Considerations When Preparing for A Challenging Conversation

1. Find the right time and place for your conversation
   Schedule a meeting, set aside enough time, create privacy
   **** Don’t underestimate this investment

2. Be in the right frame of mind: do what you need to do to be relaxed at the start of your meeting
   Engage as your best self—you can influence the meeting’s tone
   enter the conversation with genuine curiosity (vs. being right)
   assume good intentions
   believe in your ability/power to positively influence
   behave professionally—always

3. Think in advance about your best approach and how to carry it out
   Frame concerns in neutral, non-blaming language (practice!)
   Take responsibility for your own role in the problem
   Be prepared with the facts
   Be ready to listen. Acknowledge the other’s feelings, perceptions, concerns (aim for understanding)
   Stay focused on your goals

4. Stick with your plan and show some flexibility as warranted

5. Summarize your understandings at the end of the conversation
   Follow up with an e-mail of your understanding of the agreement and invite feedback/commitment

6. Seek help when you need it
   The Ombuds Office offers a confidential, independent, informal, neutral setting in which to identify your issues, goals, and options—you’ll decide what’s best for you

The Ombuds Office offers coaching, mediation, shuttle diplomacy, education about resources, policies and procedures