

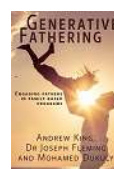
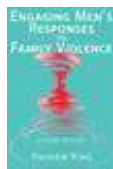
Group Supervision Coaching Tools

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1. Continuums

Continuums are useful ways of physically representing scaling questions on an imaginary line. They help group members:

- Identify the problem or issue.
- Set achievable goals.
- Have a starting point for change.
- Notice what is already working well.
- Identify strengths and exceptions.
- Measure progress.
- Allow for the introduction of metaphors.

Scaling questions are excellent identifying differences and similarities among people in groups. Ask the members: "On a scale of 1 to 10, how much risk is involved in this family situation?" They can represent this measurement either by:

- The distance between two hands.
- The number of fingers shown in the air.
- Standing up and placing themselves on an imaginary line.

Now ask the members: "What does it take to move from a 3 to a 4, or a 7 to an 8?" (Higher number is optimal response)

Scaling questions serve to make things more concrete for clients, and to show progress they have made or need to make. This tool is particularly useful with clients who tend to think in black-and-white, who have difficulty with abstract ideas. Other questions to select from:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is "your home is not very safe at all" and 10 is "it is very safe", what would that number be if your child could select it?
- How long did it take you to get to 5?
- What do you need to do to maintain 5? (What do you need to do to keep your 5?)
- How come it's not -3? What are you doing to make sure it's not -2?
- How long would you say you have been at 6?
- What is the difference between 6 and 3?
- What would your best friend say you are at on the same scale?
- What would it take to move 1 point higher?
- How would your best friend tell you have moved up 1 point?
- When you move up 1 point higher, what would be different in your life? With your child? How would your family life (safety, health, depression, relationship, etc.) be a little better?
- How confident are you that you will move up 1 point higher? What would your best friend say about how confident they are that you will move up higher? What will change in your life then?

2. Focused word discussion tool

As a powerful way to focus a discussion, write a key word, central to the current issue (e.g. *risk* or *threatening* or *difficult discussion*) on a piece of paper and place it in the centre of the space, on the floor or table. Pick an issue that has been central to the discussion. Write it on a piece of paper and place the paper in the middle of the group. Say to the group that this has been an issue that members have raised and ask them to share a story about it. This is a way to discuss an issue from a variety of angles. Useful questions include:

- How does this word affect you?
- What feelings go along with this word?
- How does this word affect other people in your team?
- What are some different ways to deal with this challenge?

After reflection sharing, ask them to think about their life if their issue was removed. What would this be like? What would be different? You may wish to replace this word with another, strengths-based/positive word. Now ask them to think about how they would feel if this issue was removed from their life and to write this feeling down on paper. Place this paper on top of the issue paper. Alternatively select another word that is connected to the previous issue and write it on a separate piece of paper and place it beside the original word. Discuss its role or response.

Source: King, A. (2018) *Continual Change Groupwork*. Groupwork Solutions, Sydney

Group Supervision Coaching Session Reflection

Ask everyone to reflect on a previous supervision session by writing on a black A4 piece of paper:

- Draw the room layout with table and who sat where.
- Identify the key issues that were present.
- Using the feedback principles attach, ask them to identify what principle was developing well and what was underdeveloped (a challenge).
- Identify their own learning as the manager.

Discuss each reflection in detail.

Possible extension exercises:

1. The control, influence and letting go circles were used to reflect on own team and how they could use this process individually or as a group.
2. Discuss the concept of advanced leadership requires the movement between different paradoxes:
 - Playful – serious
 - Public – private
 - Group focus – individual focus
 - Intellectual – emotional
 - General – specific
 - Impersonal – personal
 - Theorising – practica

3. The Campfire – For developing and reviewing the collective commitment

The Campfire (King, 2011) involves writing a single word or a few words about the key focus of your discussion (e.g. *Collective Commitment*) on a large piece of paper and placing it in the centre of the table, not the whiteboard with a variety of markers pens surrounding it. This process allows a purposeful, powerful and focused discussion with multiple opinions emerging.

