Facilitator's Guide

Psychologically Safe Interactions

Workplace Strategies
for Mental Health
An initiative of the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace
workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com

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Introduction
for Facilitator

The idea of this session is to create self-awareness of the unintended consequences of our actions, without necessarily calling it bullying. Most of us would never, ever intentionally bully. Most of us would also never, ever think we could contribute to or play a role in bullying. And, most of us never, ever think it is our fault if bullying happens to someone else.

By talking about behaviours without labeling them as bullying, we can help people open up to the possibility that how they perceive their intentions may not be the same as how others do. If we focus on bullying, it is not unusual for people to resist reflecting about themselves in this exercise. For this reason, we call this session Psychologically Safe Interactions which applies equally to everyone in the workplace.

Use as many of the following questions and slides as you have time for in your session, while leaving time to cover the sections on Checking Assumptions and Moral Courage. If necessary, you can leave the last section – Team Agreement – for another session.

Italicized text is a script you can use or modify to give instructions or debrief participants on each slide. The **Note to Facilitator** is to help you understand the intention and context of each slide. You can choose to share these ideas if you feel it is appropriate and you have enough time.

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Slide 1 – Psychologically safe interactions

Suggested wording for the facilitator

Ask participants to think about current psychologically safe interactions in their workplace by considering their answers to the following questions:

Do all employees feel safe to speak up about problems in the workplace?

Are conflicts regularly resolved effectively?

When employees are inappropriate, will someone respectfully call them on it and, if so, how?

Do all employees engage in work related discussions?

Is inappropriate behaviour addressed immediately and consistently no matter who is responsible?

Note to Facilitator:

Psychologically safe interactions do not eliminate conflict or inappropriate behavior and language, but it allows them to be addressed and solved promptly, respectfully, and consistently.

Slide 2 – What is a psychologically safe interaction?

What is a psychologically safe interaction?

Actions or comments where mutual respect is obvious and genuine.

Discussions about alternative ideas are encouraged, safe, and productive.

There is a shared language to address negative behaviours immediately and consistently.

There is a shared understanding that this approach is intended to support each person to be their best self at work.

Facilitator, please read the following to participants:

*According to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, it **"is sometimes hard to know if bullying is happening at the workplace. Many studies acknowledge that there is a 'fine line' between strong management and bullying."***

Many workplace bullies, including those in management or union roles, are honestly NOT aware that their behaviour may have been experienced as harmful by co-workers or direct reports. They consider themselves direct, passionate, or simply expressing frustration. Others may experience their behaviour quite differently.

Let's think about our own behaviour and how it might be experienced by others. The goal in this session is to consider how our behaviour either creates or helps eliminate psychologically unsafe behaviour. Ultimately, we hope to develop norms where we can all work together professionally and safely.
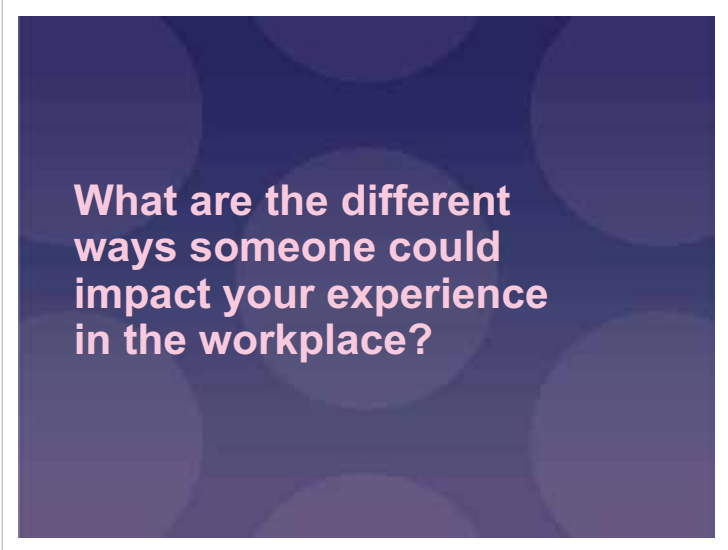
Note to facilitator:

Ask participants to write down a few sentences in answer to the question below, but not to share it. It is intended to help them reflect on the behaviours that have an impact on them. They can think about when someone disagrees with them, when a leader provides feedback, if someone is taking credit for work they contributed to, or when they are having a difficult day at work.

What else might be necessary for you to feel that interactions are psychologically safe?

Remember individuals may be going through personal, health, or financial stressors that may make it hard for them to appear happy, but a reasonable expectation would be to have professional and respectful interactions.

Slide 3 – **What power could anyone have over you?**

What are the different ways someone could impact your experience in the workplace?

Suggested wording for facilitator

The most obvious impact may be from a senior leader or supervisor who assigns you work tasks, but there are many other ways that clients, patients, or co-workers can change our experience. With your group, list as many of the ways that people can positively or negatively impact your experience in the workplace.

