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Customizable Soft-Skills Courseware

# How to Manage Your Emotions



Instructor Guide

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## Instructional Design and Learning Philosophy

*We are committed to providing the best core-skills content possible for instructor-led training (ILT). The following principles are applied in the development of programs:*

### **Sound Instructional Design**

*All course content is developed using a variety of research techniques. These include:*

- *Brainstorming sessions with target audience*
- *Library research*
- *Online research*
- *Customer research (focus groups, surveys, etc.)*
- *Subject matter experts (SMEs)*
- *Interviews with trainers*

*Expert instructional designers create imaginative and innovative solutions for your training needs through the development of powerful instructional elements. These include:*

- *Learning objectives provide effective tools for managing, monitoring, and evaluating training.*
- *Meaningful connections between the topic and students' past, present, and future.*
- *Appropriate organization of essential ideas helps students to focus on what they need to know in order to learn.*
- *Modeling techniques demonstrate useful behaviors and problem-solving skills.*
- *Active application, the cornerstone to learning, helps students immediately apply what they have learned to a real-life situation.*
- *Consistent instructions and design help students learn and retain new information.*
- *Accelerated learning techniques create interactive, hands-on involvement to accommodate different learning styles.*

### **Application of Adult Learning Styles**

*Adults learn best by incorporating their personal experiences with training and by applying what they learn to real-life situations. Our experienced instructional designers incorporate a variety of accelerated learning techniques, role-plays, simulations, discussions, and lectures within each course to appeal to all learning styles and ensure that the ideas and information will be retained.*

## Instructional Design and Learning Philosophy (cont.)

### Customizing Your Program

*There are two ways you can customize this program: 1) Customize the content and 2) Customize the format.*

*Customizing the content is easy. The Instructor Guide and Participant Guide are created in Word, so you can simply modify the content just as you would any Word document. Some common reasons for customizing content include:*

- *Changing examples to fit your industry or work environment*
- *Modifying content to match work rules and procedures*
- *Adding, deleting, or rearranging content to meet training time constraints*

*The other way to customize the program is to change the formatting. Typically, organizations will do this to add their corporate logo and/or colors, or it may just be an issue of personal preference. Again, treat the Instructor Guide and/or Participant Guide as you would any Word document. The styles used in this document are labeled HRDQ in the Quick Styles tab. For additional help using Word, consult the Microsoft website.*

### Preparing for the Training

*As you know, preparation is the key to conducting an effective training session. Here are some issues to consider:*

#### **Logistics**

- *Advertise the training with enough advance notice that participants can block it out on their calendars. Consider contacting potential participants' managers to encourage their attendance.*
- *Send a confirmation notice before the training reminding participants of the date, time, and location.*
- *Room setup: Ideally, use round tables to facilitate partner and small-group interaction.*

#### **Equipment and Supplies**

*In order for the training to go smoothly, have these supplies and equipment on hand:*

▪ <i>Name tags</i>	▪ <i>Pens or pencils</i>
▪ <i>Flip chart and markers, tape</i>	▪ <i>Beverages and snacks (optional)</i>
▪ <i>Laptop with projector (for the PowerPoint)</i>	▪ <i>Water for yourself and the participants</i>
▪ <i>Timer or watch</i>	
▪ <i>Pads of sticky notes, blank paper</i>	

Please note: Only the pages highlighted in yellow below are those featured in this preview.

## Contents

<b>Module One: The What and Why of Emotions .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Course objectives.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Do you manage your emotions? Or do they manage you? .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>What are emotions? .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>What place do emotions have at work? .....</i>	<i>5</i>
<b>Module Two: All About Triggers .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Trigger-perception-response cycle .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Common workplace triggers.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Identifying personal triggers .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<b>Module Three: Strategies for Managing Your Emotions .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Recognizing physical reactions .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Alternative to an angry outburst or emotional reactions .....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Reframe your thinking .....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Reframing practice .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Productive confrontations.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Problem solving.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Problem solving practice .....</i>	<i>16</i>
<b>Module Four: Oops! What To Do When an Outburst Happens .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<i>Handling your own anger and emotions .....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Handling someone else's outburst.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Restoring harmony.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<b>Module Five: Long-term Strategies to Channel Emotions Productively .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<i>Constructive vs. destructive communication.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Learned optimism.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Don't sweat the small stuff.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<i>Action plan .....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Course review .....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Suggested resource list.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Course evaluation .....</i>	<i>32</i>

