



Common Communication Pitfalls

Why it Matters

Even supportive managers can say things that shut down honesty. Small phrases can make people feel dismissed or judged. Noticing what *not* to say helps keep trust intact.

Pitfalls

Communication Pitfalls	Why it's a Pitfall	Phrases to Watch For	Try this Instead
 Reassuring Too Quickly	Dismisses or rushes past real emotion.	• "You'll be fine" • "Don't worry about it" • "It'll all work out"	• "That sounds tough" • "What part feels hardest right now?" • "Take your time — I'm listening"
 Minimizing Their Experience	Invalidates or compares their feelings.	• "At least it's not as bad as..." • "That's not so bad" • "Could be worse"	• "That sounds frustrating" • "I'm glad you told me" • "Your experience matters"
 Judging or Adding Guilt	Adds pressure or subtle blame.	• "Why didn't you tell me sooner?" • "That's not how I'd do it" • "You should've said something earlier"	• "Thanks for letting me know now" • "You don't have to explain everything" • "I'm just glad you shared it"
 Fixing Too Fast	Skips over listening and may feel controlling.	• "You should talk to HR" • "Just try meditating" • "Here's what I'd do"	• "Do you want to vent or talk through options?" • "I'm here to listen first" • "We can figure out next steps together"
 Rushing to Problem Solve	Shifts attention away from them.	• "I've been through the same thing" • "That happened to me once" • "I know exactly how you feel"	• "Thanks for trusting me with this" • "I'm here for you" • "Want to share more about what this feels like for you?"