Think about what everyone needs from each other to operate as the best team we can be in this program. It is important for the discussion to move people towards positive coping responses regarding the challenges they experience.

Ask people to learn forward in silence and, for the next minute, “use these pens to write or draw your immediate response to this issue (what they need from others)”. Encourage people to record their response on the paper. It may be a drawing, image, single word or short statement. It is important to allow the silence for people to reflect and value their own knowledge about the discussion topic. They can tick other people’s responses rather than rewriting it.

Having the paper on the table and not the whiteboard aids people’s ability to reflect and think about the topic. It also allows people to externalise the issue as separate from themselves and develop a mutual set of responses.

After leaving a short time for the responses to be written, ask people to share a reflection about what they or someone else has written on the paper. Other words or images can be added during the discussion.

This ‘Campfire’ process is a great alternative to brainstorming.

Source: King, A. (2018) *Continual Change Groupwork*. Groupwork Solutions, Sydney

4. Working with paradox – maintaining the immediate moment

“Alice thought she had never seen such a curious croquet ground in her life; it was all ridges and furrows; the croquet balls were live hedgehogs, the mallets were flamingos, and the soldiers had to double themselves up and stand on their hands and feet to make arches.” (Lewis Carol, Alice in Wonderland, 1932)

Learning-in-the-moment situations, when used in counselling and therapy groups, are like falling into Wonderland. Everything is alive, but nothing stays the same. As a leader, you are interested in creating an environment where a wide variety of issues can be seen from different perspectives.

Learning in the moment can be maintained only through the movement between a series of paradoxes. The movement between these processes doesn't create a mad tea party. It creates a learning environment where people can be 'fully awake', expressive and themselves. There is no manipulation and members recognise their own strengths, resources and capability to respond to challenges.

“Learning actions, those actions required to achieve the learning goal, are fraught with opportunities to experience negative emotions and strong physiological feelings. This says that, for the most part, learning may not be fun for the student (even if at times it may be considered challenging or interesting). And further, these emotions and feelings will directly affect the action the student decides to take. To ignore the fact that our students have feelings and emotions that are triggered by both their own internal processes and external events and situations is to miss the predominant feature of the learner's experience.” (Burns, 1996, p92)

When working with the paradoxes contained in the learning experience, the leader needs to be clear about the participant's learning edge. This edge is one step beyond their current comfort learning zone. This is connected with the secondary purpose for being in the group. When learning in the moment occurs, the rules of interaction are less clear, but the information that is learnt is significantly more powerful and retained for a much longer period of time. “To enter into this experience-based learning, a leader needs to be comfortable moving the group focus [see below] relatively easily.” (Slattery, 2001, p251) The paradox occurs when the movement between the focus of the group discussion changes seamlessly and quickly.

Different focus processes:

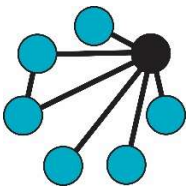
- Playful – serious
- Public – private
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5. Communication interaction structures

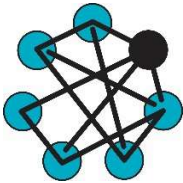
Norma Lang (2010) created a model for understanding interaction patterns in groups. The interaction in the model moves between two phases, with neither being 'right' or 'wrong'. These two communication interaction structures are maximised in either therapeutic or psychoeducational group formats. The structures can be best understood by plotting who directs the discussion to whom, as indicated in the diagrams below.

Lang's description of the leader's role: "The group is structured around the leader, who is in the central locus...The leader may have a disproportionate area and degree of influence in all group processes and may be singularly active in much of the interaction." (Lang, 2010 p113). Lang identifies two interaction structures – allonomous and autonomous – which are illustrated below (the leader is symbolised by the dark circle).

