



# Improving wellbeing with social strategies

## FACILITATION GUIDE



Game changing for business. Life changing for people

### About Genos

We are a global team of change-makers using emotional intelligence to enhance how we connect, communicate and collaborate at work. Transforming these essential people skills at work also makes a difference to peoples' relationships outside of the workplace. People become better parents, partners, siblings and friends. That's why we call our work Game changing for business. Life changing for people.

Genos is a leading, global provider that delivers on our mission with transformational content, great digital technology, exceptional customer service, passionate partners and clients who want to lead their industries.

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# Improving wellbeing with social strategies

Slide 1



The session can take anywhere between 45mins (run tightly) to 1.5hrs to run. The bigger the group size the more time you'll need to allocate to discussion and activities. The session can be split into two 30 mins sessions, 1 on Social Integration and 1 Close Relationship strategies if need be.

**Introduce the session by welcoming participants to the professional learning on improving wellbeing with thinking strategies.**

**Say:** *"Welcome to this session in improving wellbeing with social strategies. Aren't these people looking like they are having fun. What's your favourite social thing to do and how does it make you feel?"*





## Three sources of learning



Content



Discussion



Each other

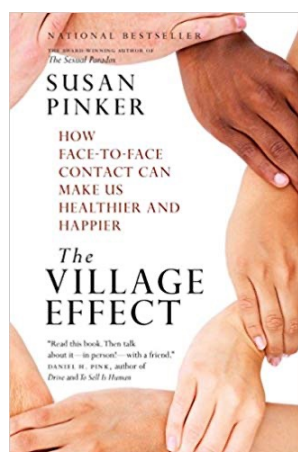
**Use this slide to position the different learning mediums of the session.**

**Say,** “there are three sources of learning that I hope we are able to draw from in this session. Firstly, from the content itself, secondly from the discussion we have around it and thirdly from each other. All of us already do things to maintain our social wellbeing so I’d like to really encourage to share your thoughts, feelings, perspectives and things you do already in this area to help enrichen our experiences of it.”

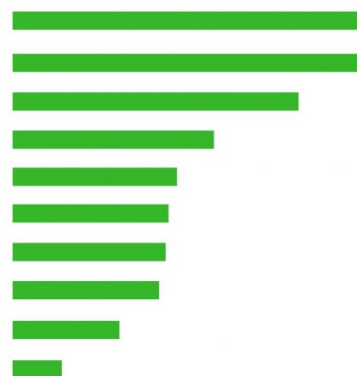




### Slide 3



Social integration  
Close relationships  
Quit smoking  
Quit boozing  
Flu vaccine  
Cardiac rehab  
Exercise  
Lean vs. overweight  
Hypertension Rx  
Clean air



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The purpose of this slide is to position the importance of social strategies to our wellbeing and to introduce the two salient areas of social wellbeing that are a focus of the session, our social integration and close relationships.

**Invite** participants to turn to page 3 of their workbooks.

**Say** - “If you look into the science of wellbeing you’ll find that well-being is best defined as a diverse and interconnected component of wellness that includes mental, physical, social and environmental wellbeing – many of the variables you see up on screen here. Susan Pinker is one of many researchers who have been studying the impact various things have on our own mortality, how long we’ll live. If you had to put them in order from those that are most beneficial to our health and wellbeing, to those that are least what would you put at the top and what would you put at the bottom?”

**Use** the slide animation

**Say** – “We’ll here’s the answer - the level and quality of interactions we have both with those we come into contact with in our day-to-day interactions (our social integration) and those we are close with (our close relationships). These have the single biggest impact on our well-being and longevity. Our level of social integration and close relationships out predict whether we’ll live to a rip old age than the others. Today our focus is going to be on social integration first and foremost followed by close relationships secondly.”