## Module One



### The What and Why of Emotions

## Course Objectives

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge and ability to:

- ◇ Recognize the messages our emotions send us at work
- ◇ Understand the trigger-perception-response cycle
- ◇ Reframe our thinking to avoid emotional outbursts
- ◇ Replace emotional outbursts with productive confrontations
- ◇ Recover from your own or another person's emotional outburst
- ◇ Employ long-term strategies to channel emotions productively

### Trainer Notes

5 minutes

*Introduce yourself and provide a brief background if participants don't know you. Go over logistics (schedule, breaks, restrooms, etc.) and any ground rules for the day. Typical ground rules include no electronics in use, show respect for every participant, participate fully, no dominating or interrupting, etc.*

*Review the course objectives with participants.*

How to Manage Your Emotions

### Course Objectives

- Recognize the messages our emotions send us at work.
- Understand the trigger-perception-response-cycle.
- Reframe our thinking to avoid emotional outbursts.
- Replace emotional outbursts with productive confrontations.
- Recover from your own or another person's emotional outburst.
- Employ long-term strategies to channel emotions productively.

## What Place Do Emotions Have at Work?

### Emotional messages at work

- ◇ We want something and are not getting it.
- ◇ From past experience, we expect trouble.
- ◇ We have feelings of powerlessness.
- ◇ We have unfulfilled expectations.
- ◇ People or circumstances are affecting our outlook.

### Most common negative emotions at work

- ◇ Frustration/irritation
- ◇ Worry/nervousness
- ◇ Anger/aggravation
- ◇ Dislike
- ◇ Disappointment/unhappiness
- ◇ Embarrassment
- ◇ Guilt

### Activity

When have your emotions (whether positive or negative) served you productively?

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When have your emotions (whether positive or negative) served you unproductively?

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*Activity: Ask participants to think of a time when their emotions (whether positive or negative) served them productively and a time when their emotions (whether positive or negative) served them unproductively. Ask for volunteers to share their answers.*

#### Trainer Notes

10 minutes

Emotions are a signal that lets you know when something is wrong. However, they don't solve the problem. And, if not expressed constructively, they can drain your energy and damage relationships. So it's important to learn how to handle them effectively.

Don't make decisions when you are too emotional to think clearly. Don't attempt to problem solve with someone who is too emotional.

Naturally, people experience positive emotions at work—happiness, gratitude, enjoyment, pleasure, delight, etc. Generally, these don't pose a problem, so we won't focus on them in this program.

A 1997 study by Cynthia Fisher at Bond University found that the most common negative emotions experienced in the workplace are:

Frustration/irritation

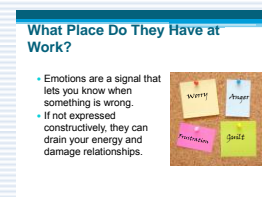
Worry/nervousness

Anger/aggravation

Dislike

Disappointment/unhappiness

Other negative emotions: Fear, embarrassment, guilt.



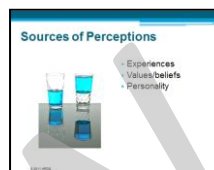


## Trigger-Perception-Response Cycle



### Sources of your perceptions

- ◇ Experiences
  - Example: A previous boss yelled at you whenever he called you into his office, so now when your current boss calls you into her office, you think she's mad at you.
- ◇ Values/beliefs
  - Example: "If something doesn't turn out the way I planned, I must have done something wrong."
  - Example: "If someone breaks a promise to me, I can never trust them again."
- ◇ Personality
  - Example: "Glass half empty" vs. "glass half full" people (natural pessimists vs. natural optimists)



