

# Communicating Concerns Directly

## Conference Planning

### 1. OPENING

- **When a concern is raised during a conference, stop the flow of the conference, and let the teacher/person know that you would like to address the issue.**

OR

- **Let the teacher/person know that the meeting is to discuss a concern and to problem solve.**  
*“What you have just described has raised a concern that I’d like to take some time to discuss.”*  
*“Can we shift our discussion from ...so that we can go deeper into . . .?”*  
*“The reason I asked you to meet with me is that I have a concern about . . .”*

- **Reassure** the teacher that the reason for the mentoring/supervision process is to provide support. Acknowledge the teacher’s strengths, skills, and background.  
*“It’s my role to communicate openly with you and to support you as a professional.”*  
*“It’s my goal in our work together to promote ongoing communication about best practices.”*  
*”I know that you’ve been working on . . .”*  
*“I know that you want the best for your students . . .”*

### 2) EXPLAIN THE CONCERN

- **Clearly state the concern and provide evidence. Use PT goals, school and program goals, district standards to describe standards of professional practice. Seek understanding of the concern from the point of view of students, parents, colleagues or yourself.**  
*“ My concern is that . . . because . . .”*  
*“During the past few months I have observed . . . and am concerned that . . . “*  
*“The following comments have been made by students, parents, colleagues . . . “*  
*“In past conversations we have discussed . . . and I am concerned that . . . “*  
*“If you were a . . ., how would you feel about . . .”*

- **Acknowledge** the person’s feelings and provide the opportunity for questions or comments.  
*“Can you tell me what you have heard so far?”*  
*“Do you have any questions or comments?”*  
*”How do you feel about what I’ve shared?”*

### 3. PLAN NEXT STEPS

- **Summarize or clarify the area for growth.**

*“ So, our goal would be . . . ” “ Our plan would be . . . ”*

*“ So if you could . . . then . . . ”*

*“ Let’s restate our goal ./ agreement . . . ” “ We agreed that . . . ”*

- **Create a plan for next steps and write it down. Ask the teacher to take the lead. Share in the process, restating as needed in the language of professional standards.**

*“ Let’s talk now about next steps. What steps might you/we take . . . ? ”*

*“ How would it be if . . . ? ” “ What do you think about . . . ? ”*

### 4) CLOSURE

- **Close by asking for feedback about the conference.**

*“ It’s not easy when concerns are raised . . . I really appreciated . . . ”*

*“ What is some feedback you can give me about this conference and our future work together? ”*

- **Suggest a follow-up meeting.**

*“ Let’s meet in two weeks to discuss progress. ”*

*“ I’d like to visit your classroom so I can support you. ”*

*“ Please feel free to let me know how things are going. ”*

### NOTES: