

Establish - The Four Pillars of Communication

1. The Right Place
2. The Right Time
3. The Right Approach – Mood & Mindset
4. The Right Intention – Reason/Outcome/Agenda

- Check that the place you are planning to talk is appropriate. Will you be able to hear each other well enough? Do you need privacy? Is it a place where you won't be interrupted or overheard? Is it neutral territory?
- Check the time is appropriate – is there enough time? (not too late at night or early in the morning)
- Check that you have the right approach i.e. Are you in the right mindset are you able to think logically & rationally? (Be mindful of the other persons mood / emotional state too)
- Check the intention is right. What is the reason you want the conversation, what is your agenda? (What points do you want to cover, are they relevant?) What *ideally* would you hope the outcome to be? i.e. to come to a resolution / an understanding/ clarity or agreement (If the intention is to pin blame on the other or try to make the other feel bad this isn't the right intention)

How to go about it

- Be aware that during & shortly after a misunderstanding or argument, it is likely that you or the other may be in a heightened physiological state which may not permit for the right mood or mindset. Allow a cool off period of an hour or more before approaching the difficult conversation.
- Be clear on your agenda – if you need to make a few notes beforehand this can be helpful.

- Approach the conversation mindfully – *think, positive, peaceful & also be mindful of body language*
- Once the four pillars of communication are established, (Time, Place, Approach & Intention) clarify your need for the conversation & your agenda to the other person.
- Manage emotional responses of the other – allow the other to let off steam without interrupting or reacting to anything until there is calm.
- Find the rational (*not emotive, don't buy into blame*) agenda of the other and agree on any common ground for the agenda of the conversation.
- Meet the other persons agenda before your own.
- Remove the unreasonable language, which will be felt as 'blaming' such as '*you made me feel*' and remember it is more effective to use an assertive approach using the words '*I feel/felt _____ because _____*'
- When you feel satisfied that your agenda has been met, summarise what's been understood by yourself & allow the other time to do the same, come to a clear end by way of reflection.
- Share how you now feel & and ask how the other now feels, be mindful of not going over old ground.
- Finally show appreciation for the time and attention of the other through words of affirmation & thanks.
- At the end of the conversation – move physically, stand and even move to a different setting & activity. Drinking or eating something can be grounding.