

**UWE
Bristol**

**University
of the
West of
England**

Ambition – Inclusion – Innovative – Collaborative -Enterprising



From Safety to Ownership RCOT Away day 3rd September 2026

Facilitator: Simon Davey-Nelson (He/Him)

Learning Outcomes

- **Psychological Safety**, Awayday Strategy and reach a verbal agreement to proceed with the course. The Psychological Mind and *the Chimp Paradox*.
- **Previous Awayday** commitments to “teamworking” using “What Good Looks Like” as the benchmark.
- **“Own it First”** a problem - solving standard to embed clearer ownership, accountability and disciplined escalation reducing over-reliance on managers.
- **Constructive Conversation** a structure for raising concerns, challenging behaviour, clarifying ownership and requesting action without blame.
- **Next steps**

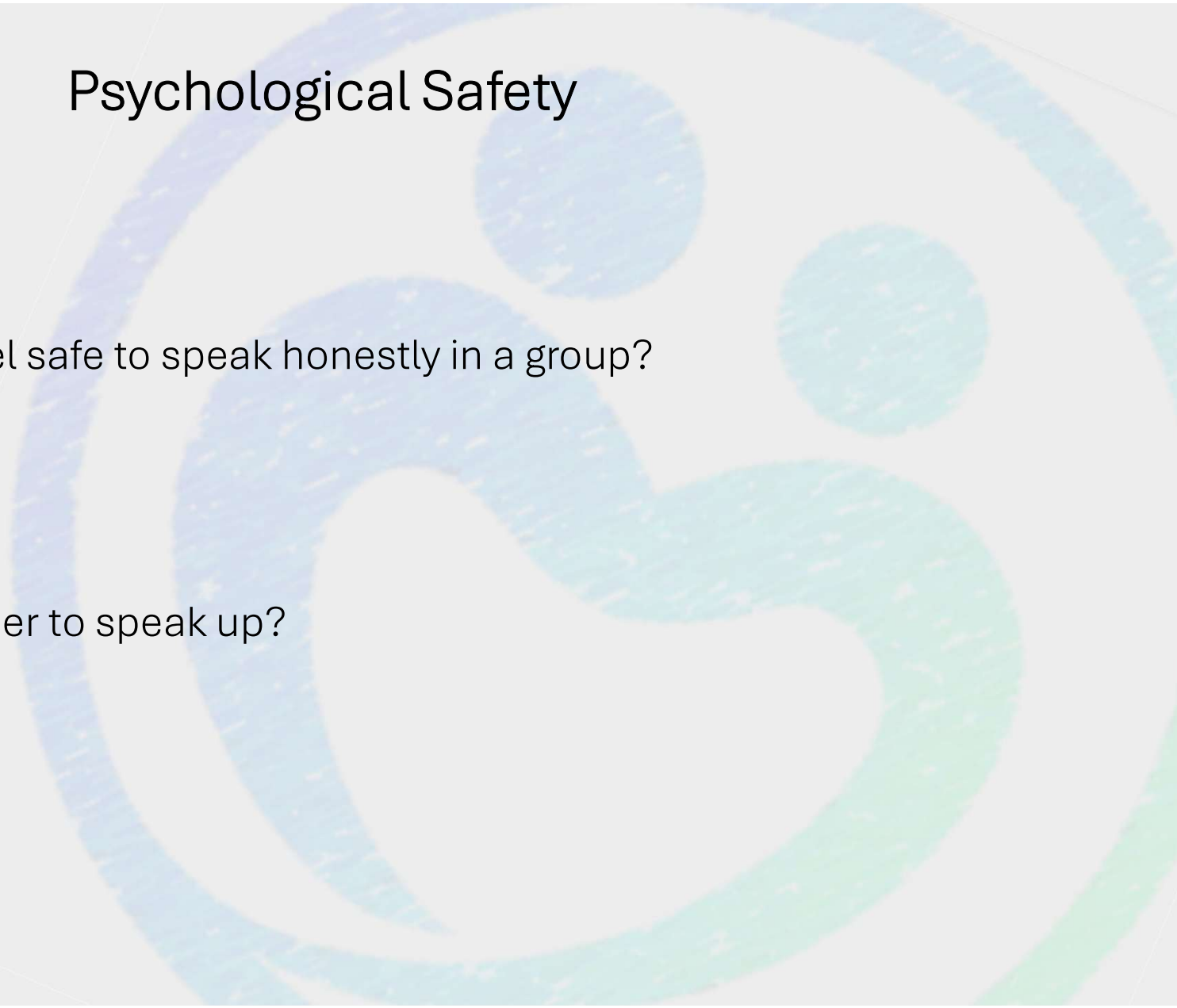
Effective Practice

- Listen to understand – Seek to understand others perspective before responding.
- Challenge issues not persons - focus on behaviours, processes and impacts.
- Share the space - Contribute openly nobody is required to disclose personal experiences.
- Be curious, not defensive - Ask questions, test assumptions and remain open to feedback.
- Treat everyone respectfully and sensitively - do not attribute comments without permission.
- Acknowledge impact and intention – Words/behaviours can cause unintentional harm.
- Be responsible – Challenge behaviours that compromise our psychological safety.

Psychological Safety

- Psychological safety is the belief that you won't be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.
- An inclusive place in which delegates can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm.
- A safe place for the learners, contributors and challengers here.
- A verbal 'agreement' will enable you to raise concerns, suggest ideas, admit mistakes, and challenge ways of working and the ideas of others, including those in authority.
- Strategy where everyone can contribute, learn and challenge constructively, with clear boundaries and appropriate support today and beyond.

Psychological Safety



A) What helps you feel safe to speak honestly in a group?

B) What makes it harder to speak up?