Allonomous – This structure is typical of group interaction where the leader is the centre of the discussion and members interact with the other group members by directing their discussion towards the leader. The leader acts as if he/she is the centre of the group's focus, even if sitting in the circle like the other members. The primary purpose for this communication interaction is the maintenance of safety. It is required in all groups at the beginning and ending stage, at transition points between activities, processes or agenda items, or in the management of a crisis that occurs where someone says an inappropriate thing. Its power relationship reflects the leader's authority and the group's dependence on them.



Autonomous – Typical of group interaction where the discussion is between the members, with the members talking directly to each other rather than only to the leader. The primary purpose for this communication interaction is the development of risk. Autonomous structures often occur in the middle group stage, where the group needs to be creative or when people are more spontaneous towards others' comments (but not directing their responses through the leader).



Autonomous interaction occurs where the communication pattern is shared between most of the group members. The members talk directly to each other, with a higher level of creativity, problem-solving and energy being observable. If autonomous communication is limited in the group, it is sought in breaks or before and after the group meetings. It can be incubated in a group by using pair, triad or small group activities. Its power relationship reflects a mutual learning space, with higher levels of perceived equality and creativity and energy. Most people who are comfortable with other people's company look for autonomous interaction as the most rewarding outcome.

Most well-facilitated groups balance these two communication structures in some way. Lang argues that the best work/task groups are usually quite structured (with a strong formal or informal set of expectations), with a high use of allonomous interaction and short periods of autonomous interaction occurring when discussion about issues is allowed.

The more allonomous (unable to function independently) a group is, the more the leader needs to be actively involved in the group, offering a great deal of direction and support. The extent of direction and active involvement needs to diminish as the group moves towards maturity and autonomy. Remaining overly directive causes frustration and even hostility for a group that is ready to determine its own functioning. (O'Hara & Pockett, 2011, p242)

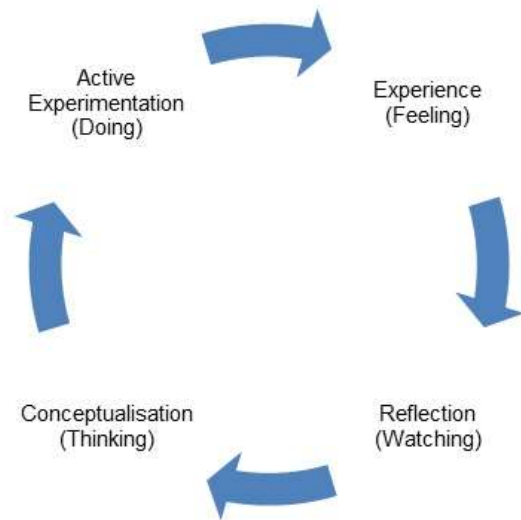
This is different to the progression idea used by most theorists who suggest groups move through specific stages of development as the interaction structures oscillate. Allonomous-autonomous interaction structures are both useful, not just in the macro context where groups move from allonomous to autonomous interaction throughout their longevity, but also in the micro context where interaction changes throughout a session.

Ways that group supervision demonstrate the different communication interaction structures:

Allonomous interaction	Autonomous Interaction
<p>e.g. either the manager and practise specialist scribing at the whiteboard</p> <p>e.g. staff speaking directly to either the manager and practise specialist rather than other team members</p>	<p>e.g. discussions where both the manager and practise specialist both sit down and are part of a group discussion;</p> <p>e.g. using pair discussions to first, to stimulate reflection</p>

6. Applying the Experiential Learning Cycle to group supervision

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC) (Kolb & Kolb, 2008) provides a way to understand adult learning. Kolb's model has been extensively applied across many settings including business, university and group leadership contexts. The ELC "portrays two dialectically related modes of grasping experience – concrete experience and abstract conceptualisation – and two dialectically related modes of transforming experience – reflective observation and active experimentation" (p298). Both modes describe the interaction between the four learning styles they contain. Kolb argues that people utilise the learning styles as a spiralling process as they interact with their environment, with each style being a dynamic state and not a psychological trait. "The ELC is actually a learning spiral. When concrete experience is enriched by reflection, given meaning by thinking and transformed by action, the new experience created becomes richer" (p309).