## Slide 4

### In this session we will:

- Explore the things we can do to boost the quality of your day-to-day social interactions
- Identify a close personal relationship you could improve and the actions you could take to do so
- Explore a coaching model for helping others respond to their challenging situations effectively



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**Use this slide to overview the session and activities of the session.**

**Say** – *“Having social wellbeing means having a sense of belonging and meaningful positive relationships with others. We build our social wellbeing through regular contact with other people including friends, family, neighbours and co-workers and by using good interpersonal skills associated with emotional intelligence.”*

In this session we will: (read from the slide)

**Use** the animations of the slide.



## Slide 5



**The purpose of this slide is to position the notion of stretch and to inspire everyone attending to do something no matter how small or large.**

**Say** *"We are always having an influence on others in everything we do. What if we were all 2-3% better at having a positive influence on others? What might that mean for our students, colleagues, parents, partners, siblings, and friends? In this session we invite you to think about the notion of stretch. Of going just that little bit further than you already do. It could be a little, it could be a lot. Either way it might be useful to consider how busy you are, what space and context you are in and what you can realistically do. Large or small, any additional actions are bound to be beneficial. little things can have a large impact."*





## Slide 6



Similarly, the purpose of this slide is to encourage continuous improvement of relationships and social interactions given their significance to overall school wellbeing.

**Say** “While we invite you to stretch – to go that little bit further with those you come into contact with and those important in your life – we also invite you to think about the notion of Continuous Improvement. That is, continuous relationship improvement. We all understand the benefits of continuous improvement. Today let’s bring that mindset to our relationships and day-to-day connections. We hope to inspire you to engage in the reflective process of identifying things you can do to enhance your interactions and relationships regularly.”



# **1. Social Integration**

## **Improving our day-to-day interactions with others**

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So lets focus on that Social Integration and look at how we can generally improve our day-to-day interactions with others.



## Slide 8



**The purpose of this slide is to position the video as a learning medium**

**Say** *“To help get us thinking about the things we can do to better connect with others in our day-to-day social interactions lets watch this short video. It goes for about 5 minutes. As you watch it take the opportunity to note down in your workbook on page 3 what it gets you thinking about it terms of things we can do to better connect with others and generally improve our day-to-day interactions with others.”*

**Play** the video. Then put people into small groups to reflect on what the video got them thinking about in terms of things we can do to better connect with others and generally improve our day-to-day interactions with others.

**Debrief** the activity by randomly calling on some people to share with you and the wider group some of the things noted from the video.





## Slide 9



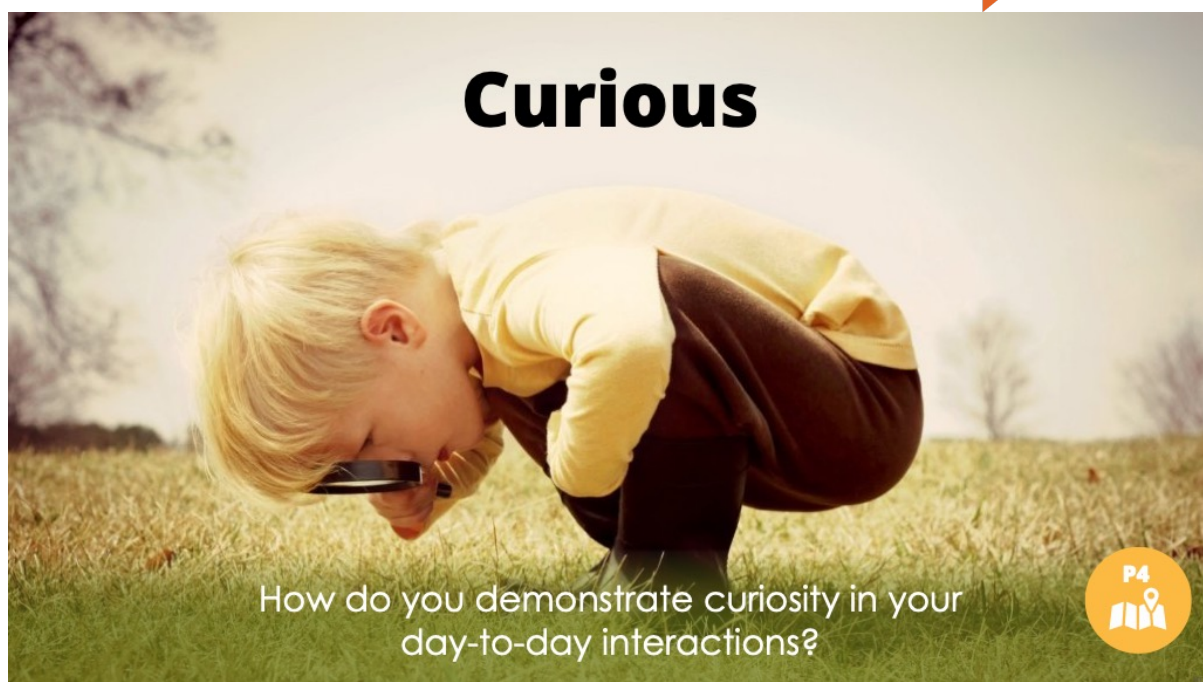
The purpose of this slide is to draw attention to one of the lessons from the video – being present and demonstrating mindful listening.