Note to facilitator

We can be impacted by different communication skills, networks or connections, popularity, seniority or familiarity with others in the organization. We can be impacted by those we serve, such as patients, clients, or students, those with regulatory authority, like police, auditors, or professional colleges, or by those seen as privileged due to factors such as socio-economics, culture, or education. Let participants come up with their own ideas and only add those they have not covered.

Slide 4 – Improving awareness

Improving Awareness

Perception vs intention – How we impact others

Checking Assumptions – How we feel others impact us

Moral Courage – Intervening respectfully

Team Agreement – A shared understanding

Suggested wording for the facilitator

Perception vs. Intention

Today we want to improve our awareness by asking questions that help us think about our own behaviors and reactions and how they might impact others. What someone may experience as hurtful behaviour may not actually have been intended as harmful. In fact, we can be quite shocked at this interpretation of what we said or did. This is the difference between our intentions and someone else's perception.

Checking Assumptions

We also may not recognize when we are making assumptions about the intentions of others. This can create a dynamic whereby we interpret or experience otherwise common behaviour as hurtful. By examining our assumptions and choosing how we react to them we may be able to build resilience against the debilitating effects of being exposed to psychologically unsafe behaviour.

Moral Courage

When we are witnessing psychologically unsafe behavior, a role described as the bystander, we may not feel equipped or authorized to intervene. This is especially true when the person exhibiting the behaviour has more power or rank than we do. Some who do intervene may do so in a forceful and intimidating manner. They are actually using the same unsafe behaviour they are trying to stop.

Learning to have a respectful confrontation can make a huge difference in any workplace. We will call this moral courage.

Team Agreement

We will talk about what this may look like, as well as how to develop norms that are agreed upon and reinforced by bystanders.

So, I ask that you remain open minded. I don't believe most of us would ever intend to harm or invite someone to harm us but be open to the idea that it is possible we may do it unintentionally.

I will walk you through a series of questions and I want you to be as objective and honest about your answers as possible. You only need to share what you are comfortable sharing. The rest is just for your own reflection.

I also ask that you not judge the answers of those who may be understanding how they impact others for the first time. What is discussed in this session, in terms of personal reflection stays in this session. Is there anyone who is unable to agree to this?

*Source: www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/bullying.html

Slide 5 – But I never meant it that way …
Perception vs Intention

Suggested wording for the facilitator

Our first area of exploration is the difference between our almost always good (or at least neutral) intentions and the sometimes unexpected perceptions of others. With each question, try to answer as if you were an objective observer of your own or other's behaviour. Try not to dwell on the challenging thoughts or emotions that might be present at the same time. Write down what others would actually see or hear without interpretation.

Slide 6 – Perception vs Intention

Perception vs Intention

What would you see or experience to indicate that someone was weak or strong in character?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

What would you see or experience that would indicate someone was weak or strong in character? Appoint someone to list your ideas as a group and be ready to share these with the larger group.

Note to the facilitator

Do not invite or offer comment on any of the answers because this is just to help people gain an understanding of the characteristics of who we might identify as weak or strong. There are no right or wrong answers since it is our perceptions we are recording.

When done writing and sharing, invite participants to think about how we have many judgments about strength or weakness that can actually be untrue. Some very strong people show their vulnerability and some people who are very vulnerable may appear quite strong. Ask the group to reflect privately on how they might react differently to someone they perceive as weak or strong.

Slide 7 – **Perception vs Intention**

Perception vs Intention

When do you expect people to simply follow directions and when do you invite collaboration?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

Please write down your answer to this question. If you never give directions as part of your job role, think about this answer from your personal, family or volunteer roles.

[Continue after they have had enough time to record their answers.]

Collaboration can be a useful process, but sometimes we just need to be clear about directions and get the job done. Sometimes there is no room for negotiation because of policy, regulation, quality control or safety issues. What can cause us to feel dismissed or bullied is when there is uncertainty about which approach will be used at which time.

If we can manage expectations by stating when collaboration will be sought and when there is a need to simply follow directions, we can avoid some of the stress and misunderstanding that comes from mixed messages.

In your group, try to write down work situations that will absolutely involve collaboration, work situations that will absolutely require following directions, and work situations that could be either. We will take up your answers when you are done.

Note to the facilitator

Depending on the time you have available, you can ask each group to share or you can ask for one example for each of collaboration, giving direction or situations that could be either.

Once this is done, you can wrap it up by saying it takes a certain level of emotional intelligence to do this effectively because we often believe that others know our constraints and the reasons for our decisions. To do this effectively, we not only have to be self-aware, we also need to be able to consider how others might interpret our behaviours.

Slide 8 – Perception vs Intention

Perception vs Intention

When are you more passionate or animated?

What might that look like to others?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

Many of us get excited about ideas or feel righteous about perceived injustices. When we feel passionate about something, how might others experience our words and behaviours?

Example: When I get excited about ideas, I might blurt out or interrupt others. I see it as passion, but others may see it as rude, dismissive, or aggressive. If I am not always able to contain myself, I could at least recognize when I have done this, apologize for any harm, and clarify my intent.