Psychological Safety Agreement

This is safe place for you to learn, contribute and challenge
We agree that the following will be observed and respected throughout the day.

- Questions are welcome?
- Uncertainty can be acknowledged?
- Mistakes are explored for learning?
- Everyone has space to speak?
- Contributions are heard before questions asked?
- Different perspectives are actively invited?
- Ideas can be questioned without attacking people?
- Seniority does not prevent respectful challenge?
- Disagreement is handled with curiosity?
- Sign-up to the Awayday Strategy?

Psychological Mind – Mind the Chimp

The Chimp: The emotional, primitive brain (limbic system) operating on survival instincts, snap judgments, and intense feelings.

The Computer: The storage bank of memories, habits, and beliefs that both the Chimp and Human reference.

The Human: The rational, logical brain (frontal lobe) operating on facts, truth, and long-term consequences.



Sources: The Mind Management – The Chimp Paradox ,Prof Steve Peters, Non-Violent Communication, Marshall Rosenberg

THE THREE PARTS OF YOUR MIND

Three parts working together



THE CHIMP

Emotional Brain
(Limbic System)

- Feels first, thinks later
- Driven by emotions
- Seeks safety
- Wants comfort
- Avoids pain
- Reacts fast



THE HUMAN

Thinking Brain
(Prefrontal Cortex)

- Thinks, analyses, plans
- Looks at long-term
- Weighs up choices
- Solves problems
- Inhibits impulses
- Strives for goals



HOW THEY WORK TOGETHER

The Chimp reacts to what's happening now – fast and automatically.



The Human can step in, think, plan and choose the best response.



The Computer provides the programs, memories and automatic habits that influence both the Chimp and the Human.



THE GOAL



A strong partnership:
The Human leads,
the Chimp feels safe,
and the Computer supports.



THE COMPUTER

Memory Brain
(Cerebellum & Basal Ganglia)

- Stores habits and memories
- Runs automatic programs
- Past learning
- Values and beliefs
- Assumptions

Psychological Mind – Mind the Chimp

Chimp & Computer leads (observation, emotions) the human needs and actions



Human leads(the needs and actions) the chimp feels safe and the computer supports them