**Invite participants to turn to page 4 of their workbooks.**

**Say** – “One of the things the video shows us we can do to improve the quality of our day to day social interactions is to be more present and to demonstrate mindful listening. Mindful listening helps us grasp the context the person is in, and how they are thinking and feeling. This can help foster cognitive and emotional empathy. To engage in mindful listening, you focus your attention on the speaker and what is being said. If your mind wanders off into thoughts about a response or reaction to what is being said, simply observe this and bring your attention back to listening. You can also focus on ‘observing and reserving’ the urge to do all the socially appropriate things like nodding, asking questions, or making certain facial expressions. When mindfully listening, you observe these things coming up in your mind and just let them be there while you keep paying attention to listening, to what is being said and felt. When you are mindfully listening, you are essentially intentionally placing your attention on listening to what the speaker is saying and feeling, constantly bring your attention back to what is being said and felt when you notice it wander off. The mindfulness meditation app Smiling Mind has a number of different exercises to hone this skill. In summary, mindful listening helps us suspend our own judgement and connect with the perspective and emotions of the person we are conversing with. People feel more listened to and understood when we are present (rather than distracted) in our interactions with them.”

**Ask** “What other things can we do to be present and demonstrate mindful listening when interacting with others?” (e.g., not look at their phone while talking with others).

**Take** responses from your group or randomly call on a few people for answers. **Encourage** your group to take notes in the space provide in their workbooks on page 4.



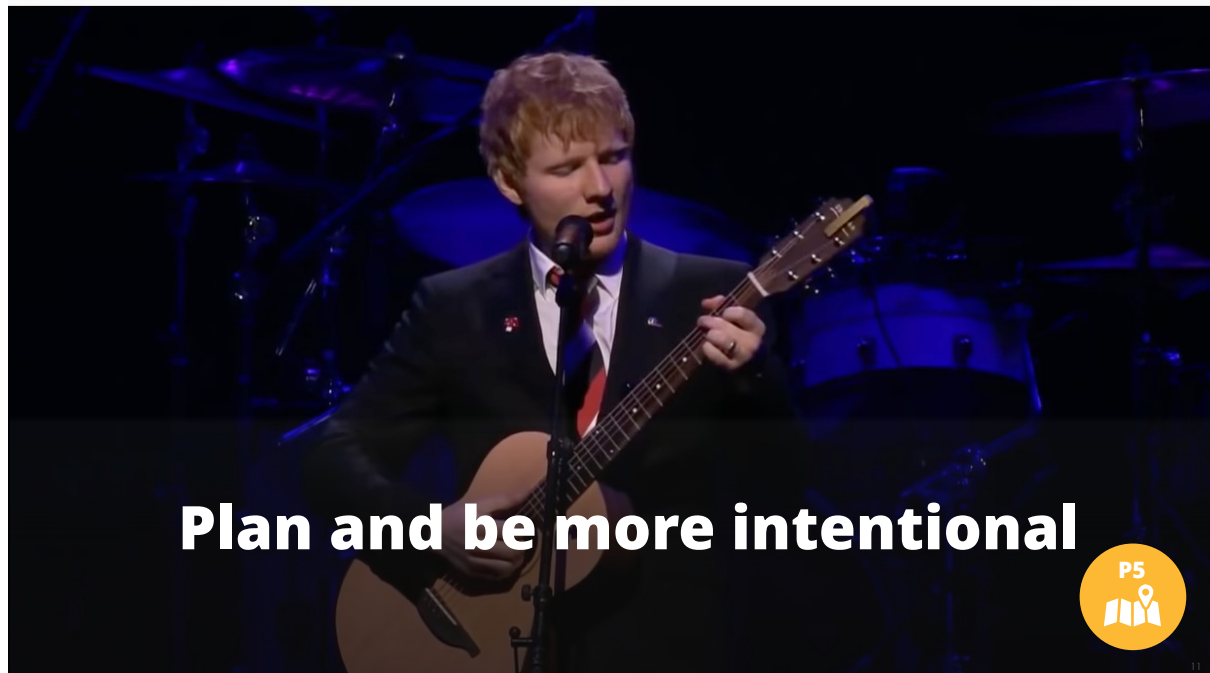
**The purpose of this slide is to draw attention to another of the lessons from the video – being curious.**