### Responses

- ◇ Mental
  - Positive self-talk and emotions
  - Negative self-talk and emotions
- ◇ Physical
  - Heart rate increases, blood pressure rises
  - Face flushed, pupils dilate
  - Muscles tense, hair stands on end
  - Body releases adrenaline and glucose



*Physical responses are pretty typical to everyone—though not everyone experiences all the responses listed.*

#### Trainer Notes

15 minutes

Contrary to what most people think, a person or event doesn't cause your emotions; your belief or perception about that event leads to your response (emotions). In other words, your boss doesn't make you angry; your perception about what your boss said or did leads to your emotion. Here's an example: Two people are told they're going to represent their department and give a presentation to upper management—one person is thrilled and the other is petrified. Same event, different perceptions of the event, and therefore different emotional responses.

Perception is defined as how you interpret an event and what you say to yourself about it. The primary sources of a person's perceptions are his or her life experience, values, beliefs, and personality. For example, some people are naturally optimistic while others are pessimistic.

The mental response to your perception is communicated to you through your self-talk. Ask participants, "Which is more automatic, negative or positive self-talk?" Most will answer "negative."

#### Trigger-Perception-Response Cycle



## Recognizing Physical Reactions

### Fight or flight

Reaction	Original purpose	Harmful effects
Breathing is faster	Provide more oxygen	Chest pains from tired diaphragm muscles
Heart rate increases	Pump blood faster	High blood pressure; feeling on edge
Extra sugars released into bloodstream	Provide more energy	Low blood sugar, feel tired
Stress signals sent to muscles	Prepare muscles for action	Fatigue, sleep problems, difficulty concentrating
Blood leaves hands and feet	Divert blood to large muscles	Cold hands and feet, migraine headaches
Digestion stops	Divert blood to large muscles	Digestive problems

### Control your physical responses

- ◇ Build in breathing room: silence, solitude, and sitting still.
- ◇ Close your eyes and take a deep breath.
- ◇ Consciously relax your muscles.
- ◇ Develop an “interrupting” habit.
- ◇ Imagine how you look and behave when you’re angry or emotional.

*Imagine how you look and behave when you’re emotional. For example, if you feel like yelling at a coworker, imagine how you would look—is your face red? Are you shouting? Waving your arms around? Do you want to work with someone like that? Probably not. This helps you see yourself as others see you.*

#### Trainer Notes

10 minutes

*The fight or flight response was humans’ original means of dealing with a physical threat. It enabled people to fight danger or flee from it. Today, we have the same reaction, but the triggers are not life-or-death events. So we need to figure out how to break this automatic response that has harmful effects on us now.*

*Control your physical response: Stopping the physical response early is the key to maintaining your composure.*

*When you are emotionally flooded and struggling to keep your composure, build in breathing room. Ideally, this includes silence, solitude, and sitting still. Sometimes you may only be able to achieve one of the three elements.*

*Relax your muscles: Sometimes it helps to tightly clench muscles and then release them.*

*Develop a habit to interrupt your typical response pattern.*

*Examples: Snapping your finger, tugging on your ear, blink three times, silently saying “stop” or “relax,” etc.*

#### Control Your Physical Responses

- Build in breathing room
- Close your eyes and take a deep breath
- Relax your muscles
- Develop an “interrupting” habit



## Reframing Practice

*Instructions: Read each exchange and write a realistic belief to replace the automatic negative response. Example:*

*Jim: "Don't take this personally, but we didn't use your suggestion at our last meeting."*

*Automatic response: "Well, don't bother asking for my input again. I'm too busy anyway."*

*Realistic response: "There must have been some even better ideas presented at the meeting."*

1. *Morgan: "Marissa is going to work on our team for the next two weeks to help us finish the Adams project."*

*Automatic response: "How dare you take one of my team members without asking first!"*

*Realistic response:*

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2. *Tom: "Your decision to delay the product launch is going to be a disaster for the company."*

*Automatic response: "I'm the expert. You don't know what you're talking about."*

*Realistic response:*

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### *Trainer Notes*

*10 minutes*

*Activity: Reframing practice. Since this is a critical skill in managing emotions, here is some additional practice.*

