

# Building respect

Step 3.  
Direct feedback

Learn about our BUILD feedback  
approach and how to use it

We welcome constructive feedback as an opportunity to improve. It's central to how we resolve issues and learn.

Giving and receiving feedback is a core skill for all of us. We use the BUILD model to give respectful feedback to each other.

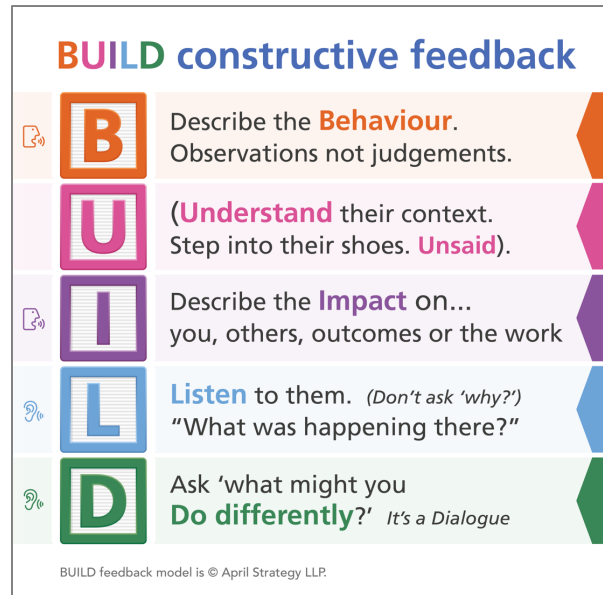


# 3. Direct Feedback

If you are in a situation where you see or experience inappropriate behaviour, you should try to give the person feedback in the first instance. This can often help resolve the situation before it escalates.

You may ask someone trusted and impartial to talk to the person displaying the inappropriate behaviour. If you don't talk to the person straight away, keep a record of the conversation details.

The BUILD model is a way to give respectful feedback to each other. This section introduces BUILD, with an option to practice using it. It also includes a template to prepare your BUILD feedback, as well as some scenarios to reflect and inform your approach.



## The ABC of appreciation

A	<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>This is what you said or did</p>
B	<p><b>Benefit</b></p> <p>The positive impact it had</p>
C	<p><b>Continue</b></p> <p>Thanks, please keep doing this</p>

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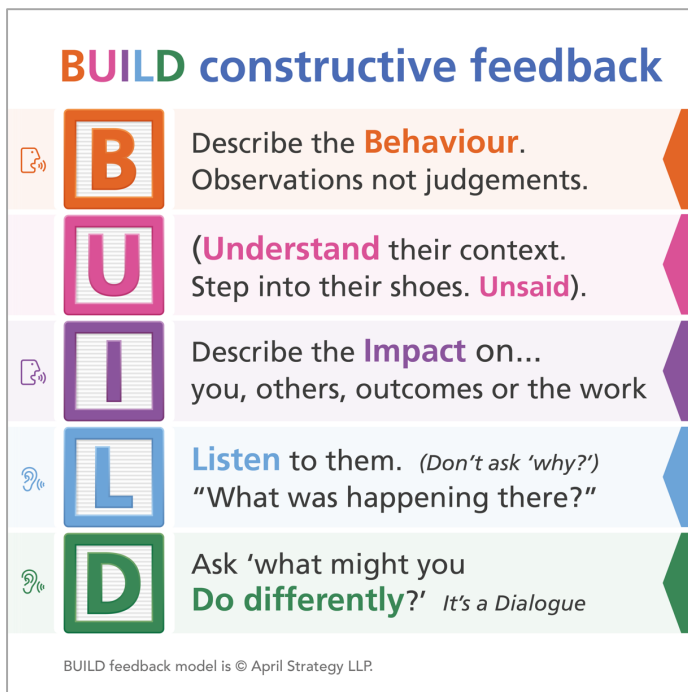
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**ABC is a great way to give the 'descriptive praise' we all enjoy**

Evidence shows that appreciation builds confidence and engagement. Appreciation of specific behaviours encourages more of those behaviours we want to see. That's why in successful teams and organisations, people always speak up about concerns, but also tend to give appreciative feedback *five times* more often than that.

## Giving constructive feedback

BUILD is our way of giving feedback ...



Imagine a colleague is shouting. Here's how you could use BUILD to give feedback

### Behaviour

"You were raising your voice."

### (Understand)

Step into their shoes for a moment. Do this in your own head. Don't say anything though. It builds empathy so your tone is less judgmental.

### Impact

"It meant I couldn't concentrate."

### Listen

"What was happening there?"