**Say** – *“Another thing we can do to improve the quality of our day-to-day interactions with others is to be more Curious. That is to be generally be interested in others, what they are thinking, feeling, what they are up to, who’s important in their life, what they are grateful and thankful for – the list goes on. In Australia in mid September we have our national RUOK day to remind us of the power of checking in on others – it can save lives. Think of being curious as an extension of this. The COVID-19 challenge has shown us all how important it is for us all to stay connected and stretch that little bit more into our conversations and interactions with others. Take more time to check in with:*

- 1. How people are going*
- 2. What they are up to*
- 3. The things that are going on in their lives.”*

**Ask** - How do you demonstrate curiosity in your day-to-day interactions? Randomly call on a few people for their ideas. As you draw on this participant led learning encourage your group to take notes in the space provided in their workbooks on page 4 – under the second question “what new things could you do to demonstrate curiosity in your day-to-day interactions?”





The purpose of this slide is to draw attention to final lesson from the video – planning and being more intentional.

**Invite** participants to turn to page 5 in their workbooks.

**Say** *“Another thing we can do to improve our social interactions is to plan and be more intentional. Ed Sheeran and other music stars excel at this. This is a clip of Ed Sheeran performing at the memorial service for Australian Music Industry legend Michael Gudinski. He sang three songs for his friend Michael including one he wrote especially for the service called Visiting Hours, it’s an incredibly emotional and authentic performance and demonstrates the impact planning and being intentional can have.”*

**Ask** - can you think of any other people who do this well? (Jacinda Ardern is another great example).





## Plan and be more intentional

- What mood and emotions might the people I'm meeting with have?
- What mood and emotion are most appropriate for the interaction?
- What's the best environment for this interaction (inside/outside, formal, relaxed), what might help foster connection?
- What questions could I ask?
- How am I going to acknowledge what I've heard and signify my understanding?
- What interesting and relevant information could I share?
- What other things can we plan for or be more intentional about when setting up our interactions with others?



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**The purpose of this slide is to position some of the things we can ask ourselves to help us plan and be more intentional**

Read the questions on the slide.

**Ask** - What other things can we plan for or be more intentional about when setting up our interactions with others.

Randomly call on a couple of people for their ideas. Encourage people to take notes in their workbooks in the space provided on page 5.



## Practice application

- In this next exercise we invite you to practise applying the three techniques just covered
  1. Being present and demonstrating mindful listening
  2. Being Curious
  3. Planning and being more intentional
- In pairs you will each take a turn at speaking for 5 mins about something or someone who recently moved you emotionally
- Take 3 mins now to personally prepare your story – what you will share
  - What or Who
  - Where, When
  - How, What happened
  - Feelings, Thoughts



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**The purpose of this slide is to position a practice application activity – it takes about 15 minutes in total to run. Note this activity is very cathartic and helps build social bonds within your group.**

**Use** the slide to overview the activity.

**Play** the song for 3 minutes while participants plan

Randomly assign participants into pairs for the exercise.

At the 5 min mark remind participants to swap over.

**Debrief** once both pairs have finished by simply asking people for some of the things they got out of participating in the activity.



## Slide 14



**Stretch action planning**

1. What could you do more of?
2. What new things could you do?
3. When will you revisit this and finesse or enhance further?

As the song plays, capture thoughts for yourself. Then be ready to share in small groups.

