

MUTUAL SUPPORT

Say:

In this module, we will discuss what mutual support is and how to use it in your team. Mutual support is an important team competency allows teams to be more effective by supporting one another. All team members can, and should, engage in mutual support.

MUTUAL SUPPORT



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CONTRIBUTORS

Say:

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MUTUAL SUPPORT

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A REAL VIGNETTE

Say:

The following vignette has been adapted from an interview with a real teacher. As you listen to the story, consider whether you have been in a similar situation before.

It was Field Day at Cherry Valley Elementary School. Unexpectedly, the P.E. teacher coordinating the event woke up with an awful sinus infection and was forced to call in sick. The principal was faced with a hard choice: cancel Field Day or not? Rather than disappoint the students, she decided to take control of the event. With the help of many committed teachers, the principal began executing the P.E. teacher's Field Day plans. In the end, the day was a great success.

The goal of this module is to explain the importance of mutual support and to teach all team members how they can effectively engage in this behavior.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

A REAL VIGNETTE

It was Field Day at Cherry Valley Elementary School. Unexpectedly, the P.E. teacher coordinating the event woke up with an awful sinus infection and was forced to call in sick. The principal was faced with a hard choice: cancel Field Day or not? Rather than disappoint the students, she decided to take control of the event. With the help of many committed teachers, the principal began executing the P.E. teacher's Field Day plans. In the end, the day was a great success.



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Instructor/Facilitator Tip: Ask participants, “Does this situation resonate with you? Would anyone like to share their experiences with mutual support? It may be that you helped someone, that you were helped by someone, or a time when you witnessed someone offering support to someone. How was the support helpful?”

THIS MODULE WILL HELP YOU

Say:

This module will help you understand the importance of mutual support, know mutual support's components, provide support constructively, use the two-challenge rule to advocate for yourself and your teammates, understand the appropriateness and use of the DESC template (**D**escribe what you observed, **E**xplain how your observations differed from your expectations, **S**upport your expectations with rationale, **C**ollaborate to define an action plan or solution), and how to manage conflict effectively.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

THIS MODULE WILL HELP YOU:

- Understand the importance of mutual support
- Know the components of mutual support
- Be able to provide support constructively
- Use the Two-Challenge Rule to advocate for yourself and your teammates
- Understand the appropriateness and use of the DESC template
- Manage conflict effectively

Slide

Instructor/Facilitator Tip: Ask participants, "What do you think are the benefits of mutual support?"

PART 1: MUTUAL SUPPORT

Say:

In Part 1, we will talk about the benefits of mutual support, what it entails and when to engage in mutual support.

MUTUAL SUPPORT



Slide

THE BENEFITS OF MUTUAL SUPPORT

Say:

Mutual support contributes to important team outcomes. Teams who engage in mutual support are more effective. That is, they make fewer errors, help each other out, can correct their own issues, can redistribute tasks so work is completed effectively and efficiently, and are more resilient.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

THE BENEFITS OF MUTUAL SUPPORT

- Teams that engage in mutual support:
 - Are more effective
 - Make fewer errors
 - Can self-correct
 - Distribute and assign responsibilities appropriately
 - Reallocate work assignments when needed
 - Are more resilient



Relevant Citation: Salas, Sims, & Burke (2005)

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WHAT MUTUAL SUPPORT ENTAILS

Say:

Mutual support is the provision of task assistance, social support, and feedback to one or more team members, as needed. In other words, mutual support is back-up behavior that benefits the individual and, thereby, the greater good of the team. We will talk about the three aspects of mutual support during this module.

This module will also help you to realize that feeling comfortable taking interpersonal risks with your team mates will help set the stage for better support. By interpersonal risks, we mean feeling safe to engage in behaviors such as speaking up, disagreeing with the group, and voicing concerns.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

WHAT MUTUAL SUPPORT ENTAILS

- **Back-up behavior** given to one or more team members as needed and can manifest as:
 - Task assistance
 - Social support
 - Feedback
- Intended for the benefit of an individual or the greater good of the team.

💡 Feeling comfortable taking interpersonal risks with your team mates will help you set the stage for better support

Relevant Citation: Marks, Mathieu, & Zacaro (2000); McIntyre & Salas (1996)

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WHEN TO ENGAGE MUTUAL SUPPORT

Say:

Mutual support should be given when additional help is beneficial to completing work. However, team members may not recognize that you may need help. If you are feeling overburdened, stressed, confused, or ill equipped to manage your responsibilities, you should seek support from fellow team members.

