

***Developing Leadership Effectiveness
in Uncertain Times***

Session 2

**Emotional Intelligence, Triggers
and Conflict**

Leadership – Emotional Intelligence, Triggers and Conflict

In session 2 we will focus on Neuro-Leadership. We will examine triggers and the brain, taking into account the role of the pre-frontal cortex as discussed in session one, and relate this to Emotional Intelligence. Being emotionally competent and intelligent is about becoming more aware of the impact of our feelings on our behaviour, and managing them to best effect.

Emerging findings in neuroscience research suggest why inspiring and supportive relationships are important in the workplace — they help activate openness to new ideas and a more social orientation to others. Insights such as these may move the primacy of a leader's actions away from the often proselytized "results-orientation" toward a relationship orientation (Richard Boyatzis, 2011).

To achieve sustained change in an organisation, leaders have to develop and apply attitudes and behaviours that are people oriented. (Druskat & Wolff, 2001)

There are three abilities that leaders who have high emotional intelligence consistently demonstrate in difficult times:

They are able to admit to their mistakes and take personal accountability

They have the ability to listen to others fully, without jumping to conclusions

They embrace rather than avoid difficult conversations, and hold people accountable.

(Bigspeak Consulting 2010)



LEADERSHIP AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

75% of careers are derailed for reasons related to emotional competencies e.g.

- 1) unsatisfactory team leadership during times of difficulty or conflict
- 2) inability to adapt to change or elicit trust
- 3) the inability to handle interpersonal problems

Centre for Creative Leadership



85-95% of the differences between a “good leader” and an “excellent leader” is due to emotional intelligence.

Daniel Goleman

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

Emotional Intelligence, as defined by Dan Goleman, is:

- The capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and others

Emotional Competence is

- *Learned capabilities* based on Emotional Intelligence that contribute to effective performance at work, outstanding leadership, and deeply satisfying relationships in life

Further discussion

Daniel Goleman, a leader in this field, has identified that successful managers and leaders possess a high percentage of emotional intelligence. By successful we mean those who have:

- Achieved enhanced financial results
- Developed a more effective and supportive organisational culture
- Achieved higher outputs with their workforce

What is Emotional Competence?

“Emotional Competence is the ability to identify and manage one’s emotions. This includes knowing how to nourish your emotional state, take turns, delay gratification, and cope with failure and loss. It also involves knowing how to control impulses, use good judgement and adapt emotions in response to others’ emotions and reactions” (*Acknowledgement – Stepitup2Thrive, Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 U.S. License*) see article.

EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE



The **Self-Awareness** cluster concerns knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions. The Self-Awareness cluster contains three competencies:

- **Emotional Self-Awareness:** Recognizing one's emotions and their effects
- **Accurate Self-Assessment:** Knowing one's strengths and limits
- **Self-Confidence:** A strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities

SELF AWARENESS



The starting point and key to development in these areas of self awareness is the ability to be critically self-reflective.

Effective critical self-reflection requires you to question yourself and the assumptions you make on an ongoing basis. This can be demonstrated through the five (5) why? Test. This is where you ask “Why” down 5 levels from the item you are analysing. This process can be used both at a personal or organisational level. It a process that assists people to gain an understanding of the root cause of an issue or concern.

By repeatedly asking the question “Why”, (three to five is a good rule of thumb), you can remove the layers of the various symptoms, which can then lead you to the root cause of a problem. Quite often the reason for a problem will lead you to another question. Although this technique is called “5 Whys,” you may find that you will need to ask the question fewer or more times than five before you find the issue related to a problem. It will depend on the complexity of the problem in the first place.