Previous Awayday -A journey to Belonging

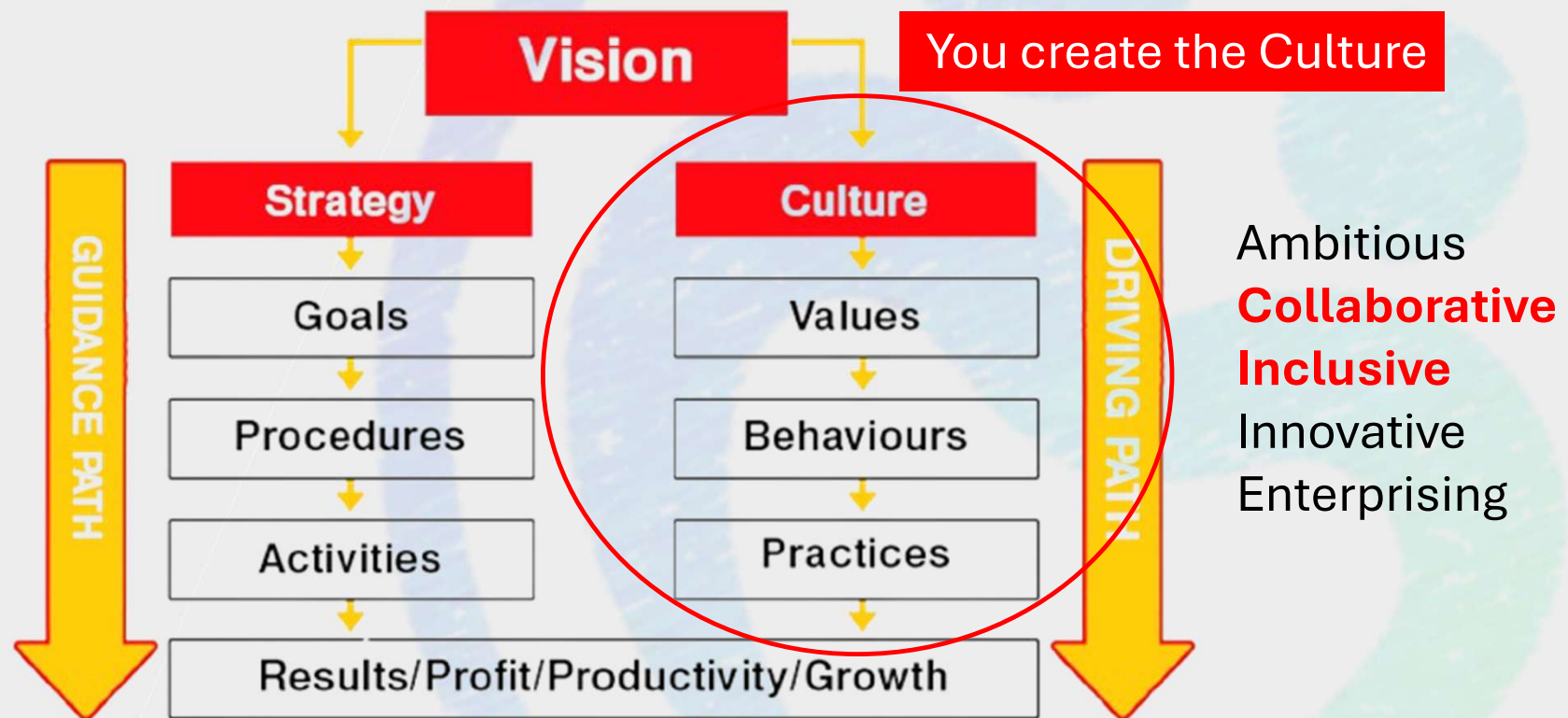
“For us, belonging is about much more than simply including people. It means proactively welcoming, celebrating, supporting, and empowering every voice, so we’re all properly recognised, valued and free to be our true and authentic selves”.

ROCT Equity Diversity Belonging (EDB) Strategy 2024-2027 – standards and competencies.

Lencioni model – Functional/’Dysfunctional teams.

Teamworking & Collaborative working –What Good looks Like.

Strategy and Culture



Torben Rick: Organisational Culture Model

Previous Awayday -A journey to Belonging



Rights
Integrity
Good
Hurt
Trust
Success

RCOT Awayday Worksheet I Turning Our Teamworking Commitments into Action

Purpose: Review each commitment honestly, recognise action already taken and agree specific next steps that will make the commitment achievable and sustainable.