*Have participants work in pairs or small groups. Direct them to read each pair of statements and write a realistic response to replace the automatic response. One example is listed.*

*Note that this may be difficult to do because the initial statement is inflammatory, and a more natural reaction would be to get defensive, rather than de-escalate the emotion.*

*Debrief by having participants share their answers.*

*Possible responses:*

*1. "Morgan must really need some help and must not realize our workload is extremely heavy too. Let's figure out a schedule that works for both of us."*

*2. "That's a harsh assessment. What is your thinking behind your conclusion?"*

*If participants would like more practice, ask them to think of a recent time when they had an automatic negative response. Tell them to describe the situation, and then reframe with a more realistic response.*

## Problem Solving

### Step 1: Find a good time and place to talk

- ◇ Set up a specific time and place; avoid interruptions.
- ◇ Set ground rules, such as no put-downs.

### Step 2: Listen to each other

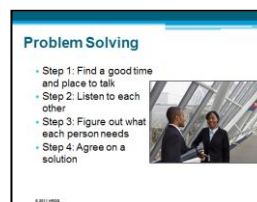
- ◇ Speaker shares his or her perspective, focusing on specific behaviors.
- ◇ Listener listens without interrupting; summarizes what he or she heard.
- ◇ Take turns talking and listening until both people agree they have heard each other.

### Step 3: Figure out together what each party needs

- ◇ Ask the other person what he or she needs to have happen in order to feel that the problem is solved.
- ◇ Each party suggests options.
- ◇ Probe to understand why the options are appealing to the other person.

### Step 4: Agree on a solution

- ◇ Evaluate the list of options by asking questions:
  - Would this really solve the problem?
  - Is this solution realistic?
  - Do we both feel good about this solution?
  - Are there any ways to make it a better solution?



*Step 3: Understanding needs is a critical part of reaching a satisfying and lasting solution. If solutions are offered, find out why those solutions are appealing to the other person. Summarize what you have heard. Again, each party takes turns.*

*Step 4: Agree on a solution. Choose the solution that best satisfies the needs of both parties. Agree on a time to check in and make certain that this solution is working.*

#### Trainer Notes

10 minutes

*Often, people feel emotional at work as the result of a conflict with someone. One of the most practical ways to deal with the conflict is to engage in problem solving.*

*Often, the only way we think of to solve problems is to split the difference. If it's not possible to do that, we get stuck. But if you and the other person build rapport by really listening to each other, you are both more likely to share underlying needs (which aren't always the needs that have been stated). These needs are not necessarily in conflict. For example, the need to be respected is a common one that comes up in conflict. You can discuss what respect looks like to each of you.*

*The steps on this page are simple to understand yet often difficult to practice. Emphasize the importance of really focusing on Step 3 and avoiding jumping into solutions.*

*Step 1: Set up a time and a place to talk to the other person. If tensions are running high, you may need to reach agreement not to use put-downs.*

*Step 2: Focus on describing specific things that have happened rather than labeling the person. For example, say, "I get mad when you cut me off" rather than, "You're pushy."*

## Handling Your Own Anger and Emotions

### In the moment

- ◇ Breathe deeply, in through the nose and out through the mouth.
- ◇ Remove yourself from the situation if possible.
- ◇ Count backward from 20 (or 50 or 100).
- ◇ Visualize a tranquil place or environment.
- ◇ Let go of expectations about the situation.
- ◇ “Freeze frame” the situation.



### Practice: Visualize a tranquil place

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### After the fact

- ◇ Go for a walk, ideally outdoors in a green place (park, lawn, etc.).
- ◇ Listen to soothing music.
- ◇ Write in a journal. Or write a letter and then throw it away.
- ◇ Do yoga or meditation.
- ◇ Take up a relaxing hobby (for example, gardening or knitting).
- ◇ Do something physical. For some people, intense physical activity is calming.
- ◇ Relax in a bath.



“The best remedy for a short temper is a long walk.”