Benefits of the 5 Whys:

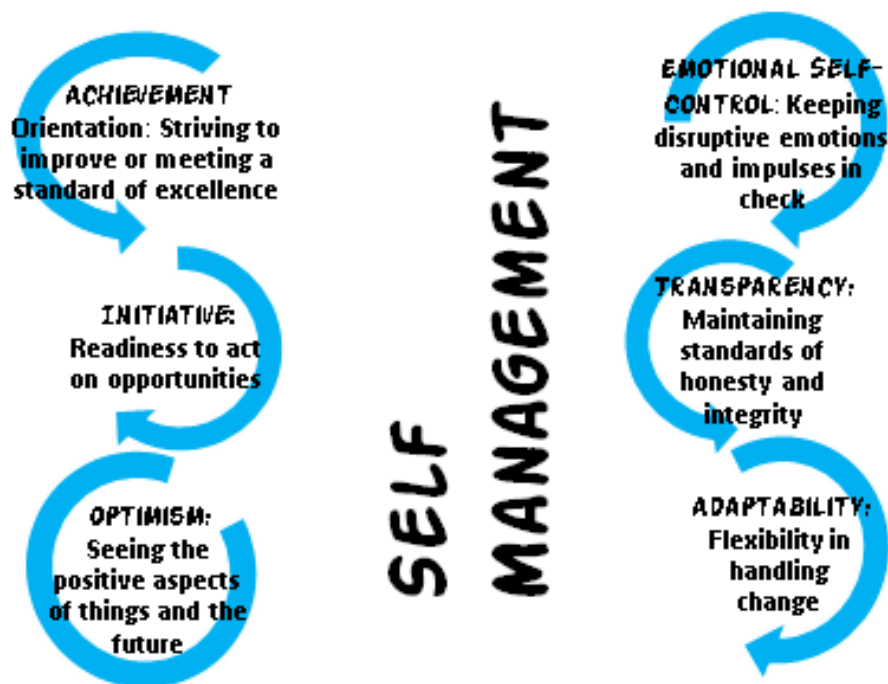
- Help identify the root cause of a problem
- Determine the relationship between different causes of a problem
- One of the simplest tools to use when issues involve human factors or interactions

How to Complete the 5 Whys:

1. Write down the specific problem. Writing the issue helps you formalise the problem and describe it completely. It also helps others involved focus on the same problem.

2. Next you need to ask yourself and others Why the problem is happening. Write the answer down below the problem.
3. You then need to work out if the answer you just provided does or doesn't identify the root cause of the problem that you wrote down in Step 1. If it doesn't ask Why again and write that answer down.
4. You will then loop back to step 3 until you feel you have come to the main cause of the issue.

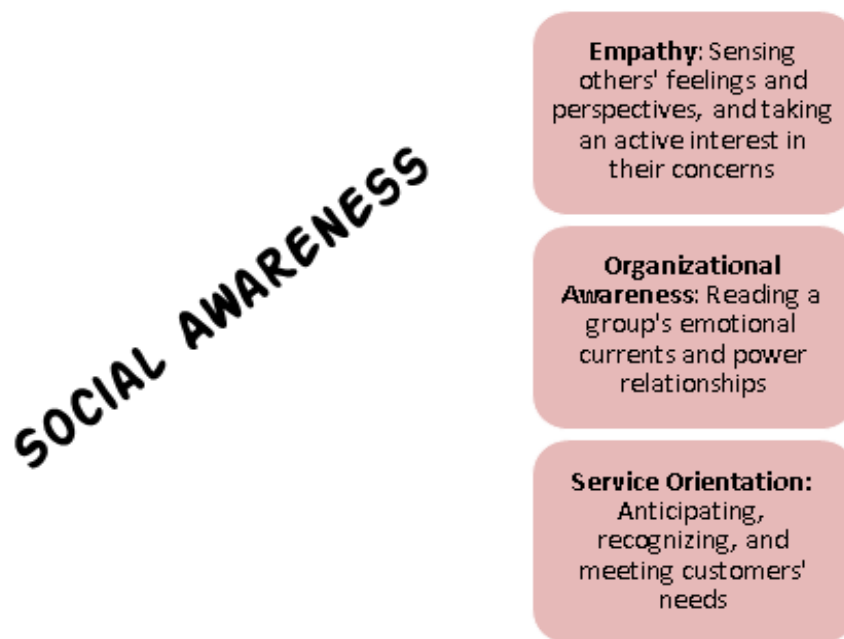
Self-Management



Self-Management cluster refers to managing ones' internal states, impulses, and resources. The Self-Management cluster contains six competencies:

- **Emotional Self-Control:** Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check
- **Transparency:** Maintaining standards of honesty and integrity
- **Adaptability:** Flexibility in handling change
- **Achievement Orientation:** Striving to improve or meeting a standard of excellence
- **Initiative:** Readiness to act on opportunities
- **Optimism:** Seeing the positive aspects of things and the future

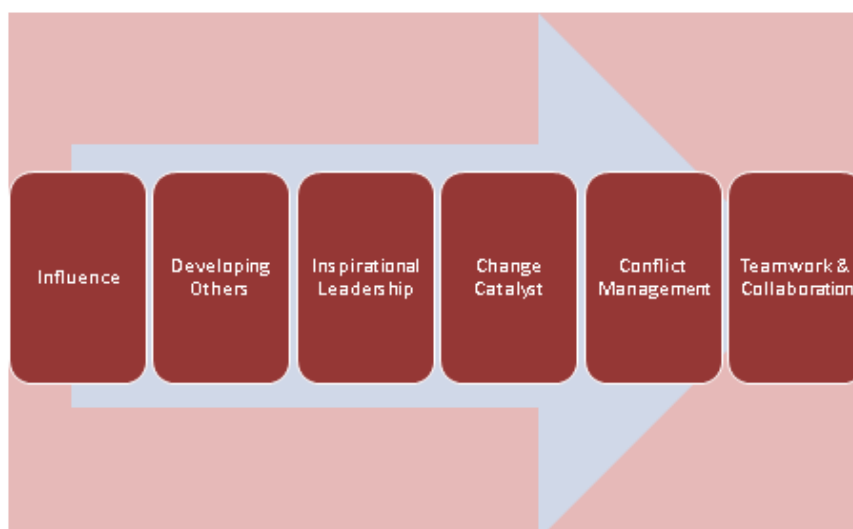
Our behaviours are often significantly emotionally toned by the oldest parts of our brain that reacts, not the part that thinks. In most situations we feel and think at the same time, however, in some situations we actually feel before we think – this will be covered later in this session under Le Doux's findings.



The **Social Awareness** cluster contains these competencies:

- **Empathy:** Sensing others' feelings and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns
- **Organizational Awareness:** Reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships
- **Service Orientation:** Anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers' needs

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT



Ways to build this skill – Find common ground with people of all kinds, Build a strong network of relationships, Bring conflict into the open and deal with it constructively, Persuade others effectively, Work with others toward shared goals, Motivate others toward a common vision, Identify others' development needs and bolster their abilities, Initiate and manage change.



EMOTIONAL LITERACY

Emotional perception and expression – the ability to identify and express feelings

Use of emotions – the ability to use feelings constructively

Emotional understanding – the ability to understand the meaning of emotions and how they can change

Emotional management – the ability to manage emotions for personal and social growth

By developing our awareness of our emotions, labelling them and using language to describe our experience, we increase our emotional literacy and are more likely to manage our emotions.

For those who do wish to become more emotionally literate, a good place to start is with simple, three word sentences such as these:

I feel sad. I feel motivated. I feel offended. I feel appreciated. I feel hurt. I feel disrespected.

Here are other examples:

Examples of what is Emotional Literacy	Examples of What is NOT Emotional Literacy
I feel.... criticised unimportant curious bored enthusiastic	I feel like I feel that... I feel like you(This is a you message in disguise)

<http://eqi.org/elit.htm>

Sometimes just by naming a feeling, we begin to actually feel the feeling. It is as by naming it we give the brain permission to access the emotional part of the brain.



Emotional perception & expression –
the ability to identify and express feelings

Emotional Perception and Expression

The ability for self-awareness; to be aware of your own feelings as they are occurring; the ability to become emotionally literate – describe what is happening; the ability to learn to identify and label specific feelings in yourself; and others and the ability to clearly and directly communicate and discuss these emotions.