P6

**The purpose of this slide is to position a personal action planning activity**

**Invite** participants to turn to page 6 of their workbooks.

**Say** – “Now that we’ve been over the video, discussed and practiced some of the things we can do to improve our day-to-day social interactions lets take a few minutes to bring it all together for ourselves into a personal action plan.”

**Use** this slide to position the activity. Once the music finishes put people into small groups of 3-4 people to share their actions. Allow about 10 minutes for this sharing. Note the purpose of being in small groups is to help each other further with their action plan ideas.

Optionally, once people have shared in the small groups you could debrief further by randomly calling on a couple of people to share with the wider group.





Slide 15

# Improving close relationships

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**Use this slide to position the second major objective of this session – to identify a close personal relationship you could improve and the actions you could take to do so**

**Say** – *“Now let’s shift gears a little bit and spend some time on the second objective of our session – to improve a close relationship.”*



Slide 16, 17, 18, 19, 20

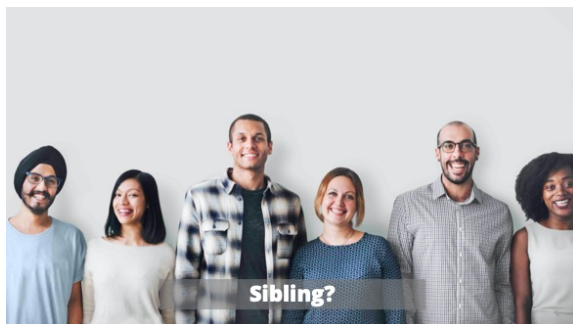
The purpose of these slides is to help your audience identify a relationship within their own lives that they would like to enhance



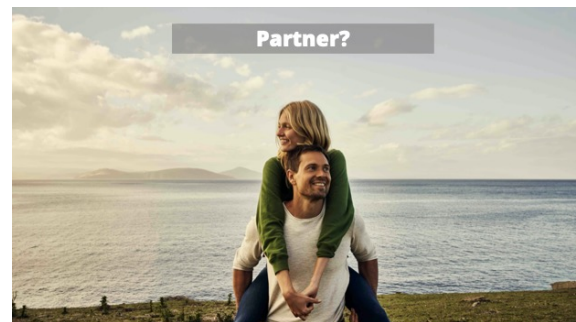
Say could it be a colleague



Could it be a child



Say could it be a sibling?



Say could it be your partner?



Say could it be a friend?

## Relationship circles activity



- Give them meaningful headings (partner, friends, colleagues, siblings, parent)
- Put the names of relevant people in them
- Underline the name of someone you'd like to focus on
- Now let's turn to page 63



**Use the slide to position the activity.**

**Invite** participants to turn to page 7 of their workbooks.

**Say** – “To help you identify someone now, and to help you come back to this in the future for continuous improvement, I’d like to invite you to complete a relationship circles activity with me.”

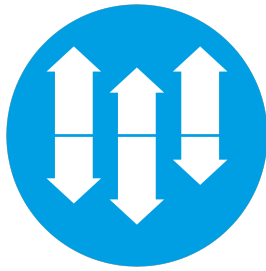
**Say** – “As it says up on slide here, the first step of this exercise is to give each circle a relevant heading, then to put the names of relevant people in them and then finally to underline someone you’d like to focus on first and foremost, in this session today. Someone you care about, someone you’d like to connect a little deeper or better with”.

Give participants about 3-5 minutes to complete the exercise. Play the song or music of your own choice while people complete it.

**Then say** – “Now lets turn to page 8 to explore some different things you might be able to do with this person.”



## Relationship improvement suggestions



Improve the  
quality and/or  
amount of time



Improve specific  
aspects of  
relationships



Improve specific  
relational skills



**The purpose of this slide and the corresponding material in the workbook is to stimulate thoughts on what people might be able to do to improve their relationship with the person they have chosen to focus on.**

**Invite** participants to turn to page 8 in their workbooks

**Say** – *“The list of things provided on page 8 of the workbook should be viewed simply as ‘thought provokers’, ideas that you might be able to apply to the relationship and person you have decided to focus on. Each idea requires further forethought and research to better define your application of it. One thing worth thinking about when coming up with ideas of your own, or building out those below to suit your context, is this: research examining the effectiveness of relationship improvement strategies has shown that those who focus on improving themselves (rather than try to change the other person in the relationship), generally have greater success.*