Principle 1: Everyone uses all four learning styles to different degrees.

Since the learning modes have dialectic relationships, learning involves the balance and utilisation of each dimension. Overall, learning is enhanced when group members utilise the two learning modes or all four learning styles (Kolb & Kolb, 2008, p319). Kolb's ELC is very important for group leadership with the terminology simplified to watching, thinking, doing, and feeling.

Reflection	Watching	Making use of and investigating experience, use of feelings and intuition, ideas and options.
Conceptualisation	Thinking	Analysing and creating meaning, asking "Why?"
Active experimentation	Doing	Preparing for action, trying things out.
Experience	Feeling	Being open to, aware of and valuing experience.

Principle 2: Dominant learning style and shadow sides may occur – the four dominant learning styles are evenly distributed in the population.

Group members often have a dominant learning style that is ideally balanced with the surrounding learning styles. Kolb described the ELC as a tool to enhance learning and to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses we experience in that situation (Kolb, 1976, p25-26). The idea of dominance can be understood by using the metaphor of an engine (the learning process) and a starter motor (dominant learning style). While the engine operates using all four learning styles (i.e. pistons), the process primarily starts when our dominant learning style is valued and catered for (i.e. starter motor). As a thinker, a group member looks for clarity of ideas, research and a chance to examine how the learning can be applied in their situation. Until this engagement occurs, a thinker may remain removed from, or critical of, what is occurring. Groups often have a 25% distribution of dominant learning styles – watching, thinking, doing and feeling. Cultural differences appear to impact on the significance of the dominant learning styles. East Asian and Aboriginal Australian communities place a stronger emphasis on the watching style. This needs to be understood before the other learning styles are mobilised.

However, a dominant learning style can be over-utilised and may not always be balanced with the use of the other styles. This over-use is called a ‘shadow side’. Table 3 uses Kolb’s theory to highlight both the core strengths and possible shadow sides (Kolb & Kolb, 2008:316). Group leaders operate best when they internally balance their use of the four learning styles and minimised the impact of their shadow sides.

Table 1: Overview of each learning style when balanced, with possible shadow side.

Learning style	Core strength when it is a balanced dominant learning style	Possible shadow side when it is less balanced
Reflecting (watching)	When the watching learning style balances feeling and thinking, this learning style has a capacity for deep reflection informed by the ability to be feeling and thinking-orientated. These people thrive in environments that allow for deep discussion, reflection and thoughtful readings that enable them to better understand why and how the world operates the way it does. The essence of being a ‘reflective observer’ is essential in group leadership. When mobilised well (with an appropriate balance of the other learning styles), it is from this place that the other learning styles emerge.	When someone is very strong in reflecting, they can find themselves procrastinating. They may have trouble putting reflections into action or be overloaded by what they are observing. This imbalanced cycle lacks the opportunity to use meta-learning to reality test ideas in action.
Thinking	When the thinking learning style balances reflecting and acting, this learning style is strong in concept development, analysis, questioning, critique, evaluation and testing ideas in the real world. These people thrive on creating conceptual models that can be applied, or generalised, to other situations.	When someone is very strong in thinking, they can find themselves over-intellectualising a situation and being more removed from the feelings that are occurring. Due to their logical approach and the amount of focus required, they often enjoy working alone.