USE OF EMOTIONS



The ability to use your feelings constructively

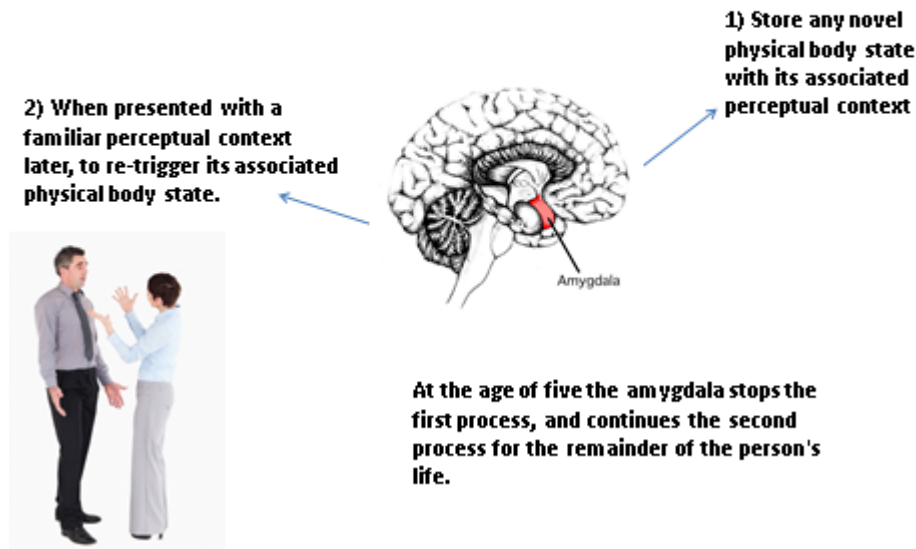
The ability to let your feelings guide you to what is important to think about

The ability to use your feelings to help you make better decisions

Use of Emotions

The ability to let your feelings guide you to what is important to think about; the ability to use your feelings to help you make better decisions.

THE AMYGDALA HAS TWO PROCESSES TO PERFORM



The amygdala consists of two almond-shaped structures in the brain's limbic region. From three months after conception until five-years-old all of a human's physical body states are stored in the amygdala together with the perceptual contexts which accompanied the states.

An example: if a pregnant mother slipped and became frightened, the physical body state of the mother [pounding heart, muscle tension, etc.] is experienced by the baby in her womb. The physical body states associated with fright are then stored in the baby's amygdala along with the perceptual context of the falling motion when its mother slipped.

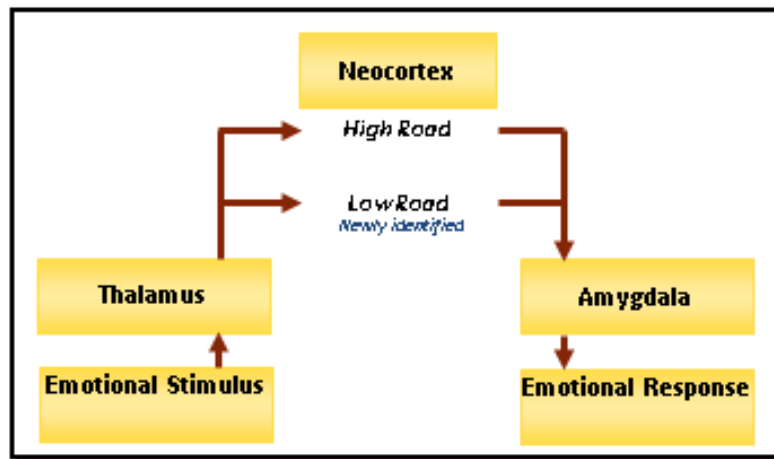
The amygdala has two functions, two processes to perform:

1. store any novel physical body state with its associated perceptual context, and
2. when presented with a familiar perceptual context later, to re-trigger its associated physical body state

At the age of five the amygdala stops the first process, and continues the second process for the remainder of the person's life. After five years old, an age known as the Memory Transition Age [MTA], it is as if the cache memory of the amygdala had been filled and no new physical body states can be added again. Therefore, patterns have been laid and this also is part of our unconscious functioning. These patterns can only be changed when we experience similar feelings in response, recognise them with cognitive interpretation and choose different responses in the moment.