Of course, in addition to receiving support, providing support is a critical part of helping team members to be more effective. The struggle, stress, or challenge that a team member faces will differ based on the problem at hand, including that the member is impaired for some reason or perhaps inexperienced. If you notice a team member having any of these problems, do not wait to offer support or you may miss the opportunity to help. If s/he refuse your offer, be gracious and recognize that although s/he refused your offer now, there may be a need for your help in the future. Don't hesitate to offer support again.

It's also important to offer support at times when you have the resources to contribute more to the team without overburdening yourself. Team members may not necessarily be struggling themselves but work could be completed a little bit more efficiently if two sets of competent hands are tackling the job.

MUTUAL SUPPORT



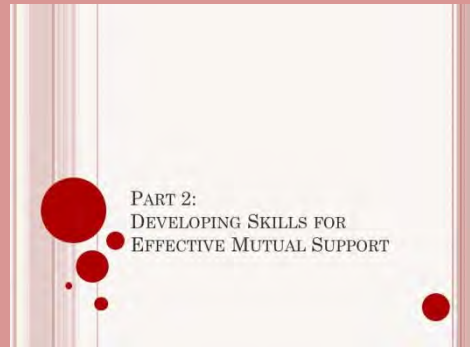
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PART 2: DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE MUTUAL SUPPORT

Say:

In Part 2, we will be covering mutual support strategies that can be used within teams.

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OFFER TASK ASSISTANCE

Say:

Offering task assistance is one important component of providing support to team members; it is actively helping team members to manage their responsibilities to the team. It may be especially beneficial when one or more team members is encountering problems in accomplishing their individually assigned tasks.

Examples of task assistance include: working with team members on their assignments, rerouting some or all work to other members, and filling in for a team member, as needed. All of these actions allow team members to function more effectively as individuals and as a team.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

1. OFFER TASK ASSISTANCE

◦ **Lend a hand:** Actively help team members manage their responsibilities to the team

◦ Includes:

- Working with team members on their assignments
- Rerouting some or all work to other members
- Filling in for a team member, as needed



Relevant Citation: Salas, Sims, & Burke, 2005

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Instructor/Facilitator Tip: Ask participants, “Can you describe a time when you offered or were offered task assistance? How did that help you or the team?”

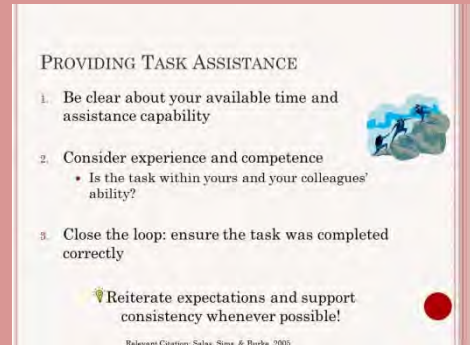
PROVIDING TASK ASSISTANCE

Say:

Be careful in offering task assistance. Otherwise, you could help make matters worse. First, be clear about how much available time you have and about what tasks you are able to assist with. For example, say, 'I see you are busy. I have 10 minutes until my class returns from lunch. I can walk your student to the office if you'd like.' Second, consider the experience level of the person who is requesting or offering task assistance. If the person is offering to help, give him or her a task that you know he or she is capable of doing correctly. In turn, when offering help, let the person you are helping know what specific tasks you can take on, given your expertise and experience. Finally, after the task is complete, be sure to let your teammate(s) know that you have finished the task and ask them to check that you did it correctly. It's safer to have someone check your work than assume you've done it correctly. This is particularly true when you are helping out on a task that is not within your typical domain of expertise or experience.

The **National Association of School Psychologists** recommends that consistency, routine, and expectations be maintained as often as possible. Changing schedules, reducing workload, and redistributing tasks are activities that should be reserved for situations where such shifts and changes are absolutely necessary. This is because consistency and continuity create feelings of comfort and safety, which can strengthen a stressed team member and the entire team. Nonetheless, you could consider any one or several of these interventions listed to help you assist members of school teams when members are overburdened or stressed. These interventions are similar to offering a soccer or hockey player a break off the field or ice for a moment so that the player can catch his or her breath. "Lending a hand" can go a long way in helping a team feel cohesive. Cohesion is the feeling in the team that the team members that they are all committed to the work and to each other. This can help team members feel as though they belong in the team and even improve team productivity!

