

CRITICISM AND FAILURE

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the session delegates should have an increased understanding of how criticism and failure can be helpful to improving performance, and how to carry out self-reflection practise.

This guide is designed for a manager or a facilitator to deliver a short workshop featuring videos from the Video Arts Wellbeing Essentials Series. Each video comes with a series of activities around the following structure:

LOOK – watch the video and reflect on the content and message.

THINK – activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace

REMEMBER – a summary of the key learning points

Each section relating to the video will last around 15 minutes

PRACTISE – At the end of the series of videos there is a 30 minute practical training exercise which will bring the learnings together. Delegates should be encouraged to record any personal development actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Embracing Failure
- Fire your inner critic
- Be kind to yourself

FILM 1 – EMBRACING FAILURE

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

THINK (discussion)

Is it possible to see failure as a helpful way to grow and develop yourself?

Yes, it is. Many successful people had to develop many versions before they got to a 'final product'.

How could it help you to see failures and mistakes as an acceptable part of working life?

It is likely to cultivate an environment where colleagues are trusted for the work they do as there are no unreasonable expectations that work will be 100% correct all of the time.

In what ways could we improve current working practises in the team so that failures and deliberate imperfections are seen as positives to learn from?

PRACTISE (recap, 2 minutes)

On a piece of flipchart paper, and create three columns. Write at the top three headings for each of the columns.

- Recent failure / mistake
- Impact it had
- Key learning

Give each team member post it notes and ask them to individually complete a row of answers. For example, it could read as:

- Recent failure / mistake – I sent an email to a client with incorrect information about their policy.
- Impact it had – They rang the office confused about the incorrect information. I had to investigate and provide a corrected letter.
- Key learning – Sometimes I can miss the importance of checking fine details.

Ask each team member to place these on to the flipchart. Engage in an open discussion about what this helps them to be comfortable with. Also acknowledge the discomfort this may cause and that it is acceptable to have open and honest discussions in this way, otherwise the performance of the team can't be improved. By engaging with the team in this way you will cultivate an environment of trust and for team members to be comfortable in admitting mistakes if and when they occur.

This practise exercise should enable team members to understand the importance of accepting that mistakes can happen and that deliberate imperfections are ok.

FILM 2 – FIRE YOUR INNER CRITIC!

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

When was the last time you allowed your inner critic to negatively influence a decision you made?

You may need to volunteer an answer yourself in order to help others feel it is acceptable to talk about things like this.

Who has any good techniques they use for not listening to their inner critic?

Invite team members to share their good practise with others, or reflect on how they could silence their inner critic.

REMEMBER

- We all have an inner critical voice, but we don't have to follow its instructions
- Treat your inner critic like a toddler or an amusing friend, not as a boss you must obey
- Personify your inner critic: give him or her a name, so it won't be a god-like "voice of truth" anymore

FILM 3 – BE KIND TO YOURSELF

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Do you recognise any of those behaviours or that thinking in yourself?

This reflection exercise is helpful for the group to safely think about how they might have unreal expectations of themselves, and possibly of others.

Next time you catch yourself in some self-criticism, how could you be kind to yourself instead?

This is a personal reflective question. Encourage team members to think about options like:

- Go for a walk and talk to someone
- Commit to treating yourself at the end of the day
- Spend up to 20 minutes doing something you enjoy like reading a book or catching up on a favourite programme

REMEMBER

- We treat ourselves in ways we'd never treat another colleague
- Catch yourself in the act of self-criticism, and be friendly instead
- It is not self-indulgent to treat yourself well.

CRITICISM AND FAILURE – GROUP EXERCISE

In this exercise, team members will develop ways to accept failure as a regular part of working and build confidence to share experiences with one another.

Hand out the exercise worksheet to each team member and ask them to take up to ten minutes to complete it.

Once completed, ask them to take a team member through their answers. This should last for about 5-10 minutes.

After everyone is done, ask each pair what they found useful about completing the worksheet and what was useful about sharing what they wrote with team members.

When each pair has had a chance to share and discuss, ask the following question to the team as a whole: What have we learned as a team, and how can we do more useful things like this on a regular basis?

This group exercise should help to cultivate a sense of acceptance that making mistakes is part of working life and there are positive and healthy ways to be able to deal with negative thoughts.