Take a moment to write down how you might behave when you are passionate about an idea or injustice. Again, write down only what others might see, hear or experience rather than what you might feel or think. Put down your pen when you are finished.

[When most people appear to be done you can say:]

Now please discuss in your group how your behaviours could be misinterpreted by others and what you could do to lessen that likelihood.

Note to the facilitator

This is another opportunity to explore the difference between our intention – to express passion – and the perception of others. Help your participants make that connection and develop strategies to be more aware in the moment.

Slide 9 – Perception vs Intention

Perception vs Intention

How do you interact with others when you are frustrated at work?

What would they see or hear?
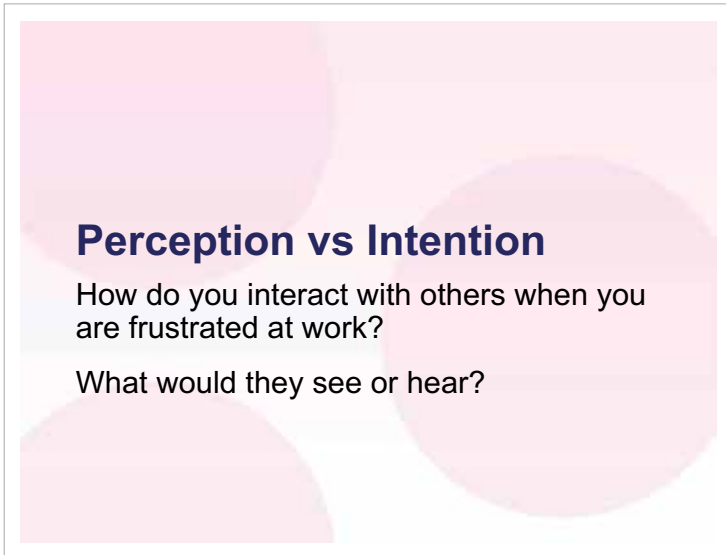
Suggested wording for the facilitator

In your workbook, write out your answer to these two questions. Once everyone has finished writing, compare your answers with others at your table.

The questions are:

How do you interact with others when you are frustrated at work?

What would they see or hear?

Please avoid writing or discussing how you <u>feel or think</u> while frustrated. We want to focus on what others, who cannot read your mind, might see or overhear when observing or interacting with you.

Note to the facilitator

You don't need every participant to share their answers and some will just not feel comfortable to share. Don't force this.

After you ask for volunteers to share answers, discuss how these behaviours might be interpreted by others as intimidating, bullying, dismissive, isolating, or harassing behaviours. Point out that this is the difference between our intention and the perception of others.

E.g. For those who go into their office and close the door when frustrated, others may perceive this as shunning or isolating. They may feel that they are being plotted against behind closed doors.

E.g. For those who get more detailed when they are frustrated in an attempt to make sure things get done well, others may perceive this as micromanaging or a lack of trust.

Slide 10 – Perception vs Intention

Perception vs Intention
What could be alternative approaches to managing frustration at work that would be psychologically safer?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

In your workbook, write out as many answers to this question as you can in one minute. Some examples would be to go for a walk to regain composure or to write out your frustration to search for a solution. Make sure your ideas would work for you in your work setting.

[Time this exercise and let participants know when one minute is up.]

Thank you. Now please compare your answers with others at your table. At each table choose two answers among all of yours to share with the larger group. Choose one that your group thinks is most innovative and one that your group thinks is most practical or helpful.

Note to facilitator

Give participants at least five minutes to discuss ideas. Ask each table to share their two answers as everyone can benefit from better ways to deal with frustrations. If you have time and after each table has had their turn, ask if anyone has another that they want to share.

You may want to wrap up this one by suggesting that we can all be more aware of the unintentional impact our behaviours may have on others.

Raised Voices

If it doesn't come up and you think it is relevant to your group, share that some people are triggered by any raised voice. It could relate to a sensitivity to noise, a childhood trauma, or the perception of intimidation or bullying.

A follow up question could be to ask when it is absolutely necessary to raise your voice at work. Then ask if it is reasonable to request that, other than in those circumstances (e.g. an emergency or warning someone of danger), people refrain from doing this.

You may also want to facilitate a discussion about stress management strategies that the participants could use at work that would reduce the impulse to raise their voice.

Slide 11 – They are out to get me … Checking Assumptions

Suggested wording for the facilitator

We have examined how our behaviours may be perceived by others quite differently than what we had intended. Now we will look at how we might make assumptions about the way other people behave.

Slide 12 – **Checking Assumptions**

Checking Assumptions

How do you react when your boss or co-workers are frustrated at work?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

For this discussion, we are not talking about when <u>we</u> are frustrated, but rather how we respond to <u>others</u> who may be frustrated.

Think of a time when a co-worker or your boss was obviously flustered or overwhelmed. What did they do and how did you react?

*Write your answer to this question in your workbook. When everyone is done, take a moment to share your answers if you wish.*

Note to the facilitator

Once the participants have had sufficient time to discuss, take up the answers to this question from those who volunteer.