MUTUAL SUPPORT



Slide

PROVIDE SOCIAL SUPPORT

Say:

Providing social support to your teammates is another important component of mutual support. Being a friend in addition to a teammate is important and can go a long way in increasing team commitment and reducing stress and burnout among your peers.

Social support refers to activities that allow team members to remain committed to the team, especially at times of emotional turmoil (e.g., when conflict arises). Social support can take a number of forms that can include: Being an ally to them when they need someone to help advocate for them or their ideas, reassuring their worth and value to the team-tell them how much you and the other team members appreciate them, listening to their problems, and offering guidance – if they ask for it. It is important to not give advice just to give advice. Sometime people are not in the correct state to properly receive advice. Be sure to read your teammate carefully and only offer guidance if they seem to want it. Otherwise, just provide other forms of social support.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

2. PROVIDE SOCIAL SUPPORT

- o **Be a friend:** Human connection can go a long way in creating commitment to the team and lessening the stress and burnout that school staff may experience.

- o Includes:
 - Being an ally
 - Reassuring teammates' worth
 - Listening to problems
 - Offering guidance (if it is wanted)



Relevant Citation: Pearce & Borok, 2004

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Instructor/Facilitator Tip: Now take a moment to think about an instance when someone you know successfully provided you with social support. What actions did they take? How did it make you feel?

KEEP IT HELPFUL & PRODUCTIVE

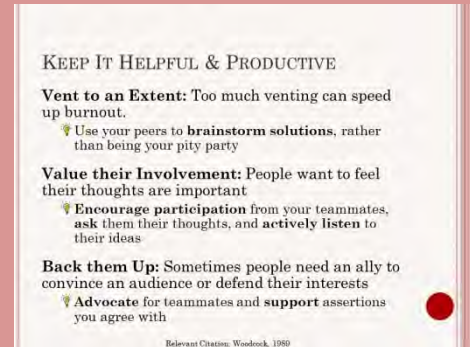
Say:

Social support can help relieve the symptoms of burnout, like emotional exhaustion. However, if done incorrectly, it may make matters worse. We often find ourselves being an ear to listen or want someone else to sympathize with our troubles. Although social support is often offered in the form of venting, this act can actually increase emotional exhaustion because we continue to reflect on the problem for longer. Next time you find yourself venting to someone or listening to someone vent, try to move the conversation on to more productive topics, like how to deal with the problem rather than continuing to mull it over.

People want to feel that their thoughts and contributions are valued by the team. Simple encouragements directed at shy or nervous teammates to contribute to the team dialogue can go a long way in making them feel that they are an asset to the team. You can provide encouragement by directly asking them what they think and actively listening to their ideas.

Sometimes new ideas need support in order to gain traction in the team. Verbalizing your agreement with an idea can go a long way in getting a stubborn team member to get on board. It may not always work, but there are power in numbers. Alternatively, you may find that your teammates need an advocate not just for their ideas but quite possibly on a personal level, too. Let's now consider how we can advocate for each others' interests.

MUTUAL SUPPORT



Slide

SPEAK UP FOR YOUR TEAMMATES

Say:

One strategy for speaking up is the two-challenge rule. You can use this rule to advocate for yourself or team members.

The basis of the Two-Challenge Rule is that you should voice your concern at least twice. These two attempts can either come from the same person or from two different team members. The first challenge should be in the form of a question. For example, ask “Can we talk about doing it another way?” Then, if other teammates are unresponsive, the second challenge is used to provide additional support for the initial concern. You must restate the concern in order to ensure that it has been understood and acknowledged.

When making assertions, remember to show respect for the other person. Use unbiased, courteous language and try to remove any personal feelings associated with the problem. You are more likely to get acknowledged if you remain calm yet confident.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

SPEAK UP FOR YOUR TEAMMATES (AND YOURSELF)

Two-Challenge Rule:

1. Voice initial concern with a question
 - o “I do not feel comfortable with that approach. Can we talk about doing it another way?”

When teammates are unresponsive...

