**Worksheet**

**Skills for positive communication**

**A mentally healthy workplace is mana-enhancing. The Māori concept of mana includes many things. In this worksheet it refers to dignity, respect, power and prestige. Mana-enhancing is about having a safe environment that enables mutual respect and people’s inherent worth and value is expressed and encouraged. Positive or** [**mana-enhancing communication**](file:///\\mhfakladc001\mhfshareddata\Programmes\Workplace%20Wellbeing\Working%20Well%20units_resources\Positive%20communication\Fact%20sheets\Drafts\9.%09https:\www.mentalhealth.org.nz\assets\Working-Well\FS-mana-enhancing.pdf) **closes the space between different understandings, while building trust and mutual respect.**

**Four practical ways you can shift to positive, mana-enhancing communication are:**



Principles of building psychological safety in communication:

• Based on respect • Value honesty, build trust • Open communication

• Make it safe to show vulnerability • Information sharing

**Activity:**

1. Think about when you interact with others in your team or in other parts of your life.
   1. What do people do that helps build positive, mana-enhancing communication?
   2. How do you show others respect and trust?
2. Now take some time (individually or in groups) to describe what you think positive communication looks like at work (words – conversations, emails, texts – actions, body language, etc):

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **What is happening when I feel:** | | **What do I do to help others feel?** |
| **Comfortable & Safe** |  |  |
| **Respect/respected** |  |  |
| **Trust/trusted** |  |  |
| **Valued** |  |  |

1. Below are some skills that support positive communication. From your description of positive communication, highlight which attributes and skills:
   1. Are being used now to support good communication in your workplace
   2. Could be strengthened to support good communication in your workplace

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Attributes** | **Skills** |
| **Approachable and accessible** | * Effective listening (includes empathetic body language - eye contact, gestures, facial expressions) * Asking helpful questions * Validating employee efforts and opinions * Paraphrasing to check understanding * Asking for understanding and confirmation of message * Transparency and information sharing * Following through on promises |
| **Show humility** | * Self-awareness and understanding of own communication style * Acknowledge own fallibility * Assess what you don’t know – let curiosity guide you and accept the need for others’ input |
| **Openness with communication** | * Give clarity around goals, expectations and responsibilities * Explain why a decision was made * Communicate in a timely manner * Important information flows continuously – people know what they need to know – there are no surprises * Share information that people need to do their jobs * Explain change and specific implications of change * Validate (acknowledge/thank) other people’s responses |
| **Proactively invite input** | * Give and receive feedback * Encourage and seek questions, suggestions and opinions * Welcome and consider all views * Be open to honest, useful criticism |
| **Tolerance and consistency** | * Avoid blaming and shaming – encourage learning from mistakes and disappointments * Fairness in dealing with people * Clarity in what behaviours are acceptable and what will happen when rules are broken |
| **All staff are valued** | * Personalise relationships – acknowledge the other person as a whole person, not just a role |