Foundation Skills For Active Implementation

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- Getting and Giving Information
  - Ability: Observe and Describe Behavior

- Connecting Through Rationales
  - Ability: Develop and Provide Rationales

- Developing and Maintaining Relationships
  - Ability: Provide Meaningful Recognition

- Maximizing Feedback
  - Ability: Accept and Receive Feedback & Improve Communication

- Conceptual Frameworks
  - Ability: Develop and Communicate Big Ideas

- Addressing Adaptive Challenges

Nominal Group Process
SODAS
SCOCS
Motivational Interviewing
Facilitation Skills

Foundation Skills for Active Implementation
Observing and Describing Behavior

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE ABILITY TO OBSERVE AND DESCRIBE?

- Ability to directly see and hear observable events and behavior and describe these observations to others
- Ability to verbally provide a “replay” of past events for others
- Ability to solicit clear descriptions from others
- Ability to describe the observable behavior and label or match the behaviors to key concepts or big ideas
Why Might It Be Important to Objectively Observe and Describe Behavior?

Value of Objectively Observing and Describing Behavior

- Improves communication
- Greater specificity = Greater perceived sincerity
- Linking big ideas with specifics helps to create common views, values, shared language
- Helps analyze how, when and if action is required....and what action might be best. Avoid faulty diagnoses.
What Might Matter?

- Antecedents and Context
- Verbal and non-verbal behavior
- Consequences or Results
  - Immediate
  - Delayed

Antecedents and Context

- History and Circumstances
- Is there a more “distal” but relevant history of events/relationships?
- Who was present?
- When did the behavior occur?
- Where did the behavior occur?
- What happened immediately prior?
Behavior

- What was said?
- By whom? To whom?
- Non-verbal behavior?
- Intensity and frequency of behavior
- Absence as well as presence of behavior

Consequences or Results

- What was the observed outcomes or results of the interaction or events?
- How did you and others respond verbally and non-verbally?
- What decisions were made as a result?
- Consequences may become the antecedents or the context for the next set of interactions
How to Observe and Describe

- Be specific
- Describe the “ABC’s” clearly so others can “see” and could “recreate” the scene
- Avoid using general terms that require interpretation
- Avoid using terms that may be perceived as judgmental
- Avoid using pronouns without a clear, proximal event, noun

When to Be Specific

- Offering recognition or praise
- Problem-solving or asking for advice
- Offering suggestions for improvement or making changes
- Setting the stage for the next event, meeting, decision
- Relaying information to “teams”
EXERCISE
OBSERVING AND DESCRIBING

Second-Hand Observation Skills

A behavioral debriefing that results in a clear behavioral description of interactions or events. Facilitated by the Implementation Specialist’s ability to ask specific questions, ask open-ended questions, non-verbally encourage conversation & summarize.
Importance of Second-Hand Observation Skills

- Avoid miscommunication
- Gives the Implementation Specialist more information - You can’t be everywhere!

Getting Started

- May want to ask for permission and give reasons for needing a clear picture
- May need to get the other person(s) comfortable with a series of questions
- Let the person tell their story and make judgment calls about interrupting to get more specific information
What Kinds of Questions To Ask?

The Obvious

– Who .......... was there...stayed...left?
– What.......... was said...decided....happened?
– When..... ...... did it occur....was it held?
– Where......... did it occur....was the meeting?
– How.............. did he react....did she respond?

The Encouraging

– Tell me more.  Say more words about that.
– What happened next?
– What was the immediate reaction/outcome?

What Kinds of Questions To Ask?

• When general statements are made -
  – Ask follow-up questions to get the full picture
    • What did she say?
    • How did he react?
  – Help the person move from the general to the specific by asking them to link the general term with behavior -
    “What” works best
    • What did he say that made you think he was (general term)?
      What were you hearing?
  – Putting the person in the scene
    • What did you say then?  What were you thinking then?
  – Develop a pronoun phobia
    • When you say “they” to whom are you referring?
Perception Checks

- People first - Information Second
- Useful when situations seem emotional
- Offer a “feeling” to go with your observation
  - “You seem really confused by his response to the plan?”
  - “Given what she said, might she be feeling left out of the process?”

Exercise: Second-Hand Observation Skills

The Scene: City Council Meeting

Main “Actors”: President of the Council and 4 or 5 Council members

I was at the meeting but not one of the council members. You are going to be working with this group to help them gel as a team. The background is that the President’s political rival (who used to sit on the Council...we will call him, Tom) has been arrested and is in jail awaiting trial on a domestic violence issue. His position needs to be filled.

Start the conversation by asking me: “So how did the meeting go?”