*Your workbook provides three different categories of things to think about. Firstly improving the quality and/or amount of time you spend with this person (go over the list in the participant workbook). The second invites you to think about improving a specific aspect of the relationship; and the third invites you to think about improving a specific relational skill. Have a read over these and see whether they inspire relevant ideas of your own on how you could improve the relationship with the person you are focused on in this session.”*

Move to the next slide to help finish the positioning of the activity





## Stretch action plan – close relationship

- Take the next 5 minutes (as the song plays) to identify something new you could do with the person you underlined earlier in your circles
- Use the examples on page 8 in the workbook as thought provokers
- When done, be ready to share in a small group



**The purpose of this slide is to position a personal action planning activity**

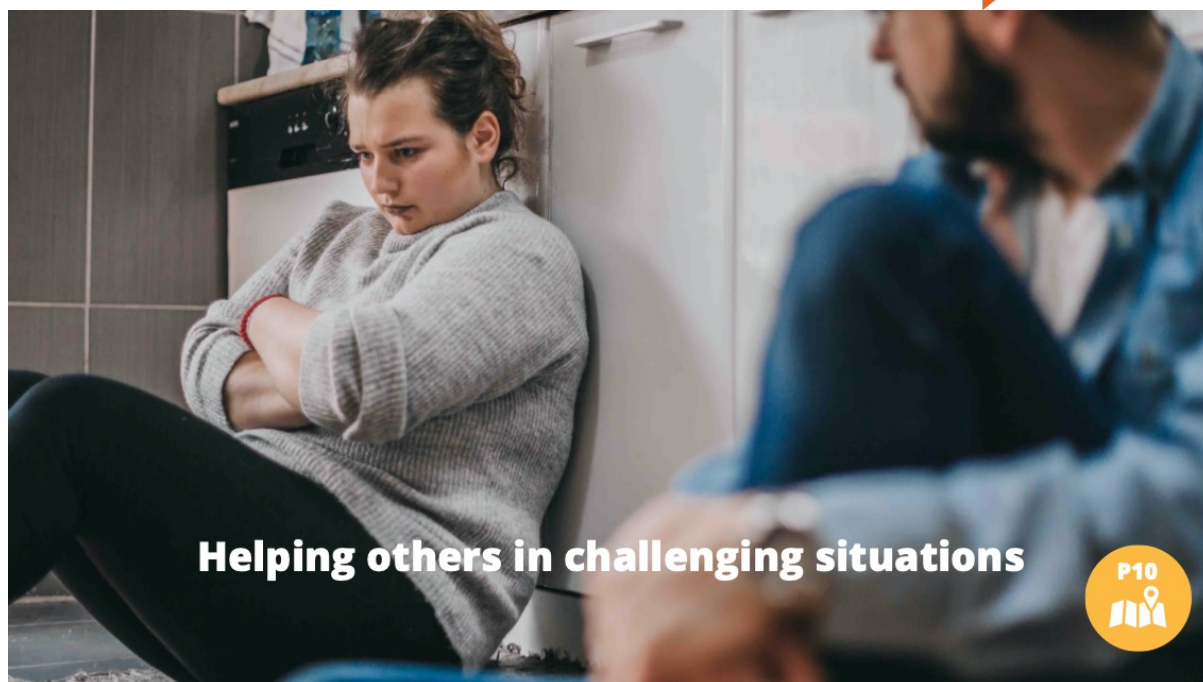
**Invite** participants to turn to page 9 in their workbooks.

**Use** the slide to position the activity.

**Play** the song and allow people to complete the individual reflection exercise, creating their action plans. Then put people into small groups of 3-4 people to share their action plans. Allow about 10 minutes for this sharing. Note the purpose of being in small groups is to help each other further with their action plan ideas drawing on participant led learning.



Slide 24



**Use this slide to position the final objective of this session – helping others in challenging situations.**

**Invite** participants to turn to page 10 in their workbooks.

**Say** *“Finally, let’s look at a model for helping us help others through challenging situations.”*



## Slide 25

### 'It's OK not to be OK': Experts say it is time to ditch 'toxic positivity'

By Allyson Chiu

August 20, 2020 — 1:00pm

Share   

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In the midst of a raging pandemic, these days it can feel as if reassuring platitudes are inescapable.

