

# Group exercise and discussion

## (40 minutes)

### **Exercise 1 - You have to deliver difficult info**

**1.** Each person in the group considers an example of a difficult conversation that you have to bring to somebody else. You should each choose a different example.

*Ex. You have to tell a direct report that they're changing teams from a team they already like. Or they're not getting a promotion that they wanted. Any example can work, as long as it's a relatively common experience.*

**2.** Each jot down answers to these questions:

- What info and feelings do you want the other person to have?
- What do you think the other person's concerns are going to be?
- What role do power dynamics play in the conversation?
- How might the conversation be different when you have relatively a lot or relatively little trust?
- What listening techniques will you need to use in this conversation? Why?



**3.** Going round robin, each talk through your notes and how you're planning to approach the conversation. The other people in the group should reflect on things you might not have thought of:

- Questions or feelings the other person might have
- Power dynamics that could affect the outcomes
- Trust issues to consider

(Take particular note of anything surprising to you)

## **Exercise 2. You have to learn from having received difficult info**

**1.** Each person in the group thinks about a time (in this job or a previous role) someone delivered difficult information to you.

**2.** Each jot down answers to these questions:

- How did you experience it?
- What did you like about the conversation?
- What do you wish had gone differently?
- How can you use your own experience to inform the next time you have to deliver difficult information?

**3.** Going round robin, each talk through your notes and offer each other additional ideas.



### **Exercise 3. How to listen -- active listening role play**

*(If you have more than two people in the group, take turns pairing, so that this exercise is 1:1.)*

- 1.** Think about a difficult thing you're dealing with--at work or otherwise
- 2.** Going round robin, share your situation. The other person in the group responds with active listening comments and questions:
  - Open ended questions (rather than yes or no)
  - Repeating back what you've heard ("Am I understanding you right?")
  - Asking exploratory questions vs giving advice
  - Be wary of "how" questions that might shift you into problem solving too quickly
  - Stay aware of your own emotional response; try a physical technique, like tapping your thigh, to ground yourself if needed