Objective: Get a clear picture of what happened at the meeting.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFeA-pM0o8Y
Communicating Effectively:
Elephants and Ladders

Recognizing and Dealing with “The Elephant”

- Naming the challenge
  - Stop the Action,
  - Set the ‘technical’ aside
  - Describe Your Observations
  - Check your perceptions

- Cautionary Tales
- Barriers? Facilitators?
Communicating Effectively: Living in the Moment

Recognizing and Dealing with “The Issue”

Taming the Elephant
– Hearing the Issues
– Addressing the Issues
– Safely Climbing the Ladder of Inference

Communicating Effectively

The Ladder of Inference
Ladder of Inference References

The following material has been adapted from:


Climbing the Ladder Of Inference

I take ACTION or MAKE STATEMENTS based on my beliefs - Visible

I adopt Beliefs about the world and people in it...

I draw Conclusions

I make Assumptions based on the meanings I add.

I select data and information from all that I have observed.

Observable “data” and experiences occur (as a video recorder might capture it). - Visible

Adapted from: The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook
Getting Where We Want To Go

We get in our own way when we behave as though:

✓ Our beliefs are the truth.
✓ The truth is obvious.
✓ Our beliefs are based on real data.
✓ The data we select are the real data...sometimes the only data.

Using the Ladder of Inference

• You can’t live your life without drawing conclusions or adding meaning....it’s usually a functional behavior!

• BUT you can improve communication by using the ladder productively and “safely” by........
Safely Using the Ladder of Inference

- Becoming more aware of your own thinking and reasoning.

- Making your thinking and reasoning more visible to others.

Safely Using the Ladder of Inference

- Inquiring into others’ thinking and reasoning:
  - What is the observable data behind the statement?.
  - Does everyone agree on what the data are?
  - “Can you run me through your reasoning?”
  - “How did we get from that data/observation to these conclusions?”
  - When you said “[your inference]”, did you mean “[my interpretation]”.

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**Safety on the Ladder**

**DO:**
- **Walk others through your thinking.**
  “Let me tell you what I heard....To me, this means...therefore I believe...”
- **Ask for data in an open-ended way.**
  “What was your reaction to...”
- **Test your assumptions.**
  “Are you upset about this? Are you disappointed in the decision we made?” “Are you optimistic about what’s next?”
- **Simply describe the observable data.**
  “You’ve been scowling for a while...can you help me understand?”....then see where the discussion goes.

**Safety on the Ladder**

**DON’T:**
- **Accuse others of climbing the ladder.**
  “I think your reasoning is faulty.”
  “You are making unwarranted assumptions.”
- **Talk behind someone’s back about their poor ladder climbing ability.**
  “Boy, he didn’t bother to check anything out.”
Exercise in Ladder Climbing Safety

I will describe the situation as objectively as I can. The way a video camera would record it. Please listen for the information that will help you answer the following questions:

- What “data” did the person choose to focus on?
- What meaning did the person assign to it (e.g. “So that must mean that…”).
- What assumptions did the person make without checking them out?
- What conclusions did the person draw (e.g. “Therefore…”).
- What beliefs were hardened, softened, challenged?
- How might this “climb” influence future actions of the person relative to the “new group” or to the issue?

Exercise in Ladder Climbing Safety

Next, using what you have learned, let’s re-script the scene:

- How could the person check to be sure he has all the data?
- Would others agree with his observation of the data? Whom should he ask?
- What questions could the person ask of others to challenge his own assumptions?
- Can you describe how he got from data to assumptions?
- Who could he ask, “When you said X (your observation) did you mean Y (your interpretation)?
- What would you say if had been the facilitator to help the person get down the ladder safely?
Has Ladder Climbing Occurred on Projects You’ve Worked On?

What factors might contribute to making inferences and unsafe ladder climbing in the context of the work of Active Implementation?

Homework Exercise in Awareness

1. Be alert for a conversation or time when you were or could have been less than safe as you climbed the ladder of inference

At our next session:
1. Describe what you might have said or checked out with others to avoid making unwarranted inferences.
2. OR….having recognized you were considering making inferences, you engaged in different behavior. Describe what you did or said to “climb the ladder safely”.
Homework Exercise in Observing and Describing

- Provide some positive feedback to a friend, partner, spouse, child, stranger, or colleague that is behaviorally specific.
- If possible use an email or written format for this and bring the written material, or your description of the process to the next session.
- Be prepared at the next session to describe antecedents, your behavior, others behavior, and other “consequences”.
- What went well? What felt awkward? Were there any unanticipated consequences?

Head and Heart – Intention is Important....

And Behavior Can Trump Intention!
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