A follow up question could be to ask people to share what they feel are the most psychologically safe responses to someone who appears agitated.

Slide 13 – **Checking Assumptions**

Checking Assumptions

What do you feel constitutes disrespectful behaviour from a leader?
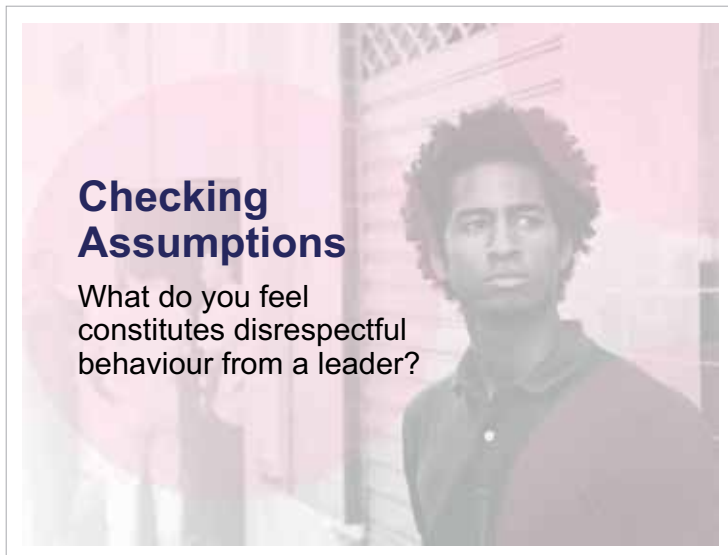
Suggested wording for the facilitator

When someone's role involves providing feedback, managing performance, or correcting behaviours, there is sometimes a risk of being interpreted as disrespectful or intimidating. We would not expect this type of critical feedback or interaction from most people in our lives. Leaders must constantly walk the line between doing their job of ensuring successful completion of assigned tasks and offending their direct reports.

Write your answer to this question in your workbook. When everyone is done, discuss your answers.

Note to the facilitator

Our perception of what is appropriate behaviour for leaders can vary based on our current health, our stress level, or our history with the individual.

Explore the answers to this question and comment on the diversity of opinion.

A possible follow-up exercise

This information could help those in leadership positions understand how others perceive their actions. If you have the time, you could turn this conversation into developing a list of behaviours related to a respectful leader, especially when dealing with feedback or problem-solving. Ask the group to make the directives measurable, specific, and reasonable given the reality of the role. Consider sharing the list of directives with all leaders in your organization.

Slide 14 – **Checking Assumptions**

Checking Assumptions

When do you feel that criticism crosses the line to harassment?

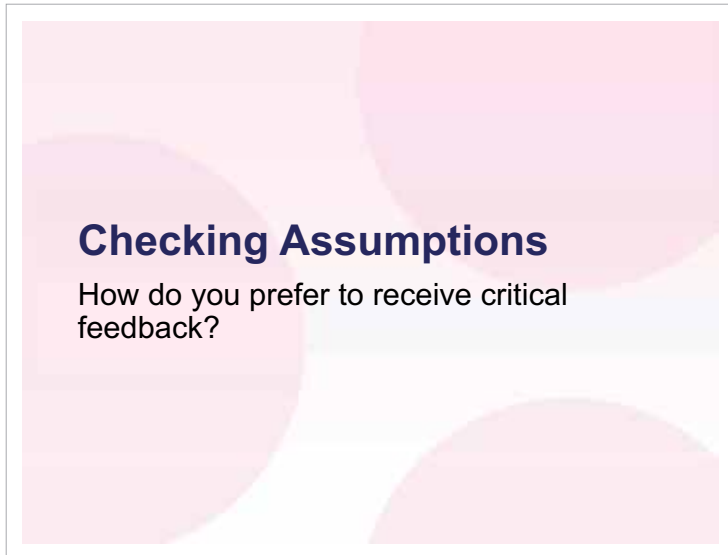## Suggested wording for the facilitator

Criticism isn't just for leaders. We all may comment on the work, style, or personality of others in a way that is critical or negative. While criticism is necessary in the workplace for feedback and quality assurance, there is a difference between constructive criticism and psychologically unsafe interactions. Write your answer to this question in your workbook. When everyone is done, take a moment to share your answers.

Note to the facilitator

Our perception of what is appropriate criticism or feedback and what feels like a psychologically unsafe interaction will vary based on our personal history, current state of well-being, our stress level, or our past experiences with the individual who is providing the feedback.

Explore the answers to this question and comment on the variety of opinions and perceptions that are shared. What crosses the line for one person may be perfectly acceptable for another.

Slide 15 – **Checking Assumptions**

Checking Assumptions
How do you prefer to receive critical feedback?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

Some of us do not like to be criticized at all, yet in the workplace criticism is inevitable. By considering the question, "How do you prefer to receive critical feedback?" we can think about an approach that would work best for us. Please record your answer in a manner that is so specific that anyone could provide you with critical feedback successfully with no fear of you becoming defensive or hurt. For example, include style and type of feedback as well as frequency. When you have all recorded your answers, compare the different approaches that you prefer.

