- Leadership
- Critical Thinking for Decisive Action.

The Dairy Capability Guide can be found at thepeopleindairy.org.au.

You might like to consider Dairy Australia's extension workshop 'Influencing Your Career' to learn more about developing yourself in the workplace. Contact your local Regional Services team to find out more about the Influencing Your Career workshop.

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