

QUESTIONS TO PREPARE FOR A CONSTRUCTIVE DISCUSSION

1. Before you go to the person, has anything you have said or done made the situation more difficult? Own any contribution you have made, and think about what you can do to make it less difficult?

2. It's sometimes wise NOT to confront a situation. What would be the probable benefits and drawbacks of either confronting or not confronting? Are there some issues that need addressing, but others that can be overlooked?

3. Is the other person's issue too serious to be overlooked? How is it hurting him/herself? Is it hurting others? How? Be specific.

4. Would it be better to go in person? With others? Should you use an intermediary? Should the issue be raised directly or indirectly? Could you use a story, an analogy or a point of common interest to open the discussion?

5. What might you be tempted to say that would be harmful, hurtful, or unhelpful?

6. What listening skills do you have a hard time with? Waiting? Clarifying? Agreeing? Reflecting? What would help you remember to concentrate on listening to the other person?

7. Are you believing the best about the other person? How can you offer him/her hope? How can you demonstrate support and concern for your opponent?

8. Write a brief summary of the points you believe should be covered in the conversation, and also write out your opening statement. How can you establish a connection with the other person even if he/she disagrees with you?

9. What are three possible ways the other person might respond to your opening statement? How could you constructively respond to each? Write out some of the "I" statements you could use.

10. How can you show you're trying to be objective? How can you ask for feedback?