

# Essentials of Leadership and Management Programme Constructive Conversations Workshop



## | What we'll cover

- What is meant by a Constructive Conversation
- Tools & Techniques to enable a Constructive Conversation
- How to make a difficult conversation constructive
- How to apply learning in practice

| Exercise



What is a constructive  
conversation?



## | Celeste's 10 Rules

1. **Listen**
2. Don't multi-task
3. Don't pontificate
4. Use open-ended questions
5. Go with the flow
6. If you don't know, say you don't know
7. Don't equate your experience with theirs
8. Try not to repeat yourself
9. Stay out of the weeds
10. Be brief

| Exercise



## | Active Listening

“The quality of your attention determines the quality of other people’s thinking.”

- Nancy Kline; Time to Think

## | Effective Questions

- Open-ended (What, When, Why, Who, How)
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Incisive Questions
- GROW



## | Appreciative Inquiry

“the search for the best in people... not so much a shift in the methods and models of organizational change, but a fundamental shift ... to ‘see’ the wholeness of the human system and to “inquire” into that system’s strengths, possibilities, and successes. ”

*- Appreciative Inquiry: Organization Development and the Strengths Revolution*

## | Examples of Appreciative Questions

- What has been the work/project where you have felt the most alive, successful, effective?
- What do you value most about yourself, your work and SHU?
- What are the critical factors that make SHU function at its best, when it feels a great place to be?

## | Incisive Questions

“Incisive questions remove limiting assumptions, freeing the mind to think afresh.”

- Nancy Kline, Time to Think

## | Incisive Questions

**Work by identifying the assumption and replacing it with a liberating question.**

- **Goal** - New Job
- **Limiting Assumption** - I haven't been working in this area for long enough
- **Liberating Alternative** - It's not about time, it's about experiences
- **Incisive Question** - If you know you've got the relevant experience, how would you highlight this?

## | Exercise - Craft an Incisive Question

Construct as follows:

- Identify the Goal
- Recognise the limiting assumption
- Assert a matching positive assumption
- Direct the thinker's attention back to the issue or goal

| GROW

- **G**oal
- **R**eality
- **O**ptions
- **W**ill

What do you want to achieve?

Is it achievable?

Exploring what's out there

Action planning

### G.R.O.W Coaching Model

#### Goal

##### Typical questions for the Goals stage.

- What do you want to achieve?
- What could we work on now that would make the biggest difference to your role / working life?
- What are the goals you want to achieve?
- Why are you hoping to achieve this goal?
- Who else needs to know about the plan? How will you inform them?
- What do you want more of in your life?
- What would you try now if you knew you couldn't fail?
- What are 2-3 goals that would make a BIG difference in your life?
- How will you know when you have achieved these goals? What will it look like?

#### Options

##### Typical questions for the Options stage

- What else could you do? What else? Anything else? What next?
- What could be your first step?
- Who else might be able to help?
- What would happen if you did nothing?
- What has worked for you already? How could you do more of that?
- What do you think I would suggest?
- What would happen if you did that?
- What is the hardest/most challenging part of that for you?
- What advice would you give to a friend about that?
- What would you gain/lose by doing/saying that?
- If someone did/said that to you what do you think would happen?
- What's the best / worst thing about that option?
- Which option do you feel ready to act on? Scale 1-10 what is this option?

#### Reality

##### Typical questions for the Reality stage

- Why haven't you reached that goal already?
- What do you think is stopping you?
- What do you think was really happening?
- What effect did ... have on you?
- What do you think ...'s perception of the situation was/is?
- Do you know other people who have achieved that goal?
- What did you learn from...?
- What have you already tried?
- How could you turn this around this time?
- What could you do better this time?
- If you asked ... what would they say about you?
- On a scale of 1-10 how severe/serious/urgent is the situation?
- If someone said/did that to you, what would you think/feel/do?

#### Wrap up

##### Typical questions for the Wrap-Up (Will) stage.

- On a scale of 1-10, how committed are you to this goal?
- What specific step would you take next? How will that meet your goal?
- How and when will you do that?
- What support do you need to get that done?
- What do you need from me/others to help you achieve this?
- How will you know when you have done it?
- Who will you involve in this?
- What would have happened to know you have achieved the goal?
- Who do you need to talk to first? Who needs to know?
- What are 3 actions you can take that would make sense this week?
- What will happen (what is the cost) of you NOT doing this?

