

3. Use the following questions to help Olivia prepare to “set context” and extend an invitation to Alannah to have a conversation.
 - a. Why does she need to have this conversation?
 - b. How will this conversation benefit her and Dr. Keller?
 - c. What will likely happen if they don’t have the conversation?
 - d. Why is it important to this conversation now? Will delaying it make the situation worse?
 - e. What has kept them from having this conversation earlier? Does she need help getting past these barriers?

Draft Context Statement:

Dr. Keller, I have been glad to have the opportunity to work with you this year. I find the research that you are doing to be fascinating, and I am excited to play a part in your work. I believe that we both started year feeling excited about the work that we would be able to do together, but over the past couple of months, something has changed. I am not sure exactly what happened, but I would like to better understand. I believe there may have been some miscommunications or misunderstandings and I am wondering if we could take some time to clear those up so that we can both make the most of our next six months together. When would be a good time to meet?

When would be a good time to chat?

Ask yourself

- Can you hear, “I care”?
- Can you hear, “I want to repair our working relationship”?
- Can you hear, “I want to understand this situation from your point of view”?
- Did she discuss shared goals or potential costs?
- Do you think this invitation would effectively open a door to a conversation Li and Dr. Keller?

Scenario B: Paul

Paul is a PhD student working in the lab of Dr. Susan Chung. Besides overseeing Paul's research project, Dr. Chung is in the process of forming a start-up company.

Paul's project is externally funded and unrelated to Dr. Chung's company. As a result, Dr. Chung spends very little time on Paul's project leaving him to work quite independently. Paul has not been terribly concerned since his work is going well. Recently, though, Dr. Chung has started asking Paul to take on extra tasks that are not related to his project. Tasks that support her start-up company. Doing this extra work is causing Paul to fall behind with his project. He is afraid that if he does not address the situation, he will not be able to meet his next important deadline.