"Everything will be fine."



Denying, minimising or invalidating those feelings through external pressure or your own thoughts can be 'counterproductive and harmful.' ISTOCK

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The purpose of this slide is simply to bring attention to the fact that positive platitudes and the like can be detrimental in these situations.

**Say** "When helping others it's important to manage your own emotions and demonstrate appropriate emotions for the context of your discussion. It is important not to try and bring positivity to the conversation as messages of positivity can deny others a very real sense of struggle and can isolate them further. The Age and SMH run a good article on this recently <https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/health-and-wellness/it-s-ok-not-to-be-ok-experts-say-it-is-time-to-ditch-toxic-positivity-20200820-p55nh9.html> While there is no right way to be, you have to be fit for context, generally calm and caring, Avoid words and phrases like "everything will be fine", "look on the bright side..." and so on."

**Ask**, "What words and phrases do you sometimes use that fit with what we are taking about here. Give people a moment to think about it and then ask people for some examples.



## The empathy gap phenomenon

It's Harder  
to Empathize  
with People If  
You've Been in  
Their Shoes

By Rachel Ruttan, Mary-Hunter McDonnell,  
and Loran Nordgren

- Particularly important when you have been in similar situations and overcame them.
- We generally have difficulty accurately recalling just how difficult a past aversive experience was.
- Overcoming past obstacles can make us especially confident about our understanding of 'how-to'.
- These two things combined can unintentionally reduce our empathy towards others struggling with the event.
- Termed the empathy-gap phenomenon.

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**The purpose of this slide is to position the Empathy Gap Phenomenon.**

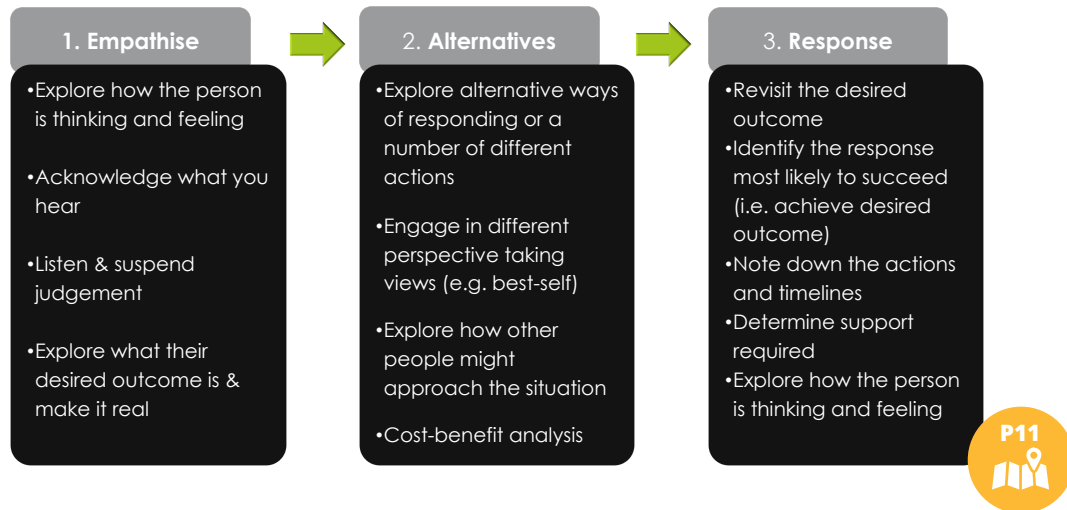
**Invite** participants to turn their attention to the second point on page 10 in their workbooks.