Give them time to explain and reflect. Don't agree or disagree, just listen. Don't ask 'why?'

### Do Differently

"What might you do differently?"

Resist the urge to make suggestions – the moment you do that it becomes a telling off!

The benefits of giving feedback using BUILD

- It's not personal or judgmental
- The person can reflect and learn
- They do most of the speaking
- It's quick and structured
- It's giving the opportunity for self-awareness

# Mastering BUILD

Consider a simple situation that many of us may have faced. You’ve just seen your colleague Simon leave his dirty lunch plates in the sink in the team room, and rush off without washing them.

<div style="border: 2px solid orange; padding: 10px; display: inline-block; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">B</div> <p style="margin-top: 0;">Describe the <b>Behaviour</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tell the other person what you observed or heard them doing</li> <li>● Describe the action or behaviour</li> <li>● Use facts not judgments</li> <li>● Facts are unarguable and true</li> <li>● Your beliefs or feelings are not facts</li> <li>● Use the word you. You did. You said.</li> </ul>	<p><b>B. Behaviour</b></p> <p>In describing behaviours, facts work much better than judgements. The difference between them may seem obvious on the surface. Looking closer, statements that appear factual are really beliefs or feelings.</p> <p>“Simon, you have left the kitchen in a mess” is a judgement not a fact. Simon may have a different view on what is a ‘mess’. If I tell Simon it’s a mess he may disagree and we may argue.</p> <p>“Simon, you are such an untidy person” is a belief not a fact. It’s making a judgement about his personality. Unsurprisingly when we make judgements, people feel judged and it can lead to poor conversations.</p> <p>A factual description could be: “Simon, I noticed you left dirty plates in the sink”. It is true and unarguable.</p> <p>Describing the behaviour factually sets you up for a successful BUILD conversation.</p>
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Your notes.

## Describing behaviours: Facts or judgements?

Getting your description of the behaviour right is key and will set your feedback off on the right track. In BUILD we describe facts, not judgements. The difference between the two may sound obvious on the surface, but when you look closer, the difference is subtle, and statements may appear factual when they are really our beliefs or feelings. And while your feelings are true to you, they are not facts.

Consider some other simple situations many of us may have faced. Being thoughtful about our use of language when giving feedback helps avoid unwanted conflict and sets you up for a positive conversation.

Situation	Facts	Judgements
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Lateness</u></b></p> <p>Your colleague Julia has just arrived at a meeting, 15 minutes after it was due to start.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“You accepted the invitation for 3pm, it’s now 3.15pm”</b></p> <p>This is true, and unarguable, as long as you saw the acceptance.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Next you can describe the impact the behaviour had on you.</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“Julia, you’re late, we had to start without you”</b></p> <p>Julia may have a different view on what constitutes being late or there may be a legitimate reason why she’s late. If I say this she may disagree and we may argue.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Something they said</u></b></p> <p>You haven’t done something your manager asked you to do, because you were called away urgently. Your manager has called you “lazy and unprofessional.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“You just said ‘You’re lazy and unprofessional’ ”</b></p> <p>When giving feedback about words people used, verbally or in an email, simply repeat the words back, as they were said.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Next you can describe the impact the behaviour had on you.</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“How dare you call me lazy, that’s unprofessional and rude.”</b></p> <p>Describing attitudes like rudeness is judgmental. You may feel it’s rude but saying that will raise the temperature of the discussion.</p>

# Mastering BUILD



## Understand their context

- Imagine what's going on for them
- Step into their shoes
- What are they going through?
- Do this in your own head – it must remain UNSAID
- Maybe they... Perhaps they...
- Builds empathy, changes your tone

### U. (Understand)

Understanding others' perspectives makes it easier to give feedback. We don't need to say anything, that's why it's in brackets. We need to step into their shoes to think for a moment what might be going on for them. It helps us be more understanding and builds empathy.

For example: (Thinks) "Hmmm, maybe Simon was called away to an emergency."

Other People's Shoes (OPS), a simple technique developed by psychologist Edward De Bono asks that you appreciate what might be going on for other people. There may be something going on in their personal life, or they may be under pressure. You may not be right (and this is why it's unsaid) but the simple act of consideration is proven to significantly reduce conflict in the workplace.

Your notes.



## Describe the Impact

- Describe to them the impact their behaviour had
- Could be impact on you, another person, a project or outcome
- OK to describe your feelings here
- I felt... (not 'you made me feel')
- OK to say what you think the impact might have been on others

### I. Impact

The impact may be personal to you or the impact on someone else, it may impact on the team or on the work. It can be direct or indirect.

