**Moving forward together post-strike: strategies for navigating delicate workplace situations**

As we return to working together after the strike, it is important to acknowledge that this has been a stressful time for many people. People have diverse opinions on the strike and have been affected by it in different ways. As a result, some relationships may feel more fragile than before, which can lead to conflict.

Conflict is a normal part of life, and how we handle it determines whether it will be constructive or destructive.

This sheet provides suggestions and resources to support you in your efforts to rebuild trust, repair damaged relationships and start to answer to the question, “How can we move forward together from here?”

1. **How to manage strong reactions**

After any challenging situation, such as a strike, people will have diverse needs:

* Some people may feel strong emotions and want to express them
* Some people may want to keep to themselves to avoid talking about contentious issues
* Some people may need to talk about what they have been through and how challenging it is

Sometimes other people’s behaviours inadvertently trigger one of our “hot button” responses, sending us into fight, flight or freeze mode and leading us to behave in a way that could escalate a situation that might otherwise have been manageable. The “[Managing Your Hot Buttons Self-Coaching Worksheet”](https://intranet.canada.ca/hr-rh/hw-ms/icm-gic/docs/managing-hot-buttons-eng.docx) will help you become aware of your triggers so that you can respond more effectively to them.

1. **How to have difficult conversations**

Some working relationships might be strained after the strike. As we start working together again, it will be natural for us to want to connect with others about what happened. This can be challenging, however, when people have divergent opinions. In addition, some people may feel pressure to focus on the work that needs to be done, and others may need time and space to reintegrate and manage the pace of their workload. These types of natural tensions could require us to have some difficult conversations.

Most of us don’t like having these conversations. We might fear provoking an emotional reaction in the other person or putting ourselves in a vulnerable position if we share our thoughts and feelings. The [Having Difficult Conversations Self-Coaching Worksheet”](https://intranet.canada.ca/hr-rh/hw-ms/icm-gic/docs/difficult-conversation-eng.docx) will help you work through your fears and prepare for difficult conversations so that you can go into them with clarity, calm and confidence.

**3. How to give an effective apology**

After the strike, people might inadvertently upset each other as they navigate tricky situations and conversations. For example, you might try to reassure a colleague who feels upset, but they might feel that your well-intentioned words or actions minimized their experience. Or you might share your perspective about the strike with someone, and they might see things differently and feel offended by what you said or how you said it.

It can be tough to admit that we have hurt someone. It takes humility to put aside our ego and own up to our mistakes. Sometimes, it’s important to find the courage to take responsibility and apologize. The [“How to give an apology effectively self-coaching worksheet”](https://intranet.canada.ca/hr-rh/hw-ms/icm-gic/docs/How-to-Give-an-Apology-Effectively-eng.docx) can help you apologize in a way that increases your chances of having a positive impact so that you can repair the relationship and start rebuilding trust.

**How to access more support**

The self-coaching guides mentioned in this article are part of a series on [our intranet site](https://intranet.canada.ca/hr-rh/hw-ms/icm-gic/lwtr-aaor-eng.asp). We hope these tools will help you move forward with the people in your workplace in a healthy, respectful, and inclusive way.

The work of “moving forward together” takes time, effort, and patience; however, it also helps us to rebuild strong working relationships.

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