Note to the facilitator

After you have taken up some of the answers, comment on the variety of responses and point out that we need to be aware that different people have different preferences and sensitivities. Ask the participants if they have ever shared their preference for feedback with those who are expected to provide it. Then ask if they have ever asked others to share their preference for receiving feedback from them.

Examples of a response might be:

- I prefer feedback by private email/face-to-face/phone call on a weekly basis/as needed/ immediately after the task or event.

- I prefer to hear not only the things I need to work on, but what I have done well.

Suggested wrap up wording for the facilitator

Most of us are sensitive to criticism and yet we are all required to receive it as part of our job. Knowing what works to motivate you to do better and what triggers you to feel defensive is important for all parties.

Slide 16 – Checking Assumptions
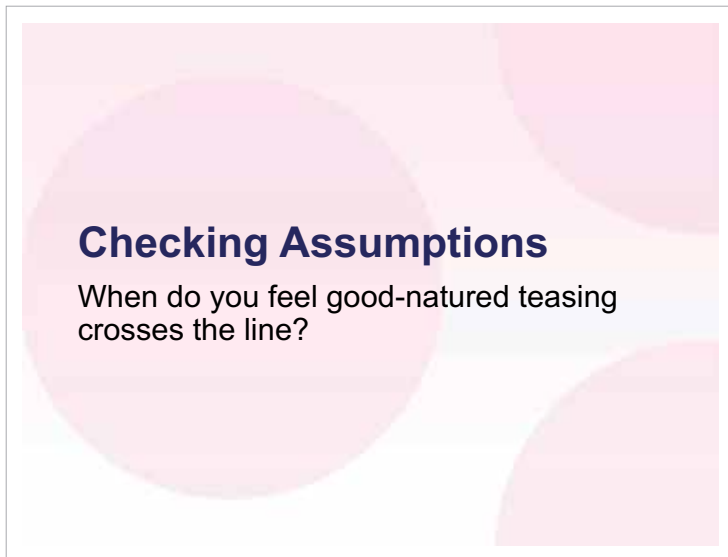
Checking Assumptions

When do you feel good-natured teasing crosses the line?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

Most of us now recognize when teasing crosses the line to discrimination based on gender, race, or religion, but consider when it may be less obvious. For example, someone may think it is just kidding around when they punch your arm or joke about crazy people. Think about when and how actions or words could be potentially harmful or unwelcome to you or others.

Write your answer to this question in your workbook. When everyone is done, take a moment to share your answers.
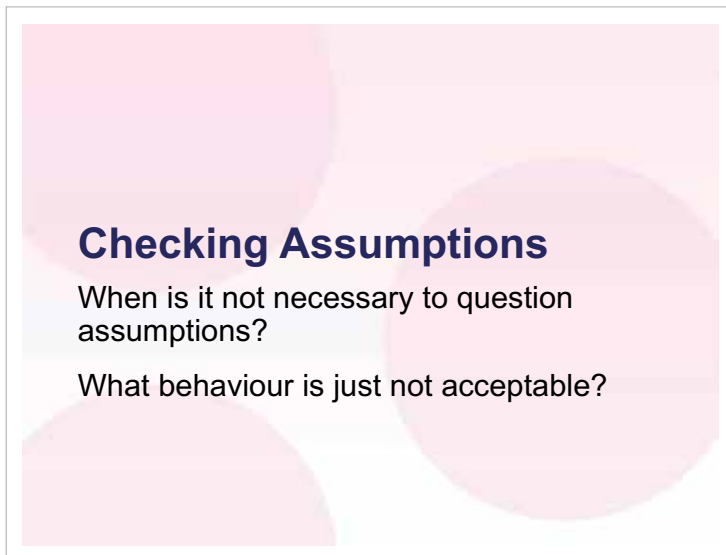
Note to the facilitator

Our perception of what is appropriate humour, what is teasing, and what is bullying can vary based on our personal situation, current health, stress level, or our history with the individual.

Explore the answers to this question and comment on the diversity of opinion.

You may also want to explore how we interpret or respond to humour when we are feeling great and what is much less funny when we are stressed or hurt.

Slide 17 – Checking Assumptions

Checking Assumptions

When is it not necessary to question assumptions?

What behaviour is just not acceptable?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

For this question I want you to write down behaviours of others that you would report or stop immediately without any hesitation or reflection on what might be motivating the behaviour. When everyone is done, share your list with your group and discuss when and if you think any of the behaviours might be acceptable and why. We will then take up the final list of behaviours that this group believes are not excusable for any reason.

Note to facilitator

This conversation needs to be managed so that there is a shared understanding of what are unacceptable behaviours and the non-discriminatory approach that should be taken to report or stop the behaviour. Check with your senior leader or HR department if you have one to see what the procedure should be in this instance.