2. Restate and explain the concern
 - o “Marcus said he was uncomfortable with the approach. I think he is worried about the ethical considerations. Can we talk about those?”

Always **show respect**. Use **non-threatening language** and **check your temper**.

Behavior Citation: Salas, Stimp & Burke, 2005

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PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Say:

Feedback is another way of providing support. This is because feedback helps the other person develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need. Although many people of feedback as a negative thing, feedback is simply information about current performance. Positive feedback, for instance, reinforces good behaviors by telling people when and how they have done a good job. By acknowledging a job well done or a good behavior, people are more likely to feel appreciated and repeat those behaviors. Feedback can also be “negative”. Feedback should never come in the form of criticism— negative feedback is simply information about a person’s areas for improvements. This type of feedback should always be respectful and constructive. Negative feedback provides people with valuable information about areas for improvement so that the feedback recipient can clarify expectations and use feedback to improve. Feedback can provide helpful suggestions for becoming a more effective member of the team by raising awareness of his/her current performance. Feedback can also include warnings about what is projected to happen if the current behavior continues without change. This can be warning of negative consequences of undesirable behavior or possibly even hints at rewards for good behavior. Remember that the intent is to develop and it can be very easy for team members to feel defensive about their work. Later in the module, we will talk about how to keep feedback constructive and respectful.

As an example, Sharon wrote an email that did not provide enough detail for others to understand what was discussed during the meeting. A team member may want to provide Sharon with feedback on her email so that she knows to include more important details in future emails. For instance, he/she should thank Sharon for writing the email, which is what she did well, to inform everyone about the meeting details. Secondly, the person providing feedback should indicate that she did not provide enough detail for other team members to understand the recap of the meeting. Furthermore, this feedback should also include that she could consult someone who took detailed meeting notes before sending the email to the group. Lastly, feedback could include consequences of sending vague emails such that absent team members will be out of the loop on what is happening.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

3. PROVIDE FEEDBACK

o **Develop one another:** Provide information with the intention of improving individual and/or team performance

o Includes:

- Reinforcing good performance
- Increasing members' awareness of their weaknesses
- Suggesting solutions to overcome limitations
- Cautioning team members about potential pitfalls or consequences



Relevant Citation: Marks & Pannen (2004)

Slide

FEEDBACK SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE

Say:

Your objective in giving feedback is to provide guidance by supplying information in a useful manner. This can be either to support effective behavior, or to guide someone back on track toward successful performance. Whatever the purpose – feedback should always be constructive. Constructive feedback is used to build people up. It is not the same as criticism, which is used to break people down. Constructive feedback lets the other person know that you are on their side and have their interests, as well as the team's, at heart.

Remember the **golden rule** when giving feedback: If you can't think of a constructive purpose for your feedback then it shouldn't be given at all

MUTUAL SUPPORT

FEEDBACK SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE

- Add value and build team members up, do not use feedback to break them down

💡 If you can't think of a constructive purpose for giving feedback, don't give it at all



Relevant Citation: Orlando (1994)

Slide

GIVING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Say:

Feedback is the facet of team communication in which learning occurs. Providing feedback is a supportive act. Team members benefit from constructive feedback. Building feedback into the culture of a team can go a long way in supporting the team and its work. The trick is learning how to give feedback constructively so that it has value. Be timely in feedback delivery. If you wait too long, facts are forgotten and the feedback loses its 'punch.' Feedback is most effective when the behavior being discussed is still fresh in the mind of the receiver. Be specific. Feedback should relate to a specific situation or task. The person receiving feedback will be better able to correct or modify performance if specific actions are mentioned during feedback. For example, "You should offer more examples of the concepts you are teaching," is more specific than, "Your teaching needs work." Focus on description rather than judgment. Describing behavior is a way of reporting what has occurred, while judging behavior is an evaluation of what has occurred in terms of "right" or "wrong", or "good" or "bad".

By avoiding evaluative language, you reduce the need for the individual to respond defensively. For example, "You demonstrate a high degree of confidence when you answer parents' questions about student performance," rather than, "Your communication skills are good." Focus on observation rather than inference. Observations refer to what you can see or hear about an individual's behavior, while inferences refer to the assumptions and interpretations you make from what you see or hear. Focus on what the person did and your reaction. For example, "When you gave the student the Financial Aid form, you tossed it across the counter," rather than describe what you assume to be the person's motivation, "I suppose you give all forms out that way!". Focus on behavior rather than personal traits. Refer to what an individual does rather than on what you imagine she or he is. To focus on behavior, use adverbs, which describe action, rather than adjectives, which describe qualities.

