

## 10 tips for tactfully voicing your opinions at work

How you're perceived at work depends on how effectively you communicate your opinions, ideas and needs. Speaking up isn't always easy, but it is important to:

- Demonstrate the value you bring to your team and organization
- Garner respect for your abilities
- Attract professional opportunities

Here are 10 tips to help you tactfully add your voice to any professional discussion:

1. **Be prepared.** Until you've developed the confidence to speak spontaneously in meetings, preparation is vital. Make sure you understand the topics on the agenda and have a few points you can speak on.
2. **Be sure the time is right.** Before talking to a colleague about a difficult or contentious issue, make sure you're in the right frame of mind. Delay the conversation if you or the other individual is angry, frustrated, upset or pushed for time.
3. **Watch your language.** *How* you say things can be just as important as *what* you say. Avoid negative language that includes words like can't, won't or unable to, instead, focus on positive phrasing and language that:
  - Tells the other person what can be done
  - Suggests alternatives and choices
  - Sounds helpful and encouraging
4. **Watch your body language.** Assume a relaxed posture, angle your body forward, maintain eye contact, keep your arms and legs uncrossed and smile to signal your approachability and openness.

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5. **Stick to the facts and keep it short.** Some people tend to ramble when their nerves get the better of them. Stay focused on the issue and be concise.
6. **Don't interrupt.** People will occasionally interrupt each other during healthy discussions, but when someone does it a lot it sends a message that they are not interested in the opinions of others.
7. **Be open to feedback.** Don't get upset when people don't like your ideas. Feedback tells you that people are paying attention and respect what you had to say.
8. **Listen actively to others.** When you show you're interested in what others have to say, they will be interested in what you have to say. Unless there is a pressing business issue, don't text or check your emails during meetings.
9. **Stay calm.** If someone becomes defensive or angry, remain calm, polite and focused. If necessary, agree to take a time out and come back to the issue at another time.
10. **Know when NOT to speak out.** Being perceived as someone who has an opinion about everything and dominates meetings and discussions will be counterproductive to having your views respected and considered.

Finally, remember that practice makes perfect. Contact us for information and resources on effective business communication, conflict resolution and overcoming anxiety at work.

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## Keeping anxiety in check in the face of uncertainty

Hardly a day goes by without alarming news about natural disasters, terrorism, political strife at home and abroad, economic threats and violence. If that wasn't enough, many of us are also concerned about our jobs, our health, our relationships and our finances. It's no wonder that this seemingly constant uncertainty is causing many of us a great deal of anxiety.

### What's your tolerance for uncertainty?

Some people have more resilience to or tolerance for uncertainty, challenges and negative events. Others have less tolerance and this can make them feel:

- Irritable
- Angry
- Sad
- Frightened
- Helpless
- Confused
- Worried
- Exhausted

Although we all differ in how much of life's uncertainty we can tolerate, there are ways to increase our resilience and better cope with an ever-changing world.

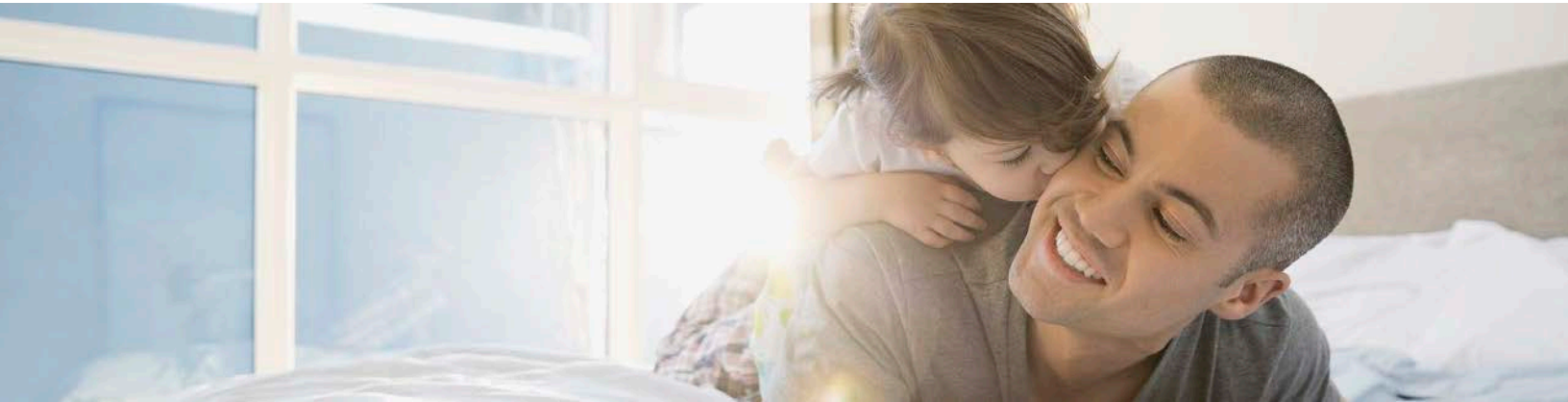
- **Limit exposure to news and social media.** Especially avoid the news before bedtime.
- **Avoid catastrophizing.** Catastrophizing means thinking that the worst possible things will happen. Don't let your fears overtake your emotions. Instead, write them down then ask yourself if they're likely to happen. You'll see that the worst case scenarios probably won't happen and you'll be able to focus on managing the situation.
- **Control what you can.** Focus on the things that are within your control, such as household or work projects. Try to establish routines to give you some comforting structure to your week.
- **Breathe, breathe, breathe.** When the unexpected happens or you see something on the news that upsets you, focus on deep breathing to calm both your mind and body.
  - Breathe in slowly through your nose for 5-7 seconds.
  - Hold your breath in for 3-4 seconds.
  - Breathe out slowly through pursed lips as if you're whistling for 7-8 seconds.
  - Repeat these steps several times.

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- **Take care of yourself.** You're better able to cope with uncertainty if you're physically and mentally prepared. Make efforts to eat well, exercise and get enough sleep.
- **Seek support from those you trust.** Many people isolate themselves when they're stressed or worried. But social support is important, so reach out to family and friends.

If you're having trouble managing stress and coping with uncertainty on your own, ask for help. Contact us for more information, support and resources.

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## Online featured reads

### Back to Work Blues: Easing into Work after Summer Vacation

The transition from vacation to the working world is often filled with anxiety and disorientation. There are a number of ways to make the transition from vacation back to work a little less jarring. [Keep reading.](#)

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