**Use** the animations on this slide to help convey the content, you will benefit from practicing it a couple of times.

**Ask** - Who is likely to show the most compassion to a bullied teenager? A teacher who endured bullying themselves or a teacher who has never been subject to bullying? Take responses or just allow a moment of silence. **Then say** "The correct answer, according to research using large data, is the teacher who has never been subject to bullying. A well-known psychological phenomenon known as the empathy gap explains why. This phenomenon is rooted in two psychological findings. 1) People generally have difficulty accurately recalling just how difficult a past aversive experience was and 2) People who have previously overcome an aversive experience know that they were able to successfully overcome it, which makes them feel especially confident about their understanding of 'how to'. The combined experience of 'I can't recall how difficult it was' and 'I know that I got through it myself' creates the perception that the event can be readily conquered, reducing empathy (often unconsciously) towards others struggling with the event. When people are secure, calm and confident, they often have trouble appreciating the power of 'hot' affective states like fear, anger, exhaustion, and feeling overwhelmed. Confident, upbeat parents, for example, routinely misjudge their children's anxiety levels.

The implications of the empathy gap phenomenon for us is fairly simple to overcome if we: 1) Pay attention to the empathy gap phenomenon and use our awareness of it to be more intentional in our approach to helping others; 2) Place *less* emphasis, not more, on our own past challenges; 3) Coach as much as possible, rather than mentor. As you are reading this script you can animate the slide accordingly.

## The E. A. R. – a coaching model for helping others



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**The purpose of this slide is to position the EAR coaching model for helping others. In this section you simply go over the model explaining it and taking any questions that arise.**

**Invite** participants to turn to page 11 in their workbooks.

**Say** “The model presented on this slide is a cognitive reframing model that can be used as a guide for a coaching/mentoring conversation to help someone identify the best possible response to make to a challenging situation. It can also help us avoid the use of positive platitudes and the empathy gap we went over earlier. The use of Open and Open Probing questions in each phase of the model works well, providing your own thoughts where appropriate to do so.”

**Go over each part of the model using the slide animations.** Say for example, “*E in the ear model stands for Empathise and represents the first thing we can do when helping others in those moments that matter. When you are in this step of the model you are asking questions that help you explore and understand what’s happened, how the person you are dealing with is thinking and feeling. In this step you demonstrate empathy by acknowledging what you hear and by suspending your own judgement. You use mindful listening. Toward the end of this step as you have ascertained what has happened and empathised with the person you explore what they would like to see happen, their desired outcome. The ampersand is there in the model to signify that often people have desired outcomes that you know are unrealistic or achievable, if this is the case you keep asking questions and explore until a more achievable outcome is defined. You then repeat this questioning approach through the next two phases of the model.*”

Once finished ask if there are any final questions and then move to summarise and end the session.



## Slide 28, 29



Use this slide to summarise and wrap up the session.

**Say:** Say, well this brings us to the conclusion of this session on improving wellbeing with social strategies. (use this next slide to summarise).

## Slide 29

### In this session we:

- Explored the things you can do to boost the quality of your day-to-day social interactions
- Identified a close personal relationship you could improve and the actions you could take to do so
- Finished with a coaching model for helping others respond to their challenging situations effectively
- Along the way we have created two separate action plans: the first to boost the quality of our day-to-day social interactions and the second to improve a close personal relationship

What has been a key takeaway from the session for you?

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The purpose of this slide is to summarise the key activities and discussions from the session

Invite participants to turn to page 12 of their workbooks.

Use this slide to summarise the session.

**Ask** at the end of the summary the question – “**what has been a key takeaway from the session for you?**” – Give participants 2-3 minutes to reflect and write answers to the reflective questions on page 12. Then generate some discussion with your participants and then thank them for their contributions.

Don't forget to point out the Recommended Reading and feel free to add/edit the recommended books.

Slide 30



**The purpose of this slide is to inspire people to implement their action plans and to remind us all of the value of our relationships with each other.**

**Say** – *“We started with a video that inspired us to think about the things we can do to better connect with others and generally enhance our day-to-day social interactions. We are now going to conclude with a second reflective video to help us think about the outcomes of doing this well, and what it’s been like for us all over the last year or so as we’ve been through our COVID-19 experiences. There’s nothing else to do other than enjoy this for what it is.”*

**Show** video and conclude the session.



# Facilitation discussion

1. **Who** – Who you could run this session for (staff, certain students, staff and parents etc)? Define an audience that could benefit from it.
2. **What** – What will you include, add or edit?
3. **How** – Who will facilitate the session? Where will you run it? Who will get your resources ready? What resources do you need?
4. **When** – When will you run the session? When will you notify people that it is on?



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