RAG  Red = little or no progress Amber = some progress, not consistent Green = embedded and evidenced <i>Stop = no longer relevant</i>	WHAT HAVE WE DONE? Name specific actions, decisions, conversations or changes—not general intentions.	WHAT DIFFERENCE DID IT MAKE? Identify who experienced the change and the evidence, feedback, behaviour or outcome.	WHAT COMES NEXT? Agree one realistic action, who will lead it, support required and when progress will be reviewed.
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COMMITMENT 1: Teams support new graduates with clear expectations and shared learning opportunities.

A. Assess our current position

RAG	What have we specifically done?	What evidence or impact can we identify? <i>Who experienced the change? What data, feedback, behaviour or outcome demonstrates it?</i>
☐ Red ☐ Amber ☐ Green ☐ Stop		

B. Make the commitment achievable

What is getting in the way? <i>Consider clarity, confidence, time, resources, relationships, systems and authority.</i>	What could we do next? <i>Identify a specific behaviour or action within the team's influence.</i>	What would 'good' look like in practice? <i>Describe an observable, sustainable result—not only an intention.</i>

C. Agree the action

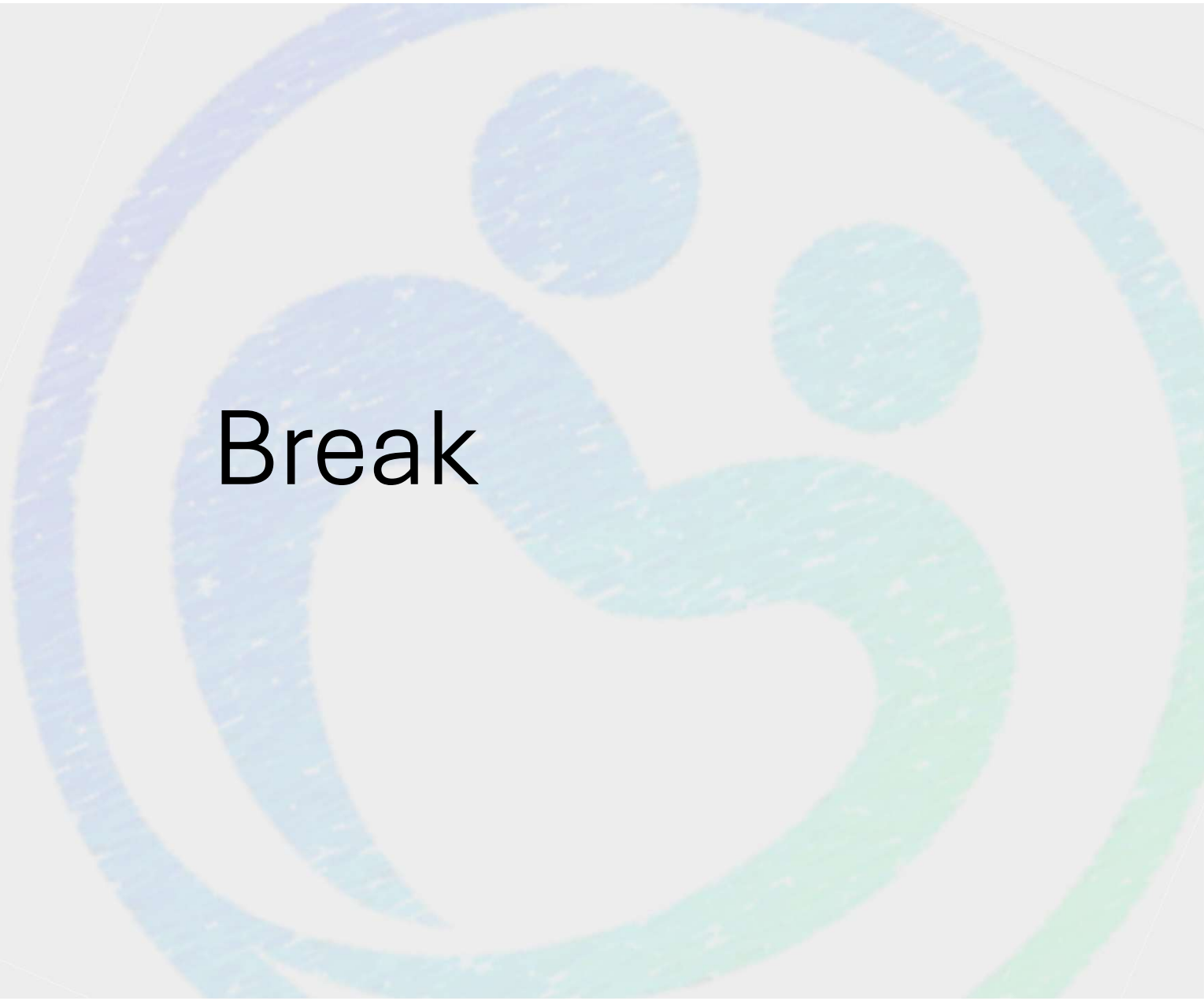
Agreed first action	Owner(s)	Support / decision needed	Review date / success measure