For example, "You talked considerably during the staff meeting, which prevented me from getting to some of the main points," rather than, "You talk too much." Provide a balance of positive and negative feedback. If you consistently give only positive or negative feedback, people will distrust the feedback and it will become useless. Be aware of feedback overload. Select two or three important points you want to make and offer feedback about those points.

If you overload an individual with feedback, she or he may become confused about what needs to be improved or changed. For example, "The time it takes you to enter grades is within the expected range. The number of errors you are currently making while assigning grades is higher than expected." Giving feedback constructively benefits everyone. You, as a colleague, use the ongoing exchange of information as a way of getting to know your team member and providing them with valuable guidance in their work. Your team members receive information that makes his or her job go easier and improves their contributions to the team. The team gains improved productivity by better taskwork and teamwork.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

GIVING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

1. Be **timely** in feedback delivery
2. Be **specific**
3. Focus on **description** instead of judgment
4. Focus on **observation** rather than inference
5. Focus on **behavior** instead of personal traits
6. Provide a **balance of positive and negative** feedback
7. **Avoid overload**

Relevant Citation: Orlando (1994)

Slide

DESC'RIBE YOUR FEEDBACK

Say:

To give great feedback, you may use the DESC script. DESC stands for: Describe, Explain, Support, and Collaborate. DESC can be used to guide a feedback discussion.

Begin by **describing** what you observed. Remember to be focus on specific, strictly observable behaviors. Doing so will help team members feel less defensive while they receive feedback. It can also provide them with tangible examples of what they have done well and/or where they need improvement.

Next, **explain** how your observations differed from your expectations. Explaining the mismatch between expectations and the observed behaviors can open the conversation between team members to discuss possible misunderstandings in the task description.

Support your expectations with rationale. Describing why feedback is being provided. Perhaps the task at hand is important to meeting the team's deadlines or perhaps the quality of the work needs to be improved so that it can be shown at the next administrative meeting to argue for more project funding. Regardless of the purpose, the rationale for the expectations should be clear and related to helping the team reach its goals.

Collaborate to define an action plan or solution. Collaborating to define an action plan allows the team members, those providing and receiving feedback, to work closely together to identify plans to make a solution and actionable plan for meeting team goals in a reasonable way.

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DESC'RIBE YOUR FEEDBACK!

In administering feedback, you could adopt the **DESC** template:

1. **Describe** what you observed
2. **Explain** how your observations differed from your expectations
3. **Support** your expectations with rationale
4. **Collaborate** to define an action plan or solution



Relevant Citation: Ovando (1994)

Slide

EVERY ROSE HAS ITS THORNS

Say:

Conflict is an inevitable part of working in a team. Most, if not all, teams experience some sort of conflict at some point in time; but it is important to know that conflict is okay and completely normal. As conflict can be common, it is important to learn how to handle conflict as it arises.

Everyone wants their team to be strong and the following part of this module will help ensure that your team has all the tools to be the strongest!

MUTUAL SUPPORT

EVERY ROSE HAS ITS THORNS

All teams experience some sort of **conflict** at some point in time. It is **inevitable** no matter how cohesive and friendly your team may be.



💡 Learning how to **handle** conflict as it arises makes the difference between a **strong** team and a fractured team

Relevant Citation: De Dreu & Weingart (2003)

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MAKE CONFLICT A THING OF THE PAST

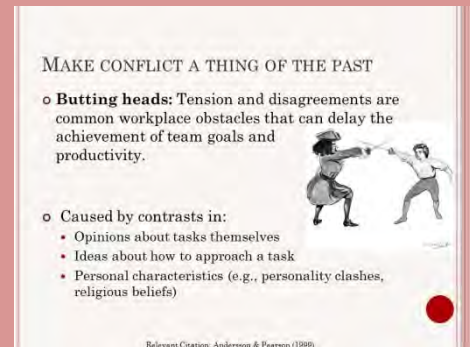
Say:

Individually, think about the following questions:
What comes to mind when you think of conflict?
How would you define it? How has conflict affected
your work with others? How did you handle it?