Doing	When the doing learning style balances feeling and thinking, people use practical and active responses to assess situations based on their technical analysis and experience with different solutions. They excel in integrating task and people needs.	They may want to implement solutions too quickly without enough time to consider and reflect on other possibilities. They may also have a practical response to a problem and wish to move beyond it.
Experiencing (Feeling)	When the feeling learning style balances acting and reflection, people are deeply involved in the concrete experiences (of themselves or others) while being comfortable with the inner world of reflection and the outer world of action. They have a natural feelings barometer and easily tune into a full spectrum of life experiences. They appreciate hands-on experiences, pairs, triads and small group discussions that have a mutual connection with others that involves sharing about self or listening to others.	Because they often place the least attention on conceptualising, they may lack planning, appear disorganised and be less likely to articulate theories to guide them. When someone is very strong in feeling, they can find themselves flooded by their or others' feelings and experiences, and this interrupts learning until these underlying issues are addressed. These issues are often about unaddressed power and conflict issues.

Principle 3: Change of context can involve a change of dominant learning style.

Learning is contextual. The dominant learning style may shift as the learning task changes, or over lifespan development. Someone with a strong doing learning style may become more of a 'watcher' as they age due to the wisdom they have gained, a heightened awareness of their own strengths, or their experience of observing others completing a task. Change in dominant learning styles is mainly based on familiarity and confidence.

Principle 4: As a group leader, balance the use of all four learning styles.

Group leaders operate best when they balance the use of the four learning styles in group processes and activities. While all members benefit from involvement in the processes below (Table 4), the conscious integration of all the following processes is most desirable:

Table 2: Examples of how to use the learning styles.

<p><i>Feeling</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a good group atmosphere • Create a secure and safe feeling • Allow an opportunity for group members to share with others in small groups, dyads or triads • Validate the acceptance of the unknown • Allow for the stimulation of new ideas and perspectives • Ensure that the expression of feelings and emotions is valued as okay • Allow for the use of humour and levity • Allow time and space to reflect and tune in to feelings 	<p><i>Watching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide diverse, varied and flexible activities • Be energetic • Use visual multisensory tools • Model techniques, examples and the use of roleplay • Provide choices and options • Allow for discussions to occur • Provide opportunities to put ideas into practice • Develop confidence first, before practising • Demonstrate skills and ideas through the use of multimedia
<p><i>Thinking</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight what the session involves • Provide clear aims and objectives • Provide guidelines, outlines • Use references to explore relevance and validity of ideas • Allow for group members to question and challenge the ideas and information • Provide useful reading material • Use handouts, but not too many • Allow time for group members to think about what has been said • Allow group members to clarify ideas 	<p><i>Doing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tasks and activities • Use warm-up exercises • Provide variation in the type of group exercises • Use experiential learning exercises • Maintain a practical focus • Provide clear opportunities for involvement • Use demonstrations • Utilise art, collage, drama, sculpture, games, roleplay, video, drumming, small groups, puppets, guided meditation • Integrate reflection and action • Ensure the session is enjoyable

Principle 5: Watchful observation and wisdom are closely connected.

The reflection (watching) learning style is central to the learning process. A true watcher fully integrates all the other learning styles as long as they do not procrastinate or have this as their shadow side. Building on Freire's work (1992), transformative learning is driven by the dialectic between *reflection* and *action*. Using principle 3, this is driven by the full integration of thinking, doing and feeling learning styles.

In groupwork it is important to know 'who your watchers are'. If a problem or crisis occurs, often the watchers are able to reframe the situation in a more balanced and wise way. Their response is important for the best management of the situation. Their response is vital because the thinker's shadow side may over-intellectualise, the doer's shadow side will probably want to move too quickly onto the next activity and the feeler's shadow side will often be flooded by emotion.

Source: King, A. (2018) *Continual Change Groupwork*. Groupwork Solutions, Sydney

7. Characteristics of effective feedback

Effective feedback principles

Supportive group climates

Defensive group climates

1. Use description *instead of* evaluation/ judgement
2. Use a problem orientation *instead of* power/control orientation
3. Use spontaneity *instead of* strategy
4. Use empathy *instead of* neutrality
5. Use equality *instead of* superiority
6. Use provisionalism *instead of* certainty.