Commitment to Accountability

Hopefully you have had a chance to consider the commitments at an individual level?
Now do the exercise as a group – share what only you feel is comfortable.

- What specifically has been done?
- What's the evidence and impact/s?
- What is preventing further progress?
- What collectively you could do next?
- What “good” would look and feel like for you?
- Who owns, supports and reviews – How will you measure “success”?

See worksheet: Turning Our Teamworking Commitments into Action



Break

UWE Values

1. A nurse champions a new way of working by initiating cross-disciplinary "co-creation" case studies building a secure, digital knowledge-sharing space where OH specialists, disability advisors, and ergonomists.
2. Rather than sticking to standard compliance checklists, an OH advisor pushes the department to reflect on how systemic bias affects clinical assessments.
3. The OH lead establishes a governance panel featuring academic educators, placement supervisors, and external workplace assessors. They facilitate joint workshops to ensure anti-oppressive and anti-racist principle.
4. A team member deliberately fosters a psychologically safe space by openly inviting constructive critique of the current system.
5. An advisor uses internal resources to build an organic peer-mentoring network with clear case-management expectations and coordinate regular, low-cost "shared learning reviews".

Own it First

"Own It First" is an accountability framework designed to eliminate administrative drift and improve user experience during complex, ambiguous, or challenging service requests. Under this principle, the professional who first intercepts an issue takes full, proactive responsibility for its initial triage, documentation, and coordination, rather than immediately passing it to another department. I

It requires an individual to clearly define the problem (Scope), actively investigate and assess its severity (Action), and track it through to a definitive handoff or resolution (Outcome), ensuring the stakeholder is never left stranded or bounced between teams without a clear path forward.

You should be thinking INCLUSION and therefore see each situation through the lens of people with protected characteristics.

Own it First

Define what you found

- Acknowledge quickly.
- Set expectations.
- State clearly that you are investigating the issue and provide a realistic update timeline.
- Avoid passing the issue to another team immediately without performing initial triage.

Do what you can

- Collect steps to reproduce, error logs, user impact, and environmental data.
- Search the internal knowledge base, runbooks, and past resolved tickets.
- Define severity: Classify the issue accurately based on business impact (e.g., P1/Critical vs. P4/Low).

Describe the impact?

- Log a clear summary of all actions taken, resources checked, and specific results to prevent duplicate work.
- Unresolvable issues into a clean template detailing the exact impact, steps already taken, and the specific action required from the next tier.
- Remain the primary point of contact for the stakeholder, keeping them updated until the escalation partner formally accepts and takes over the issue.

Protected Characteristics

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex (biological XX/XY or F/M at birth)
- Sexual orientation



Own It First: Accountability Framework

RCOT Awayday

Purpose. Use the model to slow down the decision, maximise appropriate ownership and escalate only when risk, authority or governance requires it.

DEFINE IT		DO WHAT YOU CAN		DIRECT / ESCALATE
Clarify facts, assumptions, impact, boundaries and the decision actually needed.		Act within role, use guidance, involve relevant colleagues and propose a solution.		Resolve or redirect at the right level; escalate with evidence, a recommendation and a clear ask.
Ambitious take initiative, challenge constructively and maintain high standards	Collaborative work across roles and solve problems with others	Inclusive listen to different perspectives, promote fairness and protect dignity	Innovative test better, sustainable ways of working	Enterprising act resourcefully, turn ideas into practical outcomes and use resources well

Escalation discipline: state the facts, action already taken, remaining risk, your recommendation and the exact decision or support required.

