



Exploring Leadership

COMMUNICATION: CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Giving and receiving constructive feedback is a vital skill for personal and group growth. According to the University of Tasmania, constructive feedback “provides encouragement, support, corrective measures, and direction to the person receiving it.” When done right, constructive feedback motivates growth and provides actionable suggestions for positive change and meaningful results.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- When was the last time you received feedback?
- Was it helpful, and was it a positive or negative experience?
- How could your experience have been different?

This workshop emphasizes one-on-one constructive feedback, the most common type of feedback. These interactions often occur between a manager and employee, teacher and student, or leader and participant. Feedback sessions aim to improve behaviors, build success, and strengthen relationships, but their deeper purpose is to foster growth and mutual understanding. How feedback is delivered can make all the difference—it’s not just about what you say, but how you say it that fosters growth.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Learn how to give and receive constructive feedback effectively.
- Develop skills for receiving feedback and using it for positive growth.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Paper/whiteboards
- Writing utensils
- Optional: Pre-drawn images

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

This activity challenges your communication skills as you work together to create a drawing using only verbal instructions.

FACILITATOR TIPS:

- Encourage participants to focus on describing clearly and using constructive feedback during the discussion.
- Emphasize that feedback should focus on the actions or descriptions, not on the person.

- Pair up participants and have them sit back-to-back.
- Provide each pair with paper and a pencil.
- Give the describer a pre-drawn image, or allow them to create a simple design to describe.
- The describer explains the image verbally while the artist listens and draws based on the description—no peeking allowed!
- For added fun, include optional challenges such as not repeating directions, no erasing, or describing the whole picture before drawing.
- When done, the describer looks at the artist’s picture, and gives feedback on the new drawing compared to the original or the directions given.
- Switch roles, so everyone has a turn describing and drawing.
- Wrap up by comparing the finished drawings to the original designs and discuss how communication and feedback worked.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- How did you feel during this activity as both the artist and the describer? Did your feelings change depending on the role?
- How did feedback improve your performance or help you adjust?
- How did the way feedback was given affect how you received it?
- What's the difference between negative feedback and constructive feedback, and why does that matter?
- How does understanding someone else's perspective influence how you give or receive feedback?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

After reflecting on the activity, discuss strategies for giving constructive feedback effectively:

- Check your motives: Ask yourself why you are doing it.
- Be timely: Share feedback promptly, but only after emotions have settled.
- Make it a habit: Regular feedback builds trust.
- Think it through: Plan your points so the conversation stays focused.
- Be specific: Use clear examples to avoid confusion.
- Choose privacy: Share sensitive feedback in private.
- Use "I" statements: Say, "I felt...when you..." instead of "You were..." to avoid blame.
- Focus on key issues: Address main issues, not minor details.
- Keep it balanced: Highlight positives along with areas to improve.
- Share solutions: Offer actionable ideas they can use to improve.
- Follow up: Acknowledge their progress and encourage them to keep improving.



CONCLUSION:

Giving constructive feedback one-on-one can be challenging, as comments can feel personal or discouraging, but they are a constant part of daily life. Developing the ability to both give and receive feedback effectively is essential for building trust and achieving success. With the right strategies, feedback conversations can lead to meaningful improvements, stronger connections, and shared growth. Constructive feedback is a foundation for success in both work and life.

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REFERENCES

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