If you are completing this training in a group, break
into pairs to discuss your answers to the above
questions. If you are participating in this training on
your own you might consider sharing your answers
with an interested colleague and discuss the
strengths and weaknesses of your approach.

Conflict is the tension and disagreements that arise
from team member differences. They can delay team
productivity and goal achievement. There are three
major sources of conflict which we describe here.
These include: task-based, which refers to differences
in opinions about a particular task, such as whether it
is necessary or not; process-based, which refers to
disagreements over the team's approach to a task, its
methods, and the team process; relationship-based,
which refers to interpersonal differences that create
annoyance or tension.

MUTUAL SUPPORT



Slide

THE GOOD, THE BAD, & THE WIN-WIN!

Say:

Not all conflict outcomes are equal. Some outcomes are less than ideal.

One less than ideal outcome includes compromising. When two parties “compromise” they are often settling for less than they could. Though this outcome might be the only way some conflicts will be resolved, it is possible to do better.

Avoidance is another less than ideal way to manage conflict, as tension between two or more people can build over time. This is when parties in conflict avoid or sidestep issues and the root causes continue to fester. Over time, the conflict can worsen its impact on performance and your desire to work with certain teammates, possibly doing irreparable damage to the team.

Accommodation is yet another less than ideal conflict management strategy. Sometimes certain individuals prefer to accommodate a more dominate team member’s demands. In this case, the focus is on preserving the relationship, usually “in the interest of the team”. The problem is that it’s not really in the team’s interest for conflicts to be resolved with accommodation because one party usually ends up with an unfair deal. Over time, these injustices can build resentment within the team.

When conflict arises, teams should try to attain win-win outcomes. In these cases, the focus is on finding solutions to the conflict that are mutually satisfying to all parties. These outcomes are ideal because it allows the team to meet goals without compromising member relationships. When everyone is happy with the outcome the team can move on.

MUTUAL SUPPORT



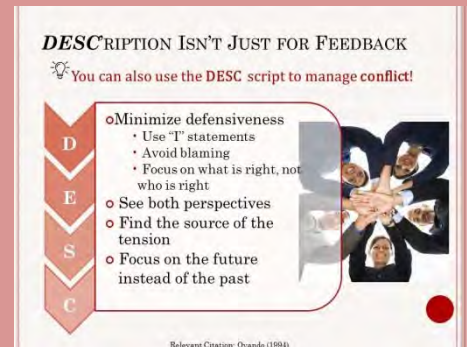
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DESC'RIPTION ISN'T JUST FOR FEEDBACK

Say:

We've seen poor management strategies and even worse outcomes! Now, we've also mentioned what could've happened differently. But, how does someone go about creating a win-win outcome? Using the DESC script can make it easier to handle! That's right, the DESC script isn't just for feedback, you can use it to help manage conflict as well! The DESC Script includes the following: D refers to describe your observations, E refers to explain differences from expectations, S refers to support expectations with rationale, and C refers to collaborate to find a resolution. "I" statements are crucial for solving a conflict as objectively as possible. "I" statements make your feelings and motives clear and can help the other person see your side of the story without feeling accused or attacked; "You" statements make the other party feel like he or she is on the chopping block and will make him or her feel much more defensive. "I feel like I've been picking up the majority of the work on the project," is more effective than "You have been making me do all of the work on this project." See it from the other person's perspective. If you really want to solve the situation, then you have to understand where the other person is coming from. Be emotionally aware and listen to what the person is feeling *and* saying; often times, the person may try to act like it's really not a big deal, but the look on his face will show you that the person is deeply angry or hurt. Get a sense of the things that are really troubling the person, what you've done to contribute to these feelings, and the ways that you have both contributed to the situation. If you're only focused on getting your way at all costs, then you'll never be able to find a compromise that pleases you both. Figure out the real source of the tension. Work together to figure out what is really troubling you both. You may think you're arguing because you feel like you don't spend enough time together, but the real reason may be that you both fear that the passion is gone from your relationship; you may be arguing with your co-worker because you feel that he has given you too much of the workload, but the real reason may be that you feel that he or she has received too much praise for his work, while you have been overlooked. You can only find a resolution once you agree on this point. Focus on the future instead of dwelling on the past. Sure, discussing some aspects of the past can help you pick up on certain patterns of behavior and can make you see how both of you have wronged each other or acted inappropriately, but if you dwell on the past, both people will only feel worse. Instead, you should focus on what's ahead of you, and how you can work together to *avoid* the problems that have occurred in the past. To do that, you'll have to change what you're both doing, because it's not working.