How could we describe Simon's impact? "Simon, I had to wash up your dishes before I could wash mine."

It is OK at this point to talk about emotions or feelings.

If you are describing the impact on someone else. Be clear this is your perception. Whether or not it has had this impact doesn't matter, this is still true for you.

"Simon, I think Claire was upset, because she had to tidy it up."

Remember, we are only aware of c. 20% of how we come across to others. Don't ask what impact they think they had. They won't know.

Your notes.

# Mastering BUILD



## Listen to their point of view



- Ask one simple question  
**“What was happening there”**
- Then give them a chance to speak
- Don't agree or disagree
- Don't say 'yes' or 'no'
- Don't interrupt or judge, just listen
- (Never ask 'why?')

### L. Listen

Simply ask **“What was happening there?”**

This question is carefully written to be free of judgement. It lets the other person voice their perspective.

Asking questions like “what was going on” or even “what was happening for you” implies judgement and may lead to a defensive response.

Listen to their response without talking for a moment. Don't agree or disagree. Don't say 'yes' or 'no'. Just listen. It will help them to feel heard and respected. So they are more likely to act on your feedback.

Resist the urge to ask “Why?” Imagine the reaction if we ask “Why did you leave your dirty dishes?” Out come justifications and rationales. “Well you've done it, it's only a few dishes, why are you so worked up?” “Why?” is not a helpful question.

Your notes.



## Ask what they could Do differently



- This is coaching. Letting them take responsibility for learning / change
- Ask: “Is there anything you might do differently next time”
- Or: “What might you do...” and wait
- We will start expecting this question
- Resist any urge to suggest what they could do. Turns it into a 'telling off'!

### D. Do differently

Ask “what would you do differently next time?”

This is coaching. It gives them the chance to come up with their own idea about what they might do. They are more likely to act on their own idea.

There is flexibility in this question. Ask in a way that's comfortable for you. You could ask ‘What could we do differently?’ but, if they suggest a change you can make, accept that then ask ‘and what could you do?’

Often we hear actions that we don't expect, but that will work for them. “Simon – what might you do differently?”

We expect Simon to talk about washing up sooner but: “You know I never have time to wash up, maybe I'll bring sandwiches from now on then I don't have to bother.”

DON'T tell them what you think they should do, as however well-meant this transforms it into a 'telling off'.

Your notes.

## Behaviours and Impacts

In describing behaviours, facts work much better than judgements. The difference between them may seem obvious on the surface, but looking closer, statements that appear factual are actually our beliefs or feelings. Unsurprisingly when we make judgements, people feel judged and it can lead to unproductive conversations. Describing the behaviour in a factual way gets the feedback off to a positive start.

	<u>Behaviour</u> Fact or Judgment?	<u>Impact</u> What's most helpful?
<b>Messy kitchen</b>	This kitchen is a mess Or You've left plates in the sink	
<b>Late for a meeting</b>	It's inconsiderate to be late Or You accepted for 3 and it's now 3.15	
<b>Talking over you in a meeting</b>	You just spoke while I was talking Or Can I finish what I was saying?	
<b>Gossiping</b>	You're talking about Sally Or You are gossiping about Sally	
<b>Shouting</b>	Stop shouting Or You've raised your voice	
<b>Aggressive email</b>	You used lots of capitals in the email Or That was a very rude email	
<b>You said you didn't like the joke, then he said 'it's only banter'</b>	It's not banter it's inappropriate Or You described the jokes as banter	
<b>Irritable and huffy</b>	You shook your head and sighed Or You're being really off towards me	
<b>Said that 'you are an idiot'</b>	How dare you say that to me? Or You just said 'you are an idiot'	



## Preparing for success

# Your BUILD buddy

### Practice builds confidence

Share your experience with each other. Making mistakes is normal and doing this in a safe environment will help you get better at using it.

#### 1. Practice regularly together

- Practice for everyday situations.
- Something that's happened in the past
- Small and trivial – have some fun.

#### 2. Rehearse before you give feedback

- Practice this with someone first
- Plan what you want to say and ensure your feedback is delivered in the most helpful way.

## BEFORE

Remember **your reasons** for having this conversation. How might a change make things better? Reminds you why you are speaking up. Builds your **MOTIVATION**, keeps the discussion on topic.

## DURING

**Be kind.** Remember you're doing this to be helpful. You don't want to 'tell them off'. **TONE OF VOICE** is as important as what you say when giving feedback.

## AFTER

Might not be a great outcome so manage your expectations throughout. May not recognise the situation or do anything differently. That's okay. You needed to say something, and you you've done what you can. **BUILD is giving the opportunity for self-awareness**, not immediate behaviour change.