Slide 18 – Respectful Confrontations ... Moral Courage
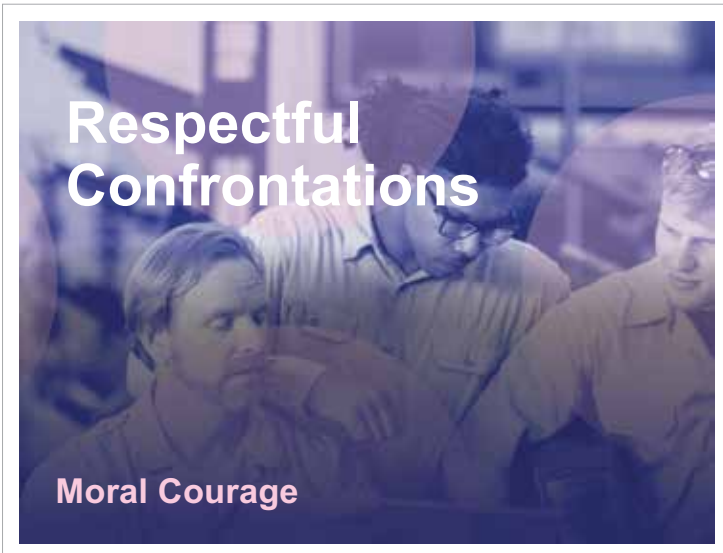
Suggested wording for the facilitator

We have looked at how our intentions may be misinterpreted and how we might make assumptions about the behaviour of others. This awareness can improve our emotional intelligence, especially when it comes to our work relationships.

But what do you do when you witness someone <u>else's</u> behaviour and the negative impact it is having on the person <u>they</u> are interacting with? Are you able to speak up? Do you end up getting angry and confrontational yourself, there by engaging in the same negative behaviours you're trying to stop? Or do you just remain silent? Any of these reactions may allow the negative or harmful behaviours to continue or even worsen.

Having the courage to speak up is only half of the skill set needed here. The other half is to speak up or confront the situation in a respectful way using what we refer to as Moral Courage. When we realize it is human nature to make assumptions about what is going on and that the intention of either party may <u>not</u> be what you are perceiving, we are better equipped to be objective and respond in a supportive, open manner to help change the situation from potentially harmful to one that can reinforce good working relationships.

Slide 19 – Moral Courage

Moral Courage

What are the thoughts and emotions you might have after witnessing a bullying incident at work?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

If you can, think about an actual time you saw someone being unkind or intimidating at work. Write your answer to this question in your workbook as honestly and objectively as you can. Include your reaction to situations where you felt safe to intervene as well as your reaction if you were not able to intervene. What did you think or feel as a bystander or witness to this type of behaviour?

Note to the facilitator

Do not force participants to share their answers to this question as they may be uncomfortable sharing this information. Ask if there are any volunteers and if not, move on to the next slide or share how you would feel witnessing a bullying incident.

You may want to share this to wrap up:

Some people may feel angry or outraged at what appears as bullying. Some people may feel sad or embarrassed for the target. Some people may feel helpless or afraid. Sometimes not reacting at all can leave us with regret that we didn't do anything to intervene. The point is that inappropriate behavior in the workplace could have a potentially negative impact on the psychological safety of all of us, not just those that are involved.

Slide 20 – **Moral Courage**

Moral Courage

When you see someone yelling at a
co-worker do you intervene, ignore it,
or just stand there?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

Write your answer to this question in your workbook as honestly and objectively as you can. When everyone is done, put down your pen. You won't have to share your answer to this question, but please write down how you actually respond and consider why.

Note to the facilitator

We don't necessarily want to have the participants share their answers to this question, as they may be embarrassed that they don't intervene. Once they have had some time for self-reflection, move on to the next question unless some really want to discuss their answers.

Slide 21 – Moral Courage

Moral Courage

Would your response be different if the person yelling was a senior leader?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

Like the last question, we won't ask you to share your answer unless you want to but please write in your workbook as honestly and objectively as you can about how you respond or don't respond if the person who is engaging in the inappropriate behaviour is a senior leader in your organization. When everyone is done, please put down your pen.

Note to the facilitator

We don't necessarily want to have the participants share their answers to this question, as they may be embarrassed that they don't feel comfortable to intervene. You can open the discussion about how it is often more challenging to intervene when it is with someone who has more power or authority. But if we learn to intervene in a respectful and non-confrontational way, using moral courage, we can do so <u>no matter who</u> the other person is. This is part of developing shared norms for interacting that everyone, including senior leadership, can find acceptable.

Moral Courage from Senior Leaders:

If your participants are not all senior leaders themselves, you may want to ask: Would your response be different if YOU were a senior leader?

A discussion about what we would want as a supportive response from senior leaders if we were speaking too loudly can help put participants into the shoes of the senior leaders. You can use this to help inform senior leaders about potential responses.

