

Giving sensitive feedback – Part 2

For non-native speakers it is all too easy to come across as direct and unfeeling. We created a scenario where workshop participants acted as HR professionals/Managers supporting their teams in managing a range of confidential issues in a 1 to 1 meeting. Some key expressions we generated are noted below. These are from the perspective of the Manager.

1) Setting the context of the meeting:

- Firstly, you need to know everything you say will remain confidential.
- I know it is not easy, but try and speak as candidly/openly as possible.
- I really appreciate you coming to see me/Thank you for taking the time to see me today.
- Firstly, I would like to say we greatly value the work you do. However, recently we have noticed that you have...
- I have organised this meeting to understand what you have experienced.
- We are here to support you in any way we can.
- I appreciate this is difficult for you, so take your time.

2) Ways of offering advice:

Supportive:

- Have you considered/thought about/reflected on...?
- I am very sorry to hear this, firstly you need to think about...

- One option you might want to consider is ...
- How would you like to move forward?
- One solution would/could be to...

Stronger:

- My recommendation is that you should...
- You should/you ought to... (be careful with 'should' and 'ought to' they are strong and can come across as forceful).
- **Note:** Only use 'must', when you feel there is a serious problem/or immediate action needs to be taken.

3) Closing:

- Thank you for taking the time to share your concerns. I will contact you to outline our next steps...
- If you need any further help and support, please get in touch/contact me...
- My door is always open if you want to talk about this further/in more detail.
- I would like to outline our next steps...
- I suggest we meet again in three weeks' time.