



Problem solving with your workers

? What?

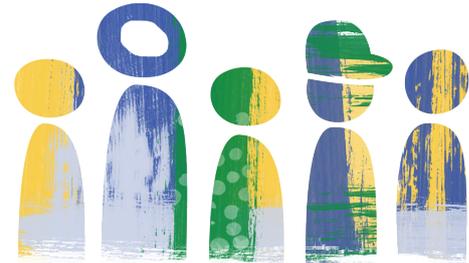
Problems can arise at any workplace. Problems can be about pay, asking for leave, performance, attendance or other workplace issues.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers often lack confidence to talk to their boss about workplace problems. They may have specific problems relating to their cultural obligations, such as Sorry Business, or experience racism and discrimination. They might also find it hard to relate to other workers and/or their boss.

? How?

Most problems at work happen because people don't know what the law is or because of problems with communication. Problems at work can usually be fixed by finding out what the law is and making time to talk to the worker/s involved.

You should respect everybody's opinions and backgrounds and take into account cultural and language differences. Creating a supportive and culturally respectful workplace can promote greater confidence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.



To help your conversations go well you should:

- **Be prepared and committed to solving the problem.** Gather information, consider the problem and think about what can be done to fix it
- **Be mindful** that you may not be aware of all the issues impacting the worker
- **Set a time to talk** with the worker without interruptions
- **Listen carefully**, keep an open mind and consider all sides of the story
- **Be flexible** and willing to change your approach once you have more information
- **Explain your point of view carefully and calmly**
- **Work with the worker** to solve the problem together
- **Offer the worker your support.** Your worker might feel more comfortable having a trusted friend or workmate with them when speaking to you about a problem
- **Learn about cultural and language differences** that might impact your workplace. You could speak to a trusted community member or Indigenous liaison officer to get a better understanding.



Tip to remember

For more information about sorting out problems in the workplace, you can go to www.fairwork.gov.au/help.

If you need help talking to your worker, you can do our 'Difficult conversations in the workplace - manager course' online course at www.fairwork.gov.au/learning.

Call our Small Business Helpline for quick and easy access to workplace relations advice. Contact the Helpline by calling **13 13 94** and pressing option 3.