Slide 22 – **Moral Courage**

Moral Courage

What could we as a group decide is a respectful but direct response to emotionally intense behaviours?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

Emotionally intense behaviours can range from frustration to rudeness and incivility. Write some ideas in your workbook about potential responses that recognize someone may be overwhelmed or upset, but at the same time reminds them that the behaviour is not appropriate. For example, if I am passionate about getting my idea across and raising my voice, what could you say to remind me that I may be unintentionally stressing others? The idea is to give me the benefit of the doubt that I am not intending harm and allow me an opportunity to try another strategy.

Some ideas may include "Can we possibly reframe this?" "Should we take a quick break?" Everyone will know what we are doing, but I get a chance to save face and start again.

Consider the most respectful way to remind each other that we could be interpreted by others as disrespectful, even if it is not our intention. Think of words that are least likely to feel sarcastic or patronizing to you. Think of words that you would hear as respectful and neutral.

When everyone is done, take up your answers with your group. Discuss how each of you would respond to someone saying those words to you. Would it feel supportive or like you were being attacked? Try to find a response that is the least likely to trigger defensiveness. We will take up each group's best answer when you are done.

Note to the facilitator

Process to choose a response

Record the responses on separate sheets of paper or sticky notes. Place them around the room and ask people to put a sticker or check mark on those that are most likely to agitate or offend them. Eliminate those ones.

Take the remaining answers or those with the fewest stickers/check marks and discuss which one might work best in your environment and why. You can do another vote if you wish.

Taking it a step further

If your group can agree on one response, you may wish to further explore the expectations about how you would offer this response [tone of voice, body language, eye contact, etc.] and how you would respond when someone has offered it to you. You can also explore how NOT to say the response – e.g., dripping with sarcasm or in a mocking tone. The end outcome should be a response that is heard as supportive and clearly asking for a change in the current interaction to something more respectful. A very important point to bring up is that the group needs to be consistent and immediate in using this response every time behavior could have a negative impact on others.

You can finish your session here by going to slide 29 and asking what they will do differently now.

Alternatively, if you plan to go on to create a team agreement or you want your participants to learn the process of creating a team agreement, you can continue with the remaining slides.

Slide 23 – **Have the group create their own ...**
Team Agreement
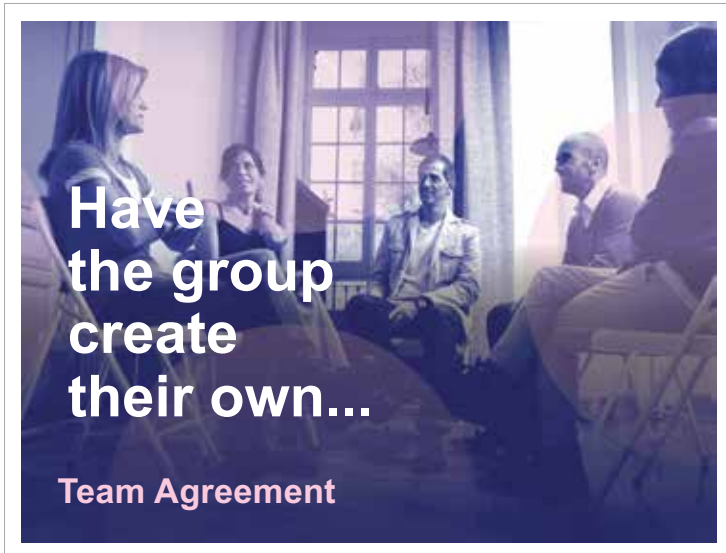
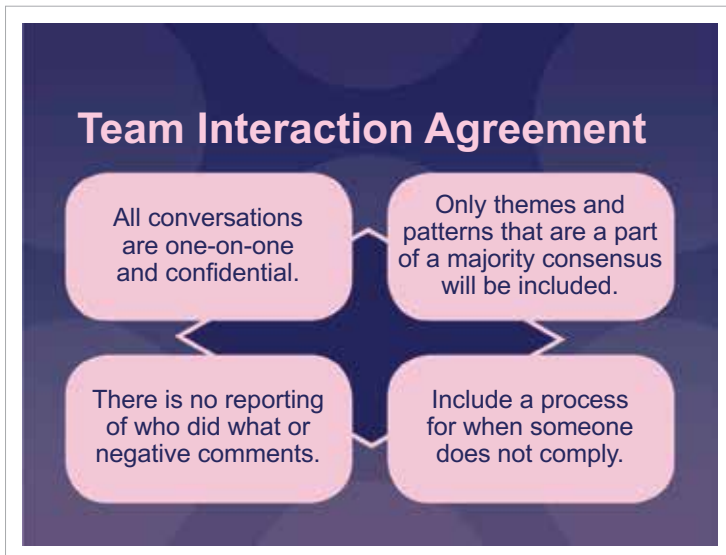## Suggested wording for the facilitator

Next, I want to share with you the outline for a process that can result in a working agreement for your team. This helps define how we agree to interact with each other on a daily basis. It will guide us on how to recognize when we may be having a negative effect on others, how to question our own assumptions about the behaviour of others, and how to use moral courage and respect to help those who may be at risk of violating the agreement we develop. It really is an agreement about how team members will interact going forward so we can create the kind of working environment we all want.