Descriptive rather than evaluative Effective feedback describes what is observable in a learning environment or in the interaction between people, rather than the expression of a judgment about what someone said or did.

Specific rather than general Feedback is more effective when it is specific because better learning can occur and changes can be made.

Takes into account the needs of both the receiver and the giver Feedback does not sit in isolation. It is based on the interaction between two or more people and relates to the needs of all parties.

Directed towards behaviour receiver can do something about Feedback occurs best when it is directed towards an issue that someone has some control over, rather than an issue where there is no control.

Solicited rather than imposed Due to the power of feedback, it is based on a learning relationship and contract. A person needs to have asked for feedback about a certain area, rather than it being imposed by someone else.

Well timed Feedback works well when it is well timed and delivered at the appropriate moment. Otherwise it is likely to be missed or forgotten.

Checked to ensure clear communication Feedback is based on the interaction between two or more people and it is important to check that the message is clearly heard and understood.

Directly verifiable information Feedback in a group is most useful and interesting for everyone when it concerns issues that are known to everyone in the room.

Leaders in all types of groups are likely to improve their effectiveness by reflecting on the way feedback is used in their particular group context. The way it is managed in a group is likely to influence the establishment of a supportive or defensive group climate. Clayton (1989) defines the governance of these climates in this way:

The control, influence and letting go circles

Context: This is an excellent exercise for reviewing a situation and accepting what can be controlled and influenced, and what needs to be let go of.

What can be controlled in life is in fact a small, very limited area. Anyone can control only what they wear, where they go, who they spend time with and their own behaviour. **People do not have the right to control others!**

In the larger circle is the area of influence. It is larger than the area of control, but still limited. Conflict in life is increased when people try to control what they can only influence, or attempt to influence what is outside their control or influence. When attempting to control a situation, or a person who is outside their influence and control, people have no choice but to use power. A person must force others to do what they want. This force is violence.

This misguided attempted to control issues in life often occurs in family separation, when separated fathers are in conflict with the mother of their children. Unless the children are in potential or actual danger, each parent has the right to attempt persuasion and to influence the other parent, and no right to try to force their view of 'how things should be' on the other. If it is not going the way they want, they need to learn how to 'let it go'.

Outside the larger ovoid shape write 'outside our area of influence and control'. There are now three distinct areas:

- Our area of control
- Our area of influence
- Outside our control and Influence

It is of paramount importance to the wellbeing of relationships and ourselves that people clearly differentiate between these three areas. Often the most important issues in someone's life are out of their control or influence. Conflict or violence results when one party attempts to control these things.

The more power/force used, the greater the conflict and feelings of mistrust. Although challenging, people must learn to let go of what is outside of the areas of control and influence. A simple thing to say, but in reality, a very challenging thing to do.

Conducting the exercise: Ask the person to think about an issue or concern. Draw two circles (or ovals) using the same centre. A smallish circle in the centre, with a larger circle on the outside. There should be a wide space left on the outside of the circles before the edge of the paper.

What I cannot control or influence - Let it go!



Together, discuss and write down the things they can control in the situation (the answers should refer only to themselves; their feelings, actions, thoughts – “I” or “my”, etc). Then, thinking of the same situation, write down all the things they can influence, but can’t control. It may be necessary to define ‘influence’: you can have some impact, but the ultimate outcome is unknown. In the outside area write down all the things they can’t control or influence. They need to let go of these things because they can’t have an impact on them. Write the words ‘Letting it go’ and discuss how this may be achieved. It doesn’t mean that they aren’t important.

The skill involved with letting go doesn’t mean forgetting or ignoring. Some letting-go techniques:

- Focus on your control of your breathing.
- Acknowledge feelings, but don’t treat them as a fact.
- Acknowledge the important values and goals decided upon previously.
- Remember and hold on to significant connections in your life.

