

Breakout 2 Instructions

This is an exercise in psychological safety, self-awareness, and emotional intelligence. It requires you to be aware of your own feelings and regulate them. It also requires you to be empathic – taking what someone tells you about THEIR experience and accepting it. Even if you think you would feel differently.

Empathy requires that you create a safe space for someone to discuss something they found difficult, and not to judge them (hard) or tell them what to do.

Psychological safety requires trust. You are more likely to create trust by listening carefully to what is said – and not said – and demonstrating that you are listening. This is a process called Active Listening and is a course in its own right.

For the breakout:

You will be divided into groups of 3 – if the numbers do not allow this completely there might be a pair (2 people) or a quartet (4 people).

There should be at least one talker and one listener. Anybody else is an observer.

Agree on who will be the talker first – you will change roles as time allows.

Talker: Describe as well as you can a difficult situation at work – avoid revealing personal or confidential information about anyone else – don't describe your emotions, just what happened.

Listener: Describe the emotions that you think the talker was feeling at that time, and now when they are describing the situation to you.

Observer: Describe the emotions you heard, saw, and felt as one spoke and one listened.

Feedback:

Talker describe one thing you appreciated about the listener, one thing you found difficult and one encouragement you would give them

Listener, describe one thing you appreciated about your listening, one thing you found difficult and one thing you would encourage yourself to do in future

Observer, provide feedback to the listener only using the technique above

Switch roles and go again