NEURAL PATHWAYS

In certain situations people *feel* before they *think* and *act*. In the brain this is accounted for via a newly identified neural link – Le Doux



(Benson, 2002)

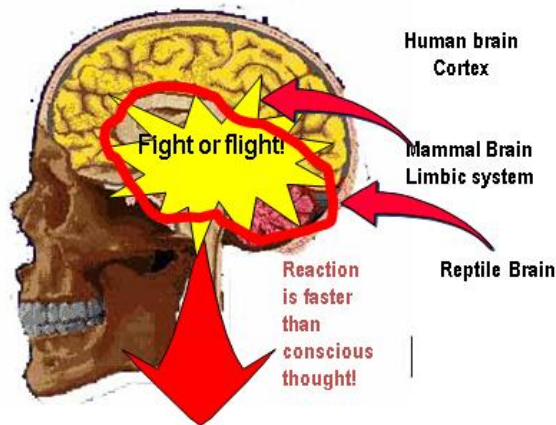
LeDoux pinpoints the amygdala as the portion of the brain responsible for emotional fear responses. The sensory signals go from the hypothalamus to the amygdala in 15 milliseconds and from the hypothalamus to the cortex in 25 milliseconds. As a result, the amygdala is creating emotional responses before the cortex (the rational brain) has even received the signal to be processed.

The amygdala has limited pattern recognition capabilities compared to the cortex, however, and performs a quick and dirty pattern recognition and response. The cortex applies its refined cognitive processes to the same signal and provides the amygdala with signals for a more reasoned approach to the same sensory input but this takes longer and will be affected by the level of emotionality the person is experiencing.

Understanding that our emotions can get out of our control and developing ways to manage these is crucial to working more effectively with challenges and uncertainty. Emotional intelligence builds our capacity to manage and work with our emotions.

Le Doux, J.E. Emotion Circuits in the Brain, Annual Review of Neuroscience, Vol. 23: 155-184 (Volume publication date March 2000) DOI: 10.1146/annurev.neuro.23.1.155

REACTIONS IN THE BRAIN



Strong emotional reactions are more likely to occur when we:

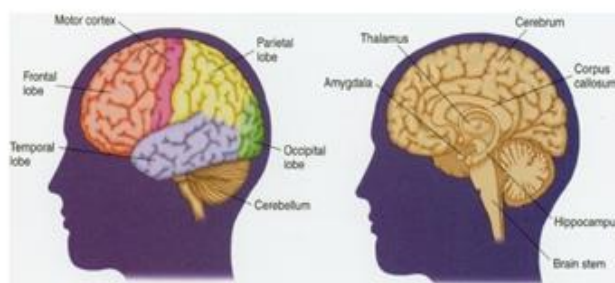
- are feeling tired
- have a build-up of stressors - 'the last straw'
- have invested significant effort into something
- have been drinking alcohol
- are involved in an activity that is closely related to our underlying motives and values

Learning to manage the overreaction:

Is about: using our understanding of our own emotions to **choose** which emotions to express, when and how to express them and managing our emotions and behaviour to have the impact we want to have. We need to manage our emotions so that we can act according to the demands of the situations we encounter and in a manner that we won't regret.

Is not about: inhibiting passion or expression of emotion or getting everyone to behave in the same way i.e. without emotion.