Jacqueline Schiff

### Trainer Notes

10 minutes

*Sometimes, despite your best efforts, you will simply lose it. When that happens, there are several ways to regain control of your emotion, especially anger. Probably the most helpful thing you can do is breathe deeply.*

*Activity: Lead participants through a brief deep-breathing exercise. Breathe in through the nose to a slow count of four, and then exhale through the mouth to a slow count of four. Repeat three times.*

*“Freeze frame” is a technique that helps an emotional person focus on the specific situation at hand and compartmentalize it, rather than letting it overwhelm his or her life. When flooded or overwhelmed, stop the running movie in your head and instead take a snapshot of the situation. Realize that it is one moment in time, and not the sum total of your life. It will help you gain perspective.*

*Activity: Visualize a tranquil place. Another strategy for regaining your composure is to mentally remove yourself from the situation by visualizing a tranquil place. Tell participants to write a description of their tranquil place and then ask for volunteers to share their examples.*

## Handling Someone Else's Outburst

### Mantra: "It's not about me."

- ◇ Shifts your perspective
- ◇ Diverts attention away from your hurt feelings
- ◇ Allows you to remain calm and think objectively
- ◇ Gives you space and time to decide how you will respond



### Drain the emotion

Avoid these behaviors	Practice these behaviors
Interrupting or arguing	Giving them time
Telling them to calm down	Listening attentively
Giving advice	Using short responses
Faking understanding	Using an even tone of voice
Belittling, condescending, or minimizing	Breaking the tension
Jumping to conclusions, judging or blaming	Remaining calm

"I don't have to attend every argument I'm invited to."

Author unknown

*Activity: For a challenging activity, have participants work with a partner and take turns yelling at each other. Even though there is no real feeling behind it, it can be difficult to remain composed when someone is yelling at you. Encourage them to repeat the mantra, "It's not about me."*

#### Trainer Notes

10 minutes

*Often, dealing with another person's outburst can make you emotional yourself.*

*Repeat "It's not about me" until you internalize and believe it, no matter what the circumstance—when people yell, cry, make sarcastic remarks, put you down, nag you, etc., etc.*

*Do not continue the discussion (which at this point is probably an argument). Give up trying to have your needs met in the moment. Wait until you and the other person have calmed down to get back to a rational discussion—remember, you can't think and feel at the same time. Give your brain (and the other person's brain) time to cool off.*

*The more you can help drain the other person's emotions, the more quickly they will regain their composure and be able to problem solve or at least have a productive conversation. You can be a positive influence on the other person by remaining calm yourself. Avoid the negative behaviors listed—no matter how tempting it is to tell someone to calm down!*

*Tone of voice: Use your "please pass the salt and pepper" tone of voice—calm, composed, not condescending,*

## Constructive vs. Destructive Communication

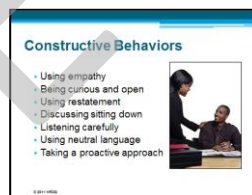
### Destructive behaviors

- ◇ *Being sarcastic*
- ◇ *Questioning integrity*
- ◇ *Dismissing people*
- ◇ *Judging and labeling*
- ◇ *Acting incredulous*
- ◇ *Asking why*



### Constructive behaviors

- ◇ *Using empathy*
- ◇ *Being curious and open*
- ◇ *Using restatement to keep conversation focused*
- ◇ *Discussing issues sitting down*
- ◇ *Listening until you experience the other side of the issue*
- ◇ *Using neutral language*
- ◇ *Taking a proactive approach*



### Practice: Replace negative behaviors with constructive behaviors

*Instructions: Work in pairs, with one person criticizing the other person. The first time the receiver will use destructive behaviors, and the second time the receiver will use constructive behaviors.*

*being curious and open, using a neutral tone of voice, restating to ensure understanding, etc. Debrief by asking participants to compare the two role plays. It is likely that both parties felt their emotions escalating the first time, while both parties felt more in control of their emotions the second time.*

#### Trainer Notes

10 minutes

*One of the most effective ways to manage emotions is to use strategies that allow you to channel them productively—use constructive communication, eliminate destructive communication, engage in learned optimism, use adaptable vocabulary, and don't sweat the small stuff.*

