

How To Be More Empathetic In Workplace Conversations

“I just have so much on this week, it’s really getting me down”

X DON'T

One-up: “You should see my to-do list!”

Try to fix it: “I’ll speak to them about a deadline extension.”

Shut them down: “You’ll be fine. Let’s go get lunch.”

Advise: “I think you should...”

Sympathise: “Oh that’s terrible.”

Storytell: “That sounds like the time when...”

Explain: “It’s only because it is the end of the month and...”

Console: “Don’t let it get you down, you are an asset to the team.”

✓ DO

Empathise: “I’m sorry you are going through this, how can I help you?”

Empathise: “That sounds really challenging, I can’t imagine what you are going through. Please know that I am here for you.”

Empathise: “It must be hard to talk about but I am glad you told me. I don’t know what to say but I would like to support you if you tell me how?”

Empathise: “From what I’m hearing, you are feeling very overwhelmed. Is that right?”

Empathise: “I can see that you are upset, thank you for sharing that with me. What can I do to make things better for you?”

Empathise: “This is a difficult situation and I think you’ve shown a lot of courage and strength in how you’re handling things.”

Empathise: “If I were in your position, I think I would feel this way too.”

Empathise: “I can understand why you feel this way, it’s perfectly normal to feel frustrated in a situation like this.”

Truth is, there is no script for empathy. It is about actively listening, stepping into someone else’s shoes, being aware of their feelings and understanding their needs.