DEFINE IT	DO WHAT YOU CAN	DIRECT / ESCALATE



Own it First - Scenarios

In your groups answer the questions on the scenario presented using the Accountability Framework sheet on your table or the electronic version available on the website.

Mind the Chimp

- Use your Computer brain to execute a strategic plan rather than letting your Chimp burn bridges or suffer in silence:
- Pause the Chimp: Discrimination causes an immediate emotional spike. Take a breath. Do not react instantly.
- Document the Observation: Write down dates, times, exact words, and witnesses immediately.
- Your Human brain needs hard data, especially if you need to escalate the issue legally or via HR.
- Validate the Feeling and Need: Acknowledge to yourself that your feelings are entirely justified because a fundamental human need (fairness, dignity) was violated.
- Decide the Best Level of Action: Constructive Conversation requests can be made directly to the person (if safe), escalated to a third party (HR, a union, an ombudsman), or used to exit the environment strategically.

1 Observation: What actually happened?



- After her assessment, Maya has not been told who will decide or implement the recommended adjustments.
- She has been sent between Occupational Health, Beth and HR.
- The recommended adjustments have not been actioned yet.



Chimp lesson:
Start with the facts, not assumptions.

2 Feelings: The Chimp reacts



Maya's Chimp

- ✗ Frustrated
- Exposed
- Tired of repeating herself
- Anxious and uncertain



Connor's Chimp

- ☹️ Worried about staying in his role
- Doesn't want to break confidentiality
- Feels responsible but limited



Beth's Chimp

- ☹️ Pressured
- Unsure what she can authorise
- Wants to get it right quickly



Chimp lesson:
Our first reaction is fast, emotional and often driven by fear or pressure.

3 Needs: What sits underneath?



Maya needs

- Adjustments to reduce barriers
- A single owner
- Clear next steps and a decision date
- Respect and communication



Connor needs

- Role clarity
- To give advice within his remit
- Maya's consent
- A fair and safe process



Beth needs

- Clear authority
- Information to make a decision
- Support from HR/others
- To help her team and be fair



Chimp lesson:
Behind every feeling is a need. When needs are met, chimps calm down.

4 Human thinking: Stop and work it out

- Check the facts**
Recommendations exist, but no owner, decision date or next step.
- What don't we know?**
Who decides? What can be actioned now? What needs others?
- What matters most?**
Maya's barriers, a fair process, clear ownership and a plan.
- What are our options?**
Warm handover, assign owner, agree actions and timescales.



Chimp lesson:
The human brain helps us pause, think, and choose.

5 Actions: Choose rather than react

Maya will

- ✓ Contribute to the trial
- ✓ Provide feedback
- ✓ Speak up if it isn't working



Connor will

- ✓ Give functional advice (with consent)
- ✓ Summarise recommendations
- ✓ Stay within his professional role



Beth will

- ✓ Move Maya to quieter desk
- ✓ Agree breaks & flexible start (trial)
- ✓ Coordinate HR, IT & Facilities
- ✓ Email plan today
- ✓ Review next week
- ✓ Escalate if needed



Chimp lesson:
Good actions meet needs and are clear, owned and time-bound.

6 Outcome: Chimp + Human working together

- ✓ Maya gets clarity, support and adjustments.
- ✓ Beth owns the decision and coordination.
- ✓ Connor provides expert advice within his role.
- ✓ Everyone understands the next steps and review date.



Chimp lesson:
When we understand each other's needs and choose helpful actions, better outcomes happen.

The Chimp Paradox Explained

What happened?



How do I feel?



What do I need?



What can I do?



What will I choose?



Better outcome



Non Violent Communication/ Constructive Conversations

NVC begins by assuming that we (humans) are all compassionate by nature and that violent strategies—whether verbal or physical—are learned behaviours taught and supported by the prevailing culture. NVC also assumes that we all share the same, basic human needs, and that each of our actions are a strategy to meet one or more of these needs.

Dr. Marshall B. Rosenberg a psychologist was the founder and director of educational services for The Centre for Nonviolent Communication.

Constructive Conversations

Most workplace conflicts are not caused by bad intentions but by unmet needs and poor communication.

Separating observations from assumptions reduces defensiveness.

