



*Professional
boundaries
and difficult
conversations*

Included below are reflective questions referred to during the webinar along with links to additional information, resources and references.

In practice reflective questions

These reflective questions can be used to form the basis of a conversation with your Be You Action Team or Learning Community Leadership.

- ② What professional beliefs and values inform your work as an educator?
- ② Are there service policies and procedures that provide guidance about how to maintain professional boundaries?
- ② Do you and your team take time to reflect on your professional values and beliefs together?
- ② How can maintaining professional boundaries support you (educators), children and families mental health and wellbeing?
- ② What challenges do you face with maintaining professional boundaries with children, families and colleagues
- ② What do you feel most challenged by when facing the prospect of having a difficult conversation with colleagues or families? Have you discussed with your team how these challenges can be overcome?
- ② What guides decisions at the service about who might be the best person to initiate a difficult conversation with families?
- ② Does the service have any policies or procedures that provide guidance and support for managing difficult conversations with colleagues and families?
- ② Do you discuss professionally challenging situations as a team and reflect on approaches and their effectiveness?
- ② Have your values and beliefs about your professional role changed during your time as an educator?
- ② Do your policies and procedures provide guidance about your role in difficult conversations with families?

Links to additional information, resources and references from the webinar

Be You Wellbeing Tools

<https://beyou.edu.au/resources/tools-and-guides>

Wellbeing Fact sheets

<https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/wellbeing>

Be You Professional Learning

<https://beyou.edu.au/learn>

ECA Code of Ethics - Early Childhood Australia

<https://earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics>

Family Partnerships domain, Assist module

<https://beyou.edu.au/learn/family-partnerships/assist>

Family Partnerships domain, Partner module

<https://beyou.edu.au/learn/family-partnerships/partner>

Mentally Healthy Communities domain

<https://beyou.edu.au/learn/mentally-healthy-communities>

Mentally Healthy Communities domain Connect module

<https://beyou.edu.au/learn/mentally-healthy-communities/connect>

Early Support domain Inquire module

<https://beyou.edu.au/learn/early-support/inquire>

BETLS observation tool

<https://beyou.edu.au/resources/tools-and-guides>

Stop Reflect Act framework

<https://beyou.edu.au/learn/family-partnerships/assist>

Be You Fact sheet: communication skills for educators

<https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/relationships/communication-skills-for-educators>

Attendee questions and answers

1. How do you respond to a colleague who downgrades you and undermines you on a shift?

Positive and safe communication between staff benefits the whole learning community. Undermining is a type of bullying. The Mentally Healthy Communities domain, Connect module <https://beyou.edu.au/learn/mentally-healthy-communities/connect> has information on bullying and building positive and respectful relationships.

You can also explore the information in the Family Partnerships Domain, Partner module <https://beyou.edu.au/learn/family-partnerships/partner> which explores relationships, collaborating and communicating.

The Be You Wellbeing Tools and Guides <https://beyou.edu.au/resources/tools-and-guides/wellbeing-tools-for-you> and Fact Sheets <https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/> relationships are also useful.

2. Do you have any tips for dealing with difficult conversations in regards to families who are involved in domestic violence?

The Early Support Domain, Inquire module <https://beyou.edu.au/learn/early-support/inquire> has information on having difficult conversations and the Stop, Reflect, Act Framework <https://beyou.edu.au/learn/family-partnerships/assist> may be helpful. Stop and reflect on who should be involved in this conversation before you act. Who has the specialist training to do this?

Provide the family with contact details of local agencies they can call on for assistance or be referred to. Remember to practise self-care and refer to the Be You Wellbeing Tools and Guides <https://beyou.edu.au/resources/tools-and-guides/wellbeing-tools-for-you>

3. How does one respond with impatient parents or urgent matters in which the request to book another time to discuss is downplayed as "not good enough"?

If the matter is urgent then it needs to be addressed straight away. Also the parent may have gathered a lot of courage which sometimes looks like anger to have a meeting.

Using the Stop, Reflect, Act Framework <https://beyou.edu.au/learn/family-partnerships/assist> you can make time to listen and then schedule another meeting before you offer your response.

The parent will feel heard and you will regulate their feelings while listening. Building strong relationships on a daily basis can help. Explore the Be You Family Partnerships domain - Partner module <https://beyou.edu.au/learn/family-partnerships/partner> to give you some additional information.

4. How do you respond to a colleague who downgrades you and undermines you on a shift?

It can be really challenging working with someone who is difficult. Your position along the mental health continuum is influenced by a range of risk and protective factors, and environmental influences. In particular, mental health and wellbeing is most likely to occur in an inclusive environment, where people have supportive relationships with each other.

The Mentally Healthy Communities domain, Connect module <https://beyou.edu.au/learn/mentally-healthy-communities/connect> has information about building positive and respectful relationships.

You can also explore the information in the Family Partnerships Domain, Partner module <https://beyou.edu.au/learn/family-partnerships/partner> which explores relationships, collaborating and communicating.

The Be You Wellbeing Tools and Guides <https://beyou.edu.au/resources/tools-and-guides/wellbeing-tools-for-you> and Fact Sheets <https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/relationships> are also useful.

5. How do you deal with difficult conversations when an entire centre community is processing grief?

Incidents can have a range of impacts for everyone in the learning community. The role of the learning environment in being responsive in times of crisis has been shown to be crucial in ensuring that people receive the help they need.

The Responding Together domain <https://beyou.edu.au/learn/responding-together> with the two modules, Recognise and Respond will assist you in understanding the impact on the whole learning community.

The Early Support Domain, Inquire module <https://beyou.edu.au/learn/early-support/inquire> has information on having difficult conversations and the Stop, Reflect, Act Framework <https://beyou.edu.au/learn/family-partnerships/assist> may be helpful.