

Press Release

19th June 2023

Difficult Conversations: How to Steer Them to a Successful Conclusion

We're not taught to have difficult conversations. The consequence is that most people avoid them - often out of concern or downright fear that the person on the receiving end will react badly. And the reality is that they might! This adverse outcome is even more likely if we delay, procrastinate, blurt the message out, or say it unprepared.

The International Stress Management Association (ISMA^{UK}) is holding a webinar on this vexed topic, entitled *Mastering the Art of Difficult Conversations: Tips and Techniques*, on Thursday 29th June. The speaker is Marie Faire, a consultant, coach, and trainer for over 35 years, who has a reputation for being both supportive and challenging. Marie has an MA in Management Learning and is an Accredited Master Executive Coach. She will be interviewed by Jane Thomas, a highly skilled trainer with over 17 years' experience in mental health and wellbeing training, who is widely recognised for her expertise.

A survey undertaken by the [Chartered Management Institute](#) (CMI) found that more than half of employees said they deal with a difficult conversation at least once a month, while 61% of people said they would like to learn how to manage workplace conversations with more confidence. In fact, the CMI found that the top three most difficult conversations – about pay, inappropriate behaviour, or feedback on poor performance – occur within the workplace. These conversations differ from other conversations because of the emotional load they often carry – such as embarrassment, anxiety, anger, pain or fear - which makes them stressful and therefore best avoided where possible.

But ignoring problems can make them worse and lead to negative consequences for all concerned. By taking a proactive approach, issues can be nipped in the bud and positive working relationships maintained. Marie will explain how difficult conversations can be dealt with successfully, by allowing for preparation and how to open the conversation, recognizing and managing your own emotional state, presenting your side and listening to the other side of the story, handling reactions with care, and finding middle ground to reach an amicable solution.

Carole Spiers, Chair of ISMA^{UK}, said, "Difficult conversations are stressful for both parties, and understanding how to deal with them effectively is something we can all benefit from, especially as the subject is frequently emotive – poor performance, unacceptable behaviour, bullying, dismissal - and emotion tends to throw us off balance. Marie will guide us through the minefield of managing difficult conversations so that we are better equipped to steer such conversations to a successful outcome."

Notes for Editors

- **Mastering the Art of Difficult Conversations: Tips and Techniques**
For more information on ISMA^{UK}'s online Masterclass, being held on Thursday 29th June, go to <https://isma.org.uk/monthly-masterclass-events>. Places may be booked in advance on [Eventbrite](#) and are free to ISMA^{UK} members. Non-members are asked to pay £10 per event.
- **Marie Faire** has been a consultant, coach, conference speaker and trainer for over thirty-five years, and a coaching supervisor for over fifteen years. Marie has several postgraduate qualifications including an MA in Management Learning. She is an Accredited Master Executive Coach and an Accredited Master Coach Supervisor with the Association for Coaching. She is the lead trainer of an AC Accredited Coach training programme and of an AC Accredited Coach Supervision training programme.
- **Jane Thomas** is a highly skilled trainer with over 17 years' experience in mental health and wellbeing training. She is an ISMA-approved personal and organisational trainer, who is widely recognised for her expertise. Jane is passionate about providing the highest quality training and support. Her company is an accredited centre for the Level 5 Diploma in Mental Health and Wellbeing Awareness. She is also a Senior Licensed Practitioner of Motivational Maps, an ISO-accredited tool to assess motivation and satisfaction levels.
- **The Chartered Management Institute** is backed by a unique Royal Charter as the only organisation that can award Chartered Manager status. Their goal is to increase the number and standard of professionally qualified managers, and help people boost their career. They have more than 100k people training to be better managers. <https://www.managers.org.uk/>
- **The International Stress Management Association (ISMA^{UK})** is the leading professional body for workplace and personal stress management, wellbeing and performance, promoting sound knowledge and best practice in stress management, resilience, wellbeing and mental health for over 30 years. ISMA^{UK} practitioners and consultants provide stress management services to individuals and businesses, assisting around 40,000 people who need professional help with stress-related issues every year. ISMA^{UK} endorses and uses the HSE guidelines for managing stress in the workplace. To find out more about ISMA^{UK}, visit www.isma.org.uk.
- **Press Interviews**
For all press and media enquiries please contact Carole Spiers, Chair of ISMA^{UK}, for an immediate response on +44 (0) 77 688 78910 or at chair@isma.org.uk.