The Layoff Conversation

Tips

- Use positive emotions (compassion, empathy)
- State that you understand that this must be very difficult; do not minimize the situation. Use your emotional intelligence.
- Allow time for the employee to say how they feel. “Be there for them.”
- Be grateful that you can make this transition process easier.
- Get right to the point.
- Stay away from discussions that could confuse the primary message (i.e., This is not about performance or personal issues.)
- Listen; document any potential problems.
- Allow time for the employee to say how they feel.
- Keep your eyes on the same level as the employee’s and maintain a calm presence.
- It is OK if people cry; do not ask them to get control of themselves before continuing. Acknowledge the distress, but proceed with the news.
- Acknowledge that part of your job is to deliver this news. This can diminish the feeling of a personal attack.
- Control your own emotions.
- Do not get defensive
Hi, (employee name). Please have a seat.

As you know, UCSF has been reorganizing to refocus our activities and are faced with significant state budget cuts.

Over the last few months we have made some very difficult decisions regarding our organization.

I must unfortunately inform you that your position has been eliminated and we do not have another position for you.

I know this is difficult news.

I want to assure you that we will help you in every way we can. (HR person) is here today to assist with information you need.

I want to personally thank you for all of your contributions to the university.

Again, I know this is difficult. Is everything I have said clear to you?

I brought (HR person) who will review with you the next steps and resources available to you.

Thank you. I am also available to you for any help you might need.