Discuss what is learnt.

Extension questions:

- What situations in life do you misjudge the balance of control/influence and letting go?
- How do you let go of issues you feel strongly about?

Stop the Drama Triangle!

We tend to move around the triangle until **ONE** of us changes; until **ONE** of us communicates in a clear and healthy pattern.

1. Stop!
2. Notice what role you are in.
3. Move out of the triangle to a clear and healthy role.

ATTACKER (Bully/Blamer)

Beliefs

*This is your fault.
You're not OK but I am.
You'll be OK if you do
what I tell you.*

Behaviours/Feelings

Critical, domineering and bossy
Puts other person down
Blames and finger points
Feels anger or resentment
Fears being out of control
Rigid in thinking

RESCUER (Enabler)

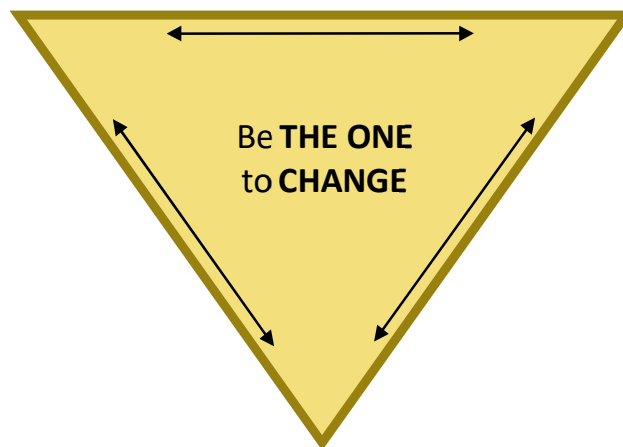
Beliefs

*You need my help.
You're not OK but I am.*

Supports other at expense of self

Feels guilty and anxious if
doesn't rescue

Feels connected and capable
when *victim* is dependent



VICTIM (Underdog)

Beliefs:

*I'm helpless and powerless.
I'm not OK and everybody else is.*

Behaviours/Feelings

- Feels oppressed, hopeless, incapable and misunderstood
- Seeks a rescuer to validate feelings
- Does not stand up to attacker

- Refuses to make decisions, solve problems, get professional help, do self-care or change behaviour

Promote the Learning Triangle

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<p>From VICTIM (Underdog) to Survivor/Thriver with Resilience</p>	<p>From ATTACKER (Bully/Blamer) to Challenger with Assertiveness</p>	<p>From RESCUER to Coach with Empathy</p>
<p>1. State What You Want: <i>I want more time to finish the task.</i></p> <p>2. Keep Agreements: If someone helps you, do your part by following through.</p> <p>3. Ask Yourself: <i>How can I get what I really want in a healthy way?</i></p> <p>4. Count Your Blessings: Acknowledge your strengths, what you</p> <p>REMEMBER: You make you! You are lovable, capable, and resilient.</p>	<p>1. State Your Boundaries: I have 10 minutes to talk and listen.</p> <p>2. Active Listen: <i>I hear a problem delayed you.</i></p> <p>3. Make Expectations Clear: <i>I want you to keep your agreement. Please have it done by Tuesday.</i></p> <p>4. Provide Choices: <i>You will keep your agreement or I will arrange for someone else to do the task. You choose.</i></p> <p>REMEMBER: You make you! The only person you can change is yourself.</p>	<p>1. State Your Boundaries: <i>I have 20 minutes to talk and listen.</i></p> <p>2. Ask What Support Is Wanted: <i>How do you imagine I can help?</i></p> <p>3. Active Listen: <i>I hear a problem delayed you.</i></p> <p>4. Affirm Resilience: <i>I have seen you succeed.</i></p> <p>5. Provide Choices: <i>You will keep your agreement or I will arrange for someone else to do the task. You choose.</i></p> <p>REMEMBER: You make you! The only person you can change (fix) is yourself.</p>

Notes