Understanding feelings and needs helps people move from blame to problem-solving.

Clear requests create practical solutions and strengthen working relationships.

Diverse teams of staff and volunteers are more effective when people feel respected, heard, and valued.

Constructive Conversations

Step 1 - Observation with judgement – Chimp & Computer Sees/ Hears

First thing seen or heard will be from the Chimp & Computer.

Step 2 – Express Feelings – Chimps Emotions vs Human Feels

Make clear how you feel about their behaviour.

Step 3 – Express Need – Human Feels and Chimp Needs

Explain what you need from the person/s

Step 4 – Make a request – Human Actions

This should be based on 'your' needs.



Constructive Conversations

Chimp Reaction: "They are a racist. They are always targeting me. I need to yell back or completely shut down." (Fight-or-flight response).

Observation: "During the team meeting, when I presented my project proposal, my supervisor interrupted me twice and attributed my idea to another colleague five minutes later." (Specific event log).

Feeling: "I feel alienated, frustrated, and disrespected." (Internal emotional naming).

Need: "I need inclusion, psychological safety, and respect for my contributions." (Core workplace needs).

Action/Request: "I will schedule a one-to-one meeting and say: 'In yesterday's meeting, my proposal was reattributed to someone else. Moving forward, would you be willing to ensure that project ownership is accurately recorded in the meeting minutes?'" (Professional boundary setting).

Constructive Conversations

Chimp Judgements

1. Observations vs. Chimp Judgments = Chimp Behaviour is immediate

Makes immediate, exaggerated assumptions, uses absolute language ("always," "never"), and attacks character.

Constructive Conversation Integration: The Human overrides this by stating objective, measurable facts without passing judgement.

Example: Instead of screaming, "You are intentionally ignoring me!" (Chimp), you say, "You did not reply to my last two emails" (Human Observation).

Constructive Conversations

Chimp Reactions

2. Feelings vs. Chimp Reactions:

Expresses itself through destructive emotional outbursts, defensiveness, or aggression.

The Human identifies and names the actual underlying emotion without blaming others for causing it.

Example: Instead of slamming a door (Chimp), you state, "I feel overwhelmed and anxious" (Human Feeling).

Constructive Conversations

Requests vs. Chimp Demands

Chimp Behaviour: Issues ultimatums, threatens, or demands submission, punishing others if they refuse.

Constructive Conversation Integration: The Human makes a specific, actionable, and negotiable request that leaves room for dialogue.

Example: Instead of yelling, "Fix this right now!" (Chimp), you ask, "Would you be willing to review this project with me for 10 minutes?" (Human Request).

Constructive Conversations

3. Needs vs. Chimp Strategies

Chimp uses manipulation, guilt, or territorial dominance to feel safe or valued.

Constructive Conversation Integration: The Human recognizes that all Chimp outbursts are just distorted, poorly expressed universal human needs.

Example: Instead of demanding compliance (Chimp), you identify the core driver: "I have a need for collaboration and clarity" (Human Need).

Constructive Conversations

1. Observation Chimp Reaction: Rage, catastrophic thinking, and impulsive behaviour vs objective, measurable data.

"They passed me over because I'm a young woman. They hate me here. I'm going to quit on the spot or sue them all. I met all quarterly performance KPIs for two years, but a male colleague with fewer years of experience was selected for the director role."

2. Human Feelings “ “I feel demoralised, invisible, and deeply hurt."

3. Human Needs: "I have a fundamental need for equity, recognition, and professional growth based on merit." (Universal human values).

4. Action/Request: "I will request a formal feedback meeting with HR. I will ask: 'Can you provide the specific competency matrix used for this decision, and outline the exact steps required for me to achieve the next promotion?'" (Constructive, documented step)

Constructive Conversations

Human Need to Manage the i Chimp – Objective Human

Give yourself a 10-second pause to let the emotional chemical surge pass. Do not let your Chimp speak.

Translate the Chimp: Listen to your internal emotional screaming (or the other person's outburst) and translate it into Constructive Conversation (What is the observation, feeling, and need here?)

Speak from the Human: Construct your actual spoken response using the script: "When I see [Observation], I feel [Feeling] because I need [Need]. Would you be willing to [Request]?"

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Thank You

