MEANINGFUL
Constructive Challenge

○ *Dignity at Work*

The Growth Company

The reality

It's healthy to challenge and it's part of a robust work culture which encourages creativity, and prevents unhealthy habits like 'group think'.

In a large and complex organisation like GC, we must be prepared that, sometimes we'll encounter differences of opinion. We'll all hear things that we don't want to hear, or don't agree with.

In most cases, that doesn't mean the person with a different opinion from yours is single minded, dismissive or causing harm – they may just have an alternate opinion from yours. Whatever our views or beliefs, leaving space for doubt helps us to listen to, and better understand, the views of others.

Problems can arise when we say things in the moment, and have a knee-jerk reaction to what we've seen or heard, which can often come across as blaming others, or in extreme cases – the use of inappropriate language, or offensive or derogatory remarks.

"My manager doesn't seem to understand how long my work takes to deliver to their process. I think we're really over-complicating how we do things, but I'm being told that's the way it needs to be. I think I have a better way of doing it, but I don't know how to share my thoughts with them…."

Belonging at GC:
a safe and inclusive place to thrive

Tips for creating a workplace where we can all have meaningful constructive challenge

Have a safe place for discussion – for people to be able to <u>openly</u>, <u>confidentially</u> and <u>respectfully</u> share and test-out their thoughts and ideas.

Where you disagree, disagree well – take the time to make sure your input is <u>appropriate</u>, <u>considered</u>, <u>evidence based</u> and <u>informed</u>.

Focus on the issues, not the personalities – strip the discussion back to the <u>core problem(s)</u> – i.e. the *'what', 'why', 'where'* and *'how'*, rather than the *'who'*.

Acknowledge others' opinions – Appreciate that a diverse workplace welcomes <u>diversity of thought</u>. <u>Actively listen</u> and make sure people are clear that you know <u>their thoughts</u>, and <u>opinions</u>, and <u>how they feel</u>.

Think before replying – digest what you've heard. Take notes where you can, and read back what the person's said to help <u>clarify the core issues</u> and <u>identify any misunderstanding</u>.

Work toward a mutually accepted resolution – it's not about winning a battle, it's about <u>resolving the issues</u> – and this might need to be achieved issue-by-issue over a period of time.
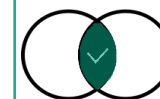
Look for common ground – <u>find the positives</u> and areas where you <u>mutually agree</u>, use these as anchors in your resolution and build from them.

Next steps are important – especially if you've not reached resolution. Take time to <u>think and reflect</u> – but be clear on <u>what's needed, by when</u> – and how you'll know that you've made some progress.

Start to take action

Start to better understand what's said in discussions, and for what reason. To do this well, it sometimes means slowing-down the conversation, or stepping back to let a discussion breathe and unfold.

● Create a team culture where asking questions and getting others' opinions is the norm. It's important to have a safe space for 'positive challenge' where colleagues feel comfortable in saying what they think and feel.

● Be clear what 'crossing the line' within a discussion looks like – and what falls either side of that.

● Check out the <u>How to challenge course</u> and <u>video.</u>

● Register for the bitesize workshops: <u>Effective Communication & Active Listening</u>; <u>Giving and Receiving Feedback</u> and <u>Making the most of our Conversations</u>