TRIGGERS

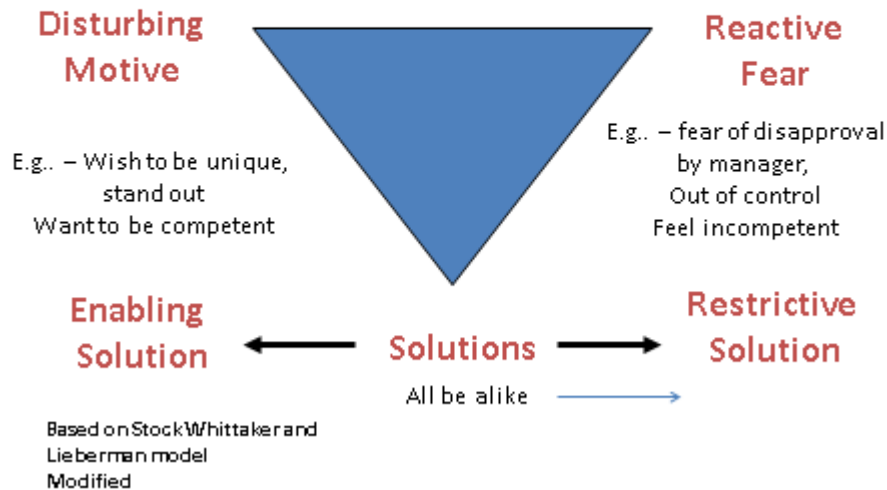


WHAT SITUATIONS
TRIGGER RESPONSES?

WHAT GOES ON
FOR ME?



FOCAL CONFLICT MODEL - UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMIC FORCES WITHIN INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS



THE INDIVIDUAL'S EXPERIENCE

At any one time a person's behaviour can be understood as the expression of their solutions (actions and words) to currently experienced conflicts. These focal conflicts are rooted in long-standing conflicts which developed much earlier in their life.

Each person has habitual solutions or responses/reactions with which to cope with personal conflicts. Some of these habitual solutions have been developed due to fear and are not so functional for the person. A person can be ambivalent when he/she regards these responses as essential to their existence and yet also want to change and to be rid of them.

When threat is experienced people most often:

- Try out habitual personal solutions that are based on protecting themselves from their fears
- Find their reaction is likely to be only temporarily successful
- Will then try to influence the group towards conditions which do not constitute a threat or will make efforts to insulate himself/herself from threatening aspects

If these are not possible maximum threat can be experienced. Anxiety must lead not to disaster but the new learning that habitual solutions are not necessary to his/her existence. Group/team culture and effective relationships must provide the environment for them to do this.

Failure to learn occurs:

- When a person succeeds consistently in maintaining a habitual maladaptive solution in the group, remaining comfortable but effectively untouched.
- When a person resorts to physical or psychological flight thus insulating the self from affective forces in the group.
- When other group members react with a breakdown of previously established solutions and substitution of disorganised, inadequate behaviour.

The benefit is limited for the consistently silent group members. They cannot experience reality testing of their fears or the necessity for maintaining habitual maladaptive solutions.

DISTURBING MOTIVE

Your wishes.....

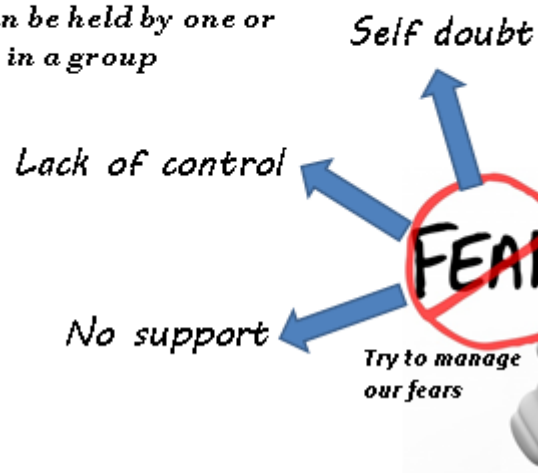
- What do I want from myself in this situation?
- What do I want for others?
- How would I like others to be working with me and in our service?
- What would I like for my team?
e.g. openness with each other