The dynamics of any group depend on the members in it and how they interact. As a result, no two team agreements are the same.

Note to the facilitator

The following slides explain the process for developing an agreement. It is not intended that you are going through the process at this time since it is based on private one-on-one conversations. It is intended to make people comfortable with the process, so you can engage them in it at a future time.

Slide 24 – **Team Interaction Agreement**

Suggested wording for the facilitator

This process is intended for groups that interact on a regular basis such as teams or departments. The shared culture and daily interaction will allow the resulting approach to be relevant to the participants.

There are four key principles of this process to keep in mind:

- *All conversations to gather feedback are one-on-one and confidential. No one will be identified with the comments they have made even if those comments end up in the agreement.*

- *The agreement includes only themes and patterns that are part of a majority decision. If one person has an idea that is not shared with the majority, such as serving chocolate for breakfast each morning, it will not make the report. This also helps team members to see which of the points that they brought up were also shared by many of your co-workers. These will be the ones included in the final agreement.*

- *There is no reporting of who did what or negative statements. While you are free to share your concerns and observations in the conversation, what gets written up is only the agreed-upon positive actions going forward. This is not an investigation.*

- *We will develop and include a process for when someone does not comply with the team agreement. It is important that we all know and agree on how this will be dealt with and that there is someone with both the authority and will to act if this happens.*

The goal is to provide an agreement that works for your team, helps to allow everyone to enjoy coming to work, and supports everyone to do work effectively.

Slide 25 – **Process for developing an agreement about team interaction**

Suggested wording for the facilitator

The first question you would be asked in your private meeting would be, What is already positive about how people interact in this workplace?

We don't want to inadvertently get rid of what we value, so we make sure to identify what we would rather not change.

Slide 26 – Process for developing an agreement about team interaction

Process for developing an agreement about team interaction

What needs to happen differently to make this a place where you are supported to do your best work every day?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

The second question you would be asked is, What needs to happen differently to make this a place where you are supported to do your best work every day?

This is your chance to provide as many creative solutions as possible. Here we are looking for answers that are specific, reasonable in our work context, and measurable so that we can know if it is happening or not. For example, we would not want to include a statement such as, "Everyone should be nice." Who knows what nice means to me or you, or how to measure it?

Instead, we might include a statement such as, "We will acknowledge people who walk into a room we are currently occupying." This is something that is specific and measurable.

Slide 27 – Process for developing an agreement about team interaction

Process for developing an agreement about team interaction

What are you personally willing to continue doing or do differently to contribute to great working relationships with everyone?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

The third question you would be asked is, What are you personally willing to continue doing or do differently to contribute to great working relationships with everyone?

This is intended to identify the personal contribution each of us can make to improve working relationships. Some of you will say that you already do all you can do, and that's okay.

You will be asked to identify those things that you currently do. Like the other questions, this one will seek answers that are specific, reasonable in our workplace, and measurable. It will be important that this question apply to everyone you work with, not just those who are currently in your circle of friends.

Slide 28 – Process for developing an agreement about team interaction

Process for developing an agreement about team interaction

What should occur when someone is unable or unwilling to honour the agreements that come from this process?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

The final question you would be asked is, What should occur when someone is unable or unwilling to honour the agreements that come from this process?

This is intended to develop a process that is understood by everyone in advance in case someone violates the agreement. This approach can range from a gentle reminder to progressive discipline.

The point is to be clear, so that no one is surprised by the response. Everyone should know there will be a response and that behaviours that are harmful will not be allowed to continue.

Of course, we will respect all labour laws and collective agreements where they apply. But this level of intervention is focused on helping the team stay on the track they have chosen for themselves.

Note to the facilitator

If you are going to proceed with the process for developing an agreement, let people know the details now including times, dates, confidentiality assurances, and expected outcomes. This can help them prepare for their private interview.

Slide 29 – **Just one more thing…**

Just one more thing...

As a result of what we have discussed today, what will you now do differently?

Suggested wording for the facilitator

Take a moment now and record in your workbook at least one thing that you will do differently at work as a result of what we have discussed today. We will take up the answers when you are done.

Note to the facilitator

If you have time, take up all of the answers by going around the room. This reinforces the desire and commitment to take action on the part of each participant. If you are short of time, just ask a few volunteers to share their answers.

Slide 30 – Creating awareness about psychologically safe interactions

Creating awareness about psychologically safe interactions

Want to learn more?

For free tools and printable resources, visit:
www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com

Workplace Strategies
for Mental Health

workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com

Suggested wording for the facilitator

If you want more information about protecting yourself against bullying, responding to harassment or other resources related to workplace mental health or psychological health and safety, I encourage you to check out the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace's website www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com, which provided the content for today's session.

Thank you for working with me to help increase our awareness and understanding of how we interact in the workplace and the impact we may have on each other. Together we can create and sustain the type of workplace we all want.