Healthy Dialogue Dashboard: This One-Page Reference Provides Strategies for Giving Feedback Especially When Negative Feelings are Present

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| **Start the conversation** | -Ensure you have the right conditions for a healthy dialogue.  
-Make sure you have a clear purpose in your mind.  
-Use a respectful tone and open body language. | -Is this an okay time to talk?  
-I want to talk to you about______ (e.g. the last email you sent, the meeting this morning).  
-Can we take a quick walk? I want to talk to you about______ |
| **Describe the facts** | -Be factual, and direct. Remember, you're giving them data so they can change something.  
-Diffuse the conversation by owning your part of the story.  
-Tailor your approach to make the other person feel safe and you have established a shared purpose. | -At the meeting this morning, I noticed______ when you______.  
-I observed you______.  
-Here's what happened in my mind...  
-I'm telling you this because I know collaboration is important to both of us. |
| **Discuss the impact** | -Explain what impact their behavior had.  
-Be truthful about your feelings.  
-Discuss the result of the behavior. | -It made me feel disrespected.  
-It felt like you didn't respect my time.  
-Since then, I've noticed our productivity is going down. |
| **Get their view** | -Take ownership of your interpretation of the story.  
-Confirm with the receiver their point of view. | -I don't know if I'm right...  
-Do you see it differently? |

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| **Listen and reflect** | -Seek common understanding.  
-Focus on what the person is saying vs. what you're going to say next.  
-Give brief and informal affirmations.  
-Paraphrase and show understanding.  
-Ask open ended clarification questions. | -I see...I understand that you feel...  
-So you're saying that...  
-What do you think the process should be like?  
-What could have prevented/improved the situation? |
| **Slow down** | -If the receiver is emotional or triggered, you might have to give them space to think and process.  
-If they are open, use their answers to your open-ended questions to establish what changes will be made.  
-Tailor your approach and review common feedback triggers (truth, relationship, identity). | -I can hear in your voice, you are upset. I'd like to hear your side, so I can better understand your feelings.  
-Do you have any suggestions for how we talk about this?  
-Can you tell me more about that? |
| **Share meaning** | -Paraphrase your shared purpose.  
-Summarize suggestions for going forward.  
-Highlight what you will do differently to support the change. | -It sounds like we both feel committed to more frequent communication.  
-What about an update every Tuesday?  
-Would it be helpful if next time if I... |

Special thanks to Jennifer Liberty Clark | Instructor of Psychology, Anoka Ramsey Community College & Steve Riccio | Lecturer, International Business & Management, Dickinson College, for supplying this resource.

References consulted: Crucial Conversations: Tools for talking When Stakes are High by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan (2012); Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well (even when it is off base, unfair, poorly delivered, and frankly, you’re not in the mood) by Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen (2015).
Healthy Dialogue Fundamentals
✧ Establish safety and tailor your approach. The receiver needs to be safe and know where they stand to hear what you have to say.
✧ Ask you colleagues how they'd like to receive feedback before a situation arises.
✧ Seek more understanding of their thinking and working styles (e.g. 5 paths) to ensure you understand their preferred communication styles.
✧ No matter how much you prepare, you can never control what is heard, be prepared for the unexpected.

Green Light Conditions for Constructive Dialogue
✓ It's based on something specific.
✓ If it's based on an incident, the past 24 hours is ideal.
✓ There's a clear purpose for the conversation.
✓ The giver is prepared.
✓ There's something the receiver can do to change a behavior.
✓ The receiver has a growth mindset.

Red Light Conditions for Constructive Dialogue
✗ The receiver is vulnerable or emotional.
✗ There’s not enough information and/or the information is second hand.
✗ It wasn't recent (more than 24 hours ago).
✗ There's nothing the receiver can do to change the behavior.
✗ There's no time for a dialog (schedule a better time).
✗ You only have criticism but haven't thought through what you want to change or a suggestion.

Mastering your own stories
When we get upset we often fall into patterns of being a victim, it's not my fault, making someone into a villain, it's their fault, or being helpless, there's nothing I could do. The next time you're upset, try to identify what kind of story it is. Keeping these themes in mind can help you identify information that can interfere with your message.

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