## | Body Language





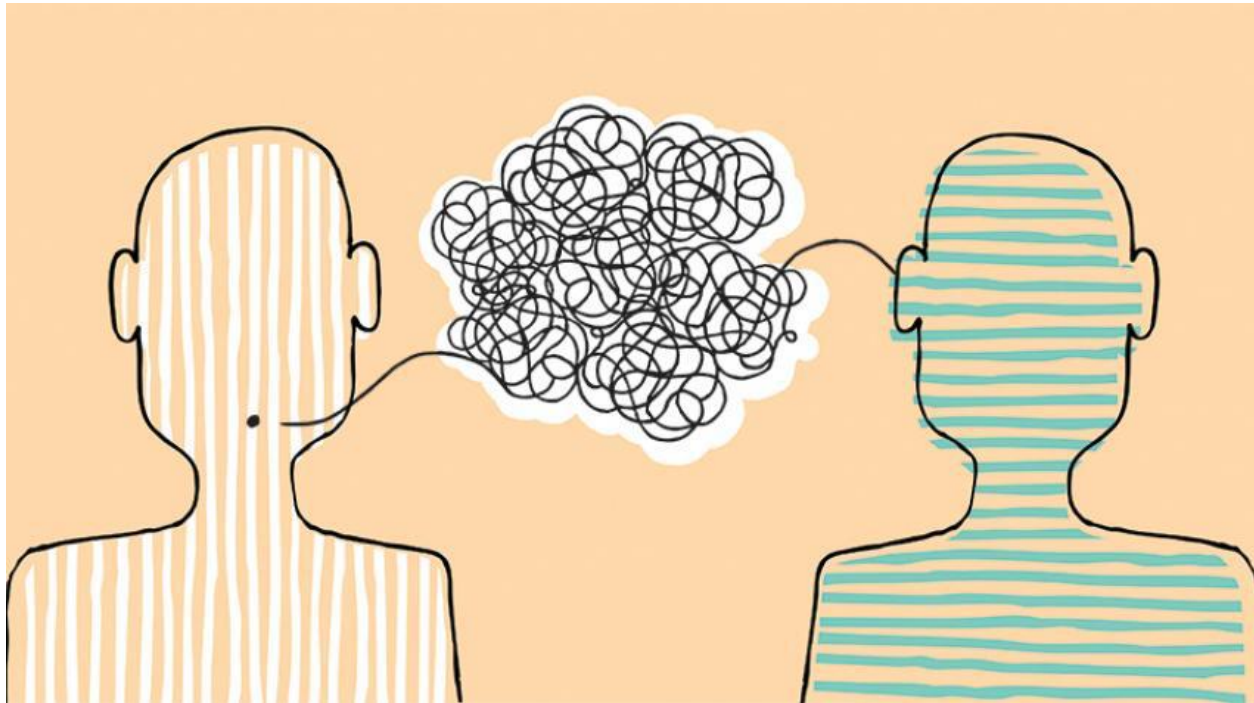
| Exercise



## | Body Language

- Crossed arms and legs signal resistance to your ideas
- Real smiles crinkle the eyes
- Copying your body language is a good thing
- Posture tells the story
- Eyes that lie
- Raised eyebrows signal discomfort
- Exaggerated nodding signals anxiety about approval
- A clenched jaw signals stress

## | Difficult Conversations



## | From Destructive to Constructive

- Show empathy
- Be clear on what you want to get out of the conversation - and keep on track
- Remain objective
- Keep your emotions in check
- Remain professional throughout - think about the code of behaviour
- Be assertive
- Think about the language you use e.g. focus on how you feel
- Practice! - practise what you want to say before it takes place
- Listen

## Exercise – Practicing the opening to a difficult conversation

- What is the issue?
- Describe a specific example that illustrates the behaviour.
- Describe your feelings
- Clarify why it is important
- What is my contribution to the problem?
- Let them know that you want to resolve the problem
- Ask the other person to respond

Work in groups of 3.

10 minutes to prepare. (individually)

Have a go, feedback, have another go. And then swap round

## | Further Resources

[Performance Development Review Toolkit](#)

[Having Difficult Conversations \(online\)](#)

[Learning to be assertive \(online\)](#)

[Influencing others \(online\)](#)

[Coaching & Developing Employees \(online\)](#)

[Coaching](#) & [Mentoring](#)

[Resource: Appreciative Inquiry Resource Pack](#)