MUTUAL SUPPORT



Slide

WHEN IN CONFLICT, CUS

Say:

If experiencing conflict with your teammates – CUS!
Yes, you heard correctly. But, this isn't what you think. CUS is a useful tool to remember when you want to inappropriately cuss, but know that it would only worsen the situation. Instead, state your concern. Then state why you are uncomfortable. Finally, provide a potential solution to the issue and ask your teammate for their suggestions.

You may also want to CUS with DESC to share your perspective.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

WHEN IN CONFLICT, CUS AT YOUR TEAMMATES

*Yes, you read that correctly.
But no, it's not what you think.*

- o CUS is a way to convey that you are uncomfortable with a situation
 - I am Concerned
 - I am Uncomfortable
 - Let's Solve this



💡 Use CUS with DESC to share your perspective.

Slide

THINK-PAIR-SHARE: CONFLICT

Say:

Take 3-5 minutes to (1) identify the type of conflict that best describes that which was demonstrated in the video and (2) write a DESC script that would allow the school psychologist to verbalize her grievances in a more constructive way. Feel free to use those CUS words and, as a bonus, follow the two challenge rule!

[Pause or countdown 5 minutes on screen here]

Now, review your responses. I encourage you to share and discuss with a partner or a group.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

THINK-PAIR-SHARE: CONFLICT

- What type of conflict was demonstrated in the previous video?
- Write a DESC script for how the School Psychologist could have articulated her grievances using the CUS strategy (but without actually cussing).
- Bonus: incorporate the Two-Challenge Rule

Slide

Instructor Tip: If the group is small, then you can have them work on the scripts individually and then share each together. For larger groups of 5 or more, consider having them partner up first and then have the small groups share their answers.

If you're really short on time, choose one or two of the individuals or groups to share an answer.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MUTUAL SUPPORT

Say:

Imagine that staff at your school have undergone training to implement a response-to-intervention model. A newly formed response-to-intervention team has been appointed that includes three general education teachers, the principal, a school psychologist, and a reading specialist. All of the team members were appointed and no one feels that they have the time to commit to this new endeavor. In addition, they do not believe that the staff have the time or resources to engage in this process.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MUTUAL SUPPORT

Imagine in your school...

- o Trained to implement state-mandated Response-to-Intervention model
- o A newly formed team has been appointed
 - Includes three general education teachers, principal, school psychologist, and reading specialist.
- o No additional resources provided to implement this model.
- o Some feel that neither they nor the staff have the time to commit to this new endeavor.

Slide

Instructor Tip: It is helpful if everyone is provided a handout with the full scenario written down. It will enable them to follow along as you read the scenario and will serve as a good reference while they complete the activity.

THINK-PAIR-SHARE: MUTUAL SUPPORT

Say:

Take a few minutes to think about the scenario that was just described. What barriers to mutual support were present? If this were happening in your school, what additional barriers might you experience that aren't apparent from the scenario?

How could task assistance, social support, and feedback alleviate the struggles faced by the professionals in the scenario?

How can you make these types of support sustainable and ongoing?

[Pause or countdown 5 minutes here]

Review your responses. I encourage you to share and discuss with a partner or a group.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

THINK-PAIR-SHARE: MUTUAL SUPPORT

- What barriers to mutual support are present in the hypothetical situation? What additional barriers might you face in your school?
- How could **task assistance**, **social support**, and **feedback** be leveraged to alleviate the struggles faced by the professionals in this scenario?
- How can you make these types of support sustainable and ongoing?

Slide

Instructor Tip: If the group is small, then you can have them work individually and then share each together. For larger groups, consider having them partner up first and then have the small groups share their answers.

If you're really short on time, choose one or two of the individuals or groups to share an answer.

You may want to allot additional time for the discussion of how to make support efforts sustainable and ongoing and encourage brainstorming about how to make these practices real in trainees' school(s).

BRAINSTORM

Say:

This activity will allow you to begin discussion about how to make mutual support an integral part of the culture in your own school teams.