*People sometimes express ideas in ways that provoke negative or aggressive responses. The person on the receiving end feels criticized and defensive and reacts emotionally and unproductively as a result. Following the suggestions for constructive behaviors creates less defensiveness, helping prevent emotions from getting out of hand in the first place.*

*Practice: Have participants work in pairs. Tell them to role play one person criticizing another about his or her pace of work. The person receiving the criticism should use the destructive behaviors listed—being sarcastic, asking why, dismissing the criticism, labeling the other person, etc. Then they should redo the role play using constructive behaviors—*

## Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

### Ask yourself, "What's really important?"

◇ Job

- Low priority: \_\_\_\_\_
- High priority: \_\_\_\_\_

◇ Boss

- Low priority: \_\_\_\_\_
- High priority: \_\_\_\_\_

◇ Coworker

- Low priority: \_\_\_\_\_
- High priority: \_\_\_\_\_

◇ Client/customer

- Low priority: \_\_\_\_\_
- High priority: \_\_\_\_\_

◇ Yourself

- Low priority: \_\_\_\_\_
- High priority: \_\_\_\_\_

### Turn your melodrama into a mellow drama

◇ You get stuck in traffic (a multicar accident ahead of you) and are late for an important meeting.

- *Melodrama: "My boss is going to kill me."*
- *Mellow drama: "I hope everyone is okay. I'll explain what happened and my boss will understand."*

◇ You are counting on help from a colleague because you always help her in a pinch, but she says she's too busy.

- *Melodrama: "I can't believe she's blowing me off when I always come to her rescue."*
- *Mellow drama: "I'm surprised she said no, but maybe someone else can help me."*

#### Trainer Notes

10 minutes

These suggestions are from *The Don't Sweat the Small Stuff Workbook* by Richard Carlson.

Maintaining an accurate perspective on circumstances will go a long way toward managing your emotions. One way to do that is to keep your priorities in mind—every morning, ask yourself, "What's really important?"

Activity: To begin developing a mindset about what's important versus what isn't, look at each of the people or situations and write down one thing related to it that is a low priority and one thing that is a high priority. For example, related to your job, a low priority might be reading an industry publication as soon as it arrives, while a high priority is 100% accuracy. Try to spend less emotional energy on low-priority items and more time and attention on high-priority items.

Melodrama into mellow drama: The goal here is to avoid blowing things out of proportion. Activity: For each situation, write down a melodramatic reaction and a mellow reaction.

**Melodrama into Mellow Drama**

Stuck in traffic	
• "My boss is going to kill me."	• "I hope everyone is okay, I'll explain what happened and my boss will understand."

Help from a colleague	
• "I can't believe she's blowing me off when I always come to her rescue."	• "I'm surprised she said no, but maybe someone else can help me."



## Course Review

1. Which of the following is true of emotions?
  - a. They always make us act irrationally.
  - b. They are irrelevant and should be ignored.
  - c. They are an outward expression of inward beliefs.
  - d. They are a sign of weakness.
  
2. Which of the following is NOT a source of your perceptions?
  - a. Emotions
  - b. Experiences
  - c. Values/beliefs
  - d. Personality
  
3. List at least three workplace triggers.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Reframing your thinking involves telling the other person what they've said that upset you.
  - a. True.
  - b. False.
  
5. Describe the "I" statement pattern to use to have a productive confrontation.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### Trainer Notes

1. c.
2. a.
3. Harassment, favoritism, lack of leadership, criticism, persistent conflict, inadequate training, lack of teamwork, lack of trust, poor communication, micromanaging.
4. b.
5. "I feel \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. What I want is \_\_\_\_\_. What I'm willing to do about my own behavior is \_\_\_\_\_."

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Rosemary C. Rulka, MS, SPHR  
President  
R.C. Rulka Consulting, LLC

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James T. Puett  
Manager, Leadership and Organizational Development  
Healthways Human Resources

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### Have questions?

Contact us at 0040 734 350 525 or [office@dekon.biz](mailto:office@dekon.biz).