**"I JUST THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW."**

## Working through the situation

However you are involved in the situation, whether you are the target of poor behaviour, have had an allegation made against you, or you are supporting someone else, it can be useful to work through the situation.

This template can help you to step back, get a better understanding of what happened, and what you'd like to happen next. Find a safe place to talk, where there will be no interruptions.

**The scenario** Work through what happened, thinking about the perspectives of everyone involved.

<p>What was the behaviour?</p>	<p>What was the context?</p>	<p>What was the impact?</p>
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**BUILD options** What would be the most constructive way to give BUILD feedback?

<p>Name the <b>B</b>ehaviour. Their actions, not personality.</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><b>(U</b>nderstand their context.) What was going on for them?</p>	<p>The <b>I</b>mpact on you / target. What you / they felt / did as a result.</p> <hr/> <hr/>
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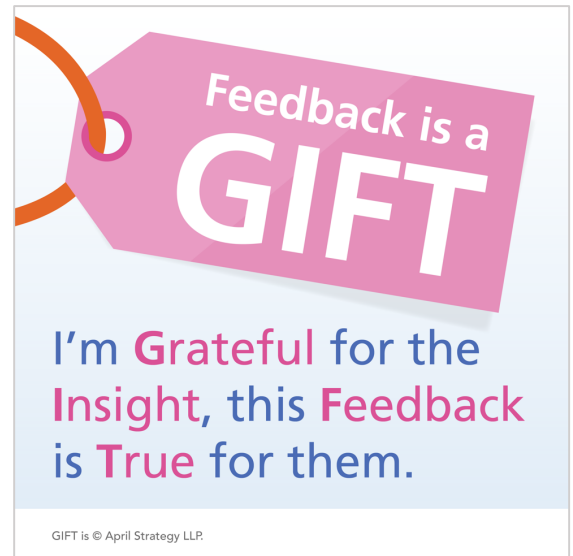
**Model behaviour** How would you like things to change? How would you do things differently?

<p>What behaviours would work better?</p>	<p>How would you (or the target) want to feel?</p>
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## Receiving feedback as a GIFT, a chance to learn

In order to give feedback, we need to first learn how to receive it. That's why the first step in this journey is about accepting feedback as a GIFT.

When someone gives you feedback, it may not feel positive and may seem unfair. But what if they didn't give you feedback? You would never know that you have affected them in that way. And you wouldn't have the chance to learn and think about doing things differently.



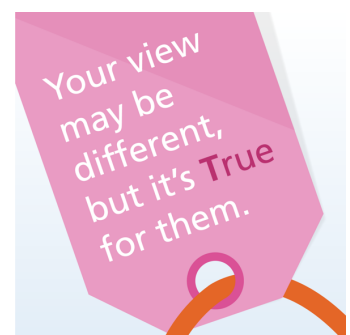
Thanking the other person acknowledges it can take courage in sharing feedback. This may be difficult but changing your perspective in this way can help make receiving feedback a more positive experience for you.

There may be something you could do better, or perhaps you've been misunderstood. Whichever, the feedback is still new information that you can choose how you use. We are only aware of 20% of how we come across to others. So, whatever your view on the situation, their feedback has given you a new level of self-awareness you did not have before.



- Listen – give them a chance to fully describe their experience
- Be curious – this is a new perspective you can learn from
- Empathise – step into their shoes for a minute
- Choose – you can choose to take it as an insult, or as constructive feedback. Only you are responsible for your reaction.

We all have different perspectives. There are always two sides to a story. You can leave any defensive reactions for a moment, and respect what is true for them.



## Further support and guidance

If you feel you need more guidance on what to do next, you can visit the University website where you can download the following tools and resources:

### For you

- Information about our approaches, policies and procedures
- Guidance on what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Who to speak to for support
- Step-by-step guides walking you through all of our options

### For your team

- Guides and templates to help you discuss and improve team culture
- Roles and responsibilities
- Guide for managers

This is one in a series of guides to support anyone who is a target of inappropriate behaviour, has witnessed or had an allegation of such behaviour made against them, and for managers dealing with inappropriate behaviour in their teams.



### Contact List

For more assistance or if you have any questions, you can get in touch with the people listed below who can advise you on informal and formal procedures, and support you throughout the process:

- [HR team](#)  
human.resources@otago.ac.nz  
Tel 03 479 8269
- [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#)
- [Ethical Behaviour Network](#)
- [Manager of Facilitation and Mediation](#)  
mediation@otago.ac.nz  
Tel 03 479 5679
- [Occupational Health](#)
- Or contact your Union rep