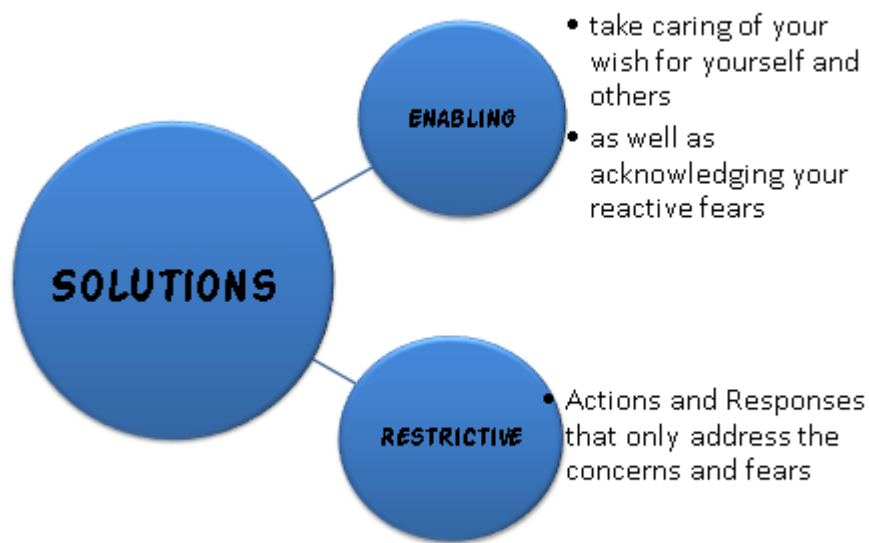


REACTIVE FEARS

What are my concerns as I go to act on my wishes?

Concerns can be held by one or more people in a group





In team situations, Enabling Solutions are like the more common concept of helping norms, which include such things as sharing and working with feelings, giving feedback, checking for understanding during communication, describing a concern openly and interacting in the here and now.

When Enabling Solutions are initially introduced to a team the group's anxiety will increase for a short time, because they confront the source of anxiety. However, if the team, with the leader's support, is able to stay engaged and active in an open discussion of either the reactive fear or the disturbing motive then anxiety is eventually reduced and the group's development is enhanced.

Restrictive Solutions severely limit what can be explored. Restrictive Solutions are associated with the concept of obstructive norms in groups. One common Restrictive Solution occurs when a team member feels uneasy in a group meeting and breaks a group silence with a joke, resulting in sudden group laughter and a release of tension.

Prolonged discussions of external topics that are irrelevant to group purpose are also a common example of a Restrictive Solution to anxiety caused by the reactive fears that have developed. Restrictive Solutions serve as a kind of "escape hatch" by immediately reducing anxiety. While these responses are a normal part of social interaction, work teams that continually seek out restrictive solutions – actions and expressions that avoid what is happening in their team, can soon become shallow, boring, and unproductive as acceptable ways of interacting are reduced to a limited, anxiety-free few.

Models of Group Development: Focal Conflict Model, Whitaker & Lieberman in "Group Work Training Manual, G.M. Clayton (1991)

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION
ON AN ISSUE THAT'S PAST
OR PLAN FOR A FUTURE
CONVERSATION

APPLICATIONS OF THE FOCAL CONFLICT MODEL



MEDIATION



RECOGNISE AND UNDERSTAND WHAT IS
HAPPENING WITHIN A GROUP



Suggested readings

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Healing Conversations: What to Say When You Don't Know What to Say. Nance Guilmartin. Jossey-Bass. 2002.

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Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence. Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, Annie McKee. Harvard Business School Press. 2002.

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The Emotionally Intelligent Nurse Leader. Mae Taylor Moss. Jossey-Bass. 2005.

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With over 20 years of experience and significant change leadership expertise across 5 different government departments at middle and senior management levels, I have been responsible for initiating and leading statewide organisational development and culture change processes, strategy planning and futuring processes, leadership and management development and performance improvement.

Over the past 10 years my successful consulting business has assisted a range of public, community and private sector organisations to grow their strategic capacity, build teams, enhance their leadership and align vision and values to achieve results.

Many of the articles and processes used in these sessions come from my own practice developed over years and from partners in Human Ingredient. If you would like more information and assistance in facilitating these activities in your teams, please contact me via email on address provided.

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MBTI Facilitator
Voices, Lominger 360 feedback
Situational Leadership
Leadership Practices
Fundamental Interpersonal Relations
Orientation
Trainer and assessor