One person should take notes during this activity. If you are completing this module on your own, I encourage you to later share your ideas with members of the team or teams that you are apart of.

Think: What does your team do well with regards to mutual support?

What doesn't your team do well or where could your team improve?

If you could only pick one or two things, what would you most like to improve in your team?

What would perfect performance in that area look like on your team?

Now, what would you need to change in order for your team to improve in that area?

How would you go about implementing those changes and making them sustainable?

How will you know whether your team has made progress in improving? That is, what can you measure to show that your team has gotten better about whatever it is you would like to improve?

MUTUAL SUPPORT

BRAINSTORM: PROMOTING MUTUAL SUPPORT IN YOUR TEAM

- What does our team(s) do well?
- What doesn't our team(s) do well?
- What would we most like to improve?
- How can we improve in that area(s)?
- How can we implement our strategies and make them sustainable?
- How will we know whether we have made progress?

Slide

Instructor Tip: Write down all the answers on a poster board or post-it notes that the team can group under each question.

Explanation of the process:

- Start positive to encourage engagement.
- Identify weaknesses specific to the team. Asking the staff themselves to identify weaknesses creates buy-in because they know it is a genuine problem that they would like to correct.
- Begin to whittle down 1-2 problems to tackle first. Trying to do too much at once is setting the team up for failure but by coming to agreement on priority items to tackle first, the team can fully commit to improving these items. Later, when the team feels like they have addressed priority items, they can revisit their notes and focus on new areas.
- Make sure the team is strategizing realistic solutions that they can actually implement.
- Finally, talk about ways to make the plan a reality. It is one thing to talk about changes, but it is another to make them.
- Identifying measures of success will allow teams to track their progress.

REFERENCES

Say:

If you would like more information on any of the topics covered in this module, please refer to the papers included on this slide.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

REFERENCES

- [illegible]

Slide

BONUS EXAMPLE: CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Say:

Here is a bonus example of constructive feedback that I encourage you to review or use.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

BONUS EXAMPLE: CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

The 4th grade team met to discuss the upcoming semester's curriculum. Mr. Smith, a first-year teacher, provided the group with his ideas for a new math program. After the meeting, Mr. Green—a teacher who has been at the school for over 20 years and his mentor—approaches Mr. Smith privately, and tells him that he did a great job communicating his ideas for the new math program in a detailed manner. However, he explained, in the future, a hand-out may help people in understanding his vision.



Slide

BONUS EXAMPLE: USING CUS TO RESOLVE CONFLICT

Say:

Here is a bonus example of CUS words for resolving conflict that I encourage you to review or use.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

BONUS EXAMPLE: USING CUS TO RESOLVE CONFLICT

A student is displaying severely aggressive behavior. His teacher, Ms. J, expresses concerns regarding his behavior to Ms. B, the school counselor, and asks for the student to wait in detention until he can be sent home. Ms. B refuses, however, and tells Ms. J it is not her job to babysit.

Astonished, Ms. J says, "Ms. B, I am concerned about the safety of myself and my students. I am uncomfortable with this student's behavior, and I do not think it is safe to continue to allow him to remain here."

Slide

BONUS EXAMPLE: USING THE TWO-CHALLENGE RULE

Say:

Here is a bonus example of the two-challenge rule that I encourage you to review or use.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

BONUS EXAMPLE: USING THE TWO-CHALLENGE RULE

"Mrs. Matthews, do you think it's safe to allow this unauthorized individual into the assembly?"

"Mrs. Matthews, it's a little loud in here and I just want to make sure I wasn't drowned out with all the noise. This student has not signed in at the office and I am concerned that it may not be safe to allow him to attend this assembly. What do you think we should do?"

Slide

BONUS EXAMPLE: USING THE DESC SCRIPT

Say:

Here is a bonus example of the DESC script that I encourage you to review or use.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

BONUS EXAMPLE: USING THE DESC SCRIPT

Mr. Johansen, I'd like to talk about what happened earlier during the IEP meeting. I was upset because the information you provided about Thomas Smith seemed incomplete. I am concerned we don't have the full picture of what is going on with Thomas and, in my experience, it is difficult to formulate a plan for a student without all relevant information. Next time, I think it would be helpful if you provided all of a student's disability information so we can make the best decisions for the student's education.

Slide