

Make It Stick

*Activity Pack*

Assertiveness and Self-Confidence

**Helping lessons learned through training become part of *how we work*.**

**To the Learner Leader…**

This suite of activities has been designed to reinforce the key learning from the **Assertiveness and Self-Confidence** course. They have been designed to be led by Team Leaders or designated Trainers and do not require training experience, though for best results we recommend that whoever is leading the activities understands the principles of adult learning and has some experience in leading learning activities.

The suite of activities will provide you with up to six months of learning reinforcement. We recommend that an activity is run each month following the Assertiveness and Self-Confidence course.

When running each activity:

* Ask the group to reflect back on the original course they attended:
* What takeaways did they have?
* What have they tried to implement?
* When revisiting some of these activities for a second time, ask them what additional ideas or thoughts they have in applying the concepts and tools in the activities to their job.

Each activity will take 10-15 minutes to run, depending on the size of the group.

There is one activity to a page. Each activity has a brief introduction followed by instructions for the trainer.

We suggest the following to optimise your learning experience:

* Have the group meet away from their normal workspace
* Make sure mobile devices are switched off so that everyone fully engages
* Make the environment ‘safe’ and encourage everyone to contribute
* Run these activities with everyone standing – try running these outdoors in the fresh air
* Have other team members take the lead and run an activity – this will build confidence and leadership skills
* Don’t be afraid to improvise – the learning needs to be about you and your group so make it meaningful
* When debriefing an activity get the group to reflect on what the activity means for them, and what they will do differently or continue to do that underscores the learning points from the activity

**Activities in this pack**

1. Realistic and doubt response
2. Making a WISH
3. Building self-confidence
4. Dealing with manipulation
5. Saying ‘no’
6. Being assertive with those in authority

**Activity 1: Realistic and doubt response**

**Introduction**

Thoughts govern behaviour regardless of whether the behaviour appears rational or irrational to others. When confronted by situations, we make a choice about how we respond based on our thought patterns. We can respond through the prism of doubt, which is one that lacks self-confidence, or through the prism of reality, which is a confident response.

**Instructions**

Split the group into pairs and ask them to consider both a doubt response and a realistic response to the situations below.

Here is an example to share with the group.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Situation** | **‘Doubt’ response** | **‘Realistic’ response** |
| Your colleague walked into the office and did not say hello to you. | What have I done to upset him/her? | He/she has something on their mind. |

Situations:

Your boss calls to tell you he wants to meet with you later today.

Your friend cancels lunch with no explanation as to why.

You don’t get invited to a neighbour’s holiday party.

You need to call someone for help because she has more expertise in what you’re working on.

You’ll be late on a deadline.

A friend is upset with you.

A family member is angry at you.

You get lost and will be late for a meeting.

The person you are talking to looks at her watch.

Questions to reflect on at the end of the activity:

* How can you check if your response is rooted in self-doubt or reality?
* If you are prone to doubtful responses what can you do?

**Activity 2: Making a WISH**

**Introduction**

One technique for making an assertive statement is:

**W** = ‘When…’

**I** = ‘I find…’ or ‘I need…’

**S** = ‘So I’d like…’

**H** = “How…

WISH can be used to deliver feedback, to request a change in behaviour or to respond to a verbal attack.

**Instructions**

Get the group to practice using the WISH technique. Here is an example:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Person A | I’d like to suggest we try a new approach |
| Person B (shutting down Person A) | We’ve tried that before and it didn’t work |
| Person A (assertively responding to Person B’s attempt to shut the conversation down) | **WHEN** the first response I get to my ideas is criticism…  **I FEEL** frustrated  **SO I’D LIKE** the opportunity to present my ideas before receiving feedback  **HOW** does that sound to you? |

Here are three scenarios the group can explore.

**Scenario 1**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Person A | “I have been thinking about the roster and wanted to suggest a change” |
| Person B (interrupting) | “No can do, it’s locked in” |
| Person A | “When…” |

**Scenario 2**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Person B | “I am leaving in an hour” |
| Person A | “Where is the report you were meant to have to me today?” |
| Person B | “I can get it to you mid-morning tomorrow” |
| Person A | “When…” |

**Scenario 3**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Person B (aggressive) | “Your presentation was hopeless. You’ll never get promoted ahead of me” |
| Person A | “When…” |

**Activity 3: Building self-confidence**

**Introduction**

Self-confidence is having clarity of thought, and belief in who you are and how you respond to situations. There are four areas in which self confidence can be built.

1. Using what you already know – building on positive experiences you have had
2. Moving beyond perfection – aiming to do your best and realising that pursuing perfection can damage confidence
3. Stretching your mind – exploring new things and stretching your existing limits and boundaries
4. Developing physical confidence – being physically fit gives you a better chance of doing your best

**Instructions**

Go through each of the four areas in which self-confidence can be built and ask the group what is working for them:

* What have they tried?
* How have they done it?
* What worked?
* What were the challenges they experienced?
* What did they do to overcome those challenges?
* What changes they have noted as a result?

Ask each member of the group to share their experiences.

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Ask each member of the group to reflect on where they are currently at in their job, and where they would like to be, and focus on the following questions:

* What do you love about your job and work?
* What aspects of your job are you really good at or other people have told you that you are really good at?
* What is essential for you to have available in your work?
* What do you feel you really ought to be doing or would like to be doing?
* What differences would such a change make?

Now ask the group to reflect on how they could make that happen – what positive steps could they take to move closer to achieving the desired change? Ask members to share with the group their thoughts on how they will make this change happen.

**Activity 4: Dealing with manipulation**

**Introduction**

Manipulation and bullying can occur at any time and be perpetrated by anyone in the workplace. It is confronting and distressing and may severely rattle someone’s confidence. This behaviour can include:

* Physical intimidation
* Sexual and racial harassment
* Verbal abuse
* Unjustified criticism
* Humiliation
* Exclusion

In the workplace there is often a strong desire to be selfless and to please others. This can leave us vulnerable to manipulation by those wishing to take advantage of this desire. We need to understand the warning signs of manipulation and respond accordingly.

**Instructions**

As a group, discuss the ramifications of blindly following the tendencies below and discuss the counter behaviour that can be applied to provide a more balanced approach.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tendency** | **Counter Behaviour** |
| You want to please | Accept that not everyone can be pleased. Remember mutual respect |
| You take on more and more work to gain approval | Set yourself sensible limits to balance work and home life |
| You find it hard to say ‘no’ | Be more assertive |
| You have a strong desire to think well of others | Be more objective - ask others’ opinions |
| You want things to be perfect | Realise that perfection isn't possible and erodes confidence |
| You have a strong need to feel valued | Learn to value yourself |
| You tend to discount your own contributions | Ask if what you are expected to do is fair and reasonable |

Ask the group to share a recent example of where they have witnessed manipulative behaviour or been subjected to manipulative behaviour, how they felt, and what they did about it or how they could have countered it.

**Activity 5: Saying ‘no’**

**Introduction**

One of the most effective ways of asserting your rights at work and elsewhere is in the simple act of saying ‘no’. Yet it is something that many people struggle with for fear of how they will be perceived.

**Instructions**

First, have a discussion on the difficulties people may have in saying ‘no’. Some of the reasons to explore are:

Saying ‘no’ directly is rude and blunt.

Saying ‘no’ is selfish, uncaring and mean.

People won’t like me if I say ‘no’.

Saying ‘no’ will cause others to take offence. It will make them feel rejected and hurt.

Disagreement and conflict are a disaster and must be avoided at all costs.

Now split the group into pairs. One person is to make a request while the other person says ‘no’ to the request. Use the requests below or have your pairs make up their own request. Make sure the context of the requestor is made clear: boss, co-worker, direct report, peer, etc.

**Scenario 1**

Refusing a request to stay late after work to help get some marketing materials uploaded to the internet.

**Scenario 2**

Refusing a repeated request for you to join the work social committee.

**Scenario 3**

Refusing a request from your boss to write a report by the end of the week. It will clash with other deadlines that your boss has given you.

**Scenario 4**

Refusing a request from one of your team members who wants to start coming into work 60 minutes later than her current start time. She has just joined a gym and wants to take an early morning gym class before coming to work. This staff member is one of three who answers incoming calls. All three are needed first thing in the morning to handle the volume of calls.

**Activity 6: Being assertive with those in authority**

**Introduction**

Many people struggle with being assertive with people in authority, especially their boss, as they believe that to do so may jeopardise their relationship and affect their career prospects. Being assertive with those in authority starts from a position of mutual respect, asserting your rights and having a relationship with your boss that is open and transparent.

Being assertive could mean fulfilling a right you have, or it could mean giving feedback. In both cases you need to plan what you will say, stick to the facts and have a logical reason for stating your position.

**Instructions**

Discuss each of the following scenarios as a group. If you are being assertive how would you maintain respect? What are the things you would and wouldn’t say. How would you ensure you maintained openness and transparency?

**Scenario 1**

Your boss is increasingly sending you messages outside of work hours asking for assistance in the evening and on the weekends. He says that is normal practice and should be expected in a 24/7 economy.

**Scenario 2**

Your boss is very happy with your work and every time you show competence and appear to handle the workload your boss piles more on. This is starting to affect your health and your mood.

**Scenario 3**

Your boss has been favouring a colleague of yours and has given them projects ahead of you, when you are equally qualified to take on the assignment.

**Scenario 4**

Your boss deals with many of the high-end accounts for the business. Recently she has been under some strain for personal reasons and this is starting to have an effect on the service she and others in your company are providing. You have spoken to several customer contacts who are not happy and some are thinking of taking their business elsewhere.