

Module 4 - Step 3: A Win: Win Situation - Audio Transcript

How to develop Win: Win situations - For me, the best and the simplest method to achieve a win: win situation is just to listen and empathise. These are your 'soft skills' where you get to trust your instincts; then reach for your Menopause Tool Box! However, if you need something more formal...

Here's a strategy that you may find useful and which can be utilised with the Personal Action Plan. It encourages acceptance of responsibility while providing support and advice.

1. Agree and specify Desired Results

- Focus on the contribution that will be made by all parties (this may include a line manager)
- Address the *needs* of everyone involved
- Understand what constitutes a 'win' for all concerned - what is the desired outcome?
 - Make sure any Agreement of how to reach the outcome is in alignment:
employee: manager, whoever else is involved

2. Set the Guidelines:

- Agree the structure and overall time scale and follow-up with agreed dates
- Be aware of the "watch out for" situation, the known failure points (things not to do) - for instance, a member of staff may be showing a tendency to 'give up', encourage them to seek out support if faltering in any way. You will come to realise your own criteria where people do not seem to be completing what they have agreed to do, for instance, with their Personal Action Plan, as you utilise your own resources and experience
- Agree levels of initiative
- Set them
- Set the monitoring procedure up on internal systems

A clear understanding of guidelines avoids many problems.

3. Identify available resources - this could be any of the Tools in the Menopause Tool Box but I think it's always good to start with Traffic Lights and the Symptom list. There may be further training required (for a line manager, for instance) but this can be flagged up as a reference point for future discussion. It is important to identify not only the resources available but also how to access them, how to work with others who use the same resources and what the limits are.

One of the most overlooked resources is you! Especially as you may be in a leadership, management, or supervisory role.

4. Define Accountability: Accountability deals with how we can tell what we are doing. It creates integrity. Here the details of accountability are spelled out, as well as how the results will be measured.

5.

- The criteria may be measurable, observable, or discernible.
- Without question, the toughest part of setting up this type of win:win agreement with staff, is creating a clear and comprehensive set of desired results
- In the process of accountability, the individual evaluates herself against the desired results specified in the agreement. Helpful in the evaluation process is the process for 360 degree feedback, which the individual can request from all those involved. This feedback would be given directly to the individual and noted on file.

6. Determine the Consequences: Look at whether or not absenteeism or productivity levels improve. What happens if there is no change? It is important to identify both negative and positive consequences

In other words, you develop a situation where both parties understand what is at stake: “This is what you expect from me; this is what I expect from you. Let’s meet in the middle and do it.” The result of this is that staff feels supported.

Frustration is essentially a function of expectation. Clarifying interdependent expectations up front does a great deal to contributing to the ultimate quality of life at the end of the exercise. Doing things in this way allows you to get all the issues out on the table before they cause problems - you seek creative solutions rather than tip-toe-ing round the issues and live with the negative consequences of unresolved issues and unexpressed feelings. Instead, you use joint resources to address and resolve differences to the benefit of all.

The first step is to really understand. As you approach the road to mutual understanding you may find it useful to address the following:

- **What is the problem from the other person’s point of view.** Really listen with intent to understand and not to reply. Try and get inside their head and think how they are thinking. Then encourage the other person to do the same.
 - What are the key issues (not viewpoints) involved? Then look at each others viewpoints to make sure there is complete understanding. Look at the problem together and identify the issues that need to be resolved.
 - What results would constitute a fully acceptable solution?
 - What would be a ‘win’ for you and a ‘win’ for the other person? Put them both on the table and discuss how to achieve an acceptable ‘win’.

In this way you are laying the foundation for covering the whole subject and again, staff feel valued and supported.

Don’t rule out *‘brainstorming’* a situation. It’s often helpful for the member of staff to look at this from a different perspective as their own has become clouded or fixed. Try to create a list of possible options that would meet the criteria that has been set up.

Example 1: Supposing a member of staff is at that stage where they are feeling unable to cope, everything is getting on top of them, *‘everyone’* is making demands on their time... When you consider this scenario, you’re not thinking for either/or, but you’re looking for an alternative solution that will suit everyone’s needs:

- **What is the problem from the other point of view?** As you listen, you find that various other symptoms are coming into play - they may relate to menopause, they may not, or the other person does not recognise the possibilities: broken sleep, sweating, forgetfulness, for instance and she hasn't mentioned any of this to anyone for fear of looking foolish or not wanting anyone to think she can't do her job properly. You have identified that they are not shirking but they are feeling like a victim and resort to anger rather than discuss the issues, or rather her perception of the issues. After thoroughly exploring the situation, you share your staff member's situation with your own concerns. With all the viewpoints on the table, you are ready to work together to identify issues and find solutions
 - You may find Menopause Symptoms and Menopause Traffic Lights useful to help identify or pinpoint mood swings, for instance.
 - As you communicate openly, you recognise that this problem is a symptom of a much larger series of problems. Key issues might include such things as:
 - relationships with managers
 - relationships with colleagues
 - relationship situations as home, brought into work

What would define a solution that's acceptable to both of you? It's a good idea to work on both short term and long term solutions, if required.

How to get started: If you have not already done so, this is a good time to identify up to three symptom challenges affecting this member of staff - this may require the member of staff to go away and think about it. Schedule another session to discuss and it would be a good idea to mention that from the 'three' symptoms or challenges affecting that person, then you would like to focus on just one. So get them to write down three symptoms and then highlight the main culprit and start brainstorming that one. Discuss solution ideas from your own Tool Box and your own experience; combine or eliminate until you reach a proposed solution that could be monitored.

Agree a date to follow-up and compare results from both points of view. If it is seen to be working, then a 'well-done' pat on the back would not be out of place. We all, after all, seek approval!

The point is that you are working together on the problem and this resolves any isolation the member of staff is feeling. This is a valuable use of time for both parties, a joint resolution, a win: win situation.

It may or may not be necessary to look at other symptom challenges that are affecting her working life but in my view, the member of staff will now be understanding what is happening, she's peri-menopausal and that means her working life and home life can be affected BUT issues can be resolved through discussion and collaboration - understanding from both sides and what her options are - she could also try this at home.

As you work together to understand viewpoints, identify issues and create other solutions, you both realise you have the foundations for creating a win:win agreement.

Remember: seek first to understand. You can't make your point until you restate her point to her own satisfaction.

When you listen openly and empathetically to the underlying needs and the fears and the feelings of your staff member on such a delicate issue, it is very powerful. You both realise how judgemental each of you has the potential to be and that by working together you can come up with ideas and solutions and some alternative ways to resolve the issues at hand. You may come up with new insights into prevention, education and resolution of what has been happening in this particular instance.

Your experience and understanding will grow and new solutions will evolve and you can always come back to us when things look as if they are going pear-shaped!

The spirit of true empathy is the foundation of effective synergy. It transcends negative energy and creates openness and understanding and unites people in problem solving. The key issue becomes the quality of the relationship between the people involved and their ability to communicate and synergise with each other in seeking solutions.

People judge themselves. Their evaluation is not just a function of measurement but also of discernment. People are much more aware of the issues that affect their performance and success.

Cultivate the conditions of Empowerment

Empowerment can't be 'given'; it has to be grown. It's a matter of nurturing the conditions that create it. The more these conditions are present, the more empowered the culture will be.

Somebody once asked me: *Is there something you feel you could do to make a difference?* And the answer is a resounding "yes"

You are now in a position to **empower other individuals** within your organisation and to significantly increase their performance capability just by knowing something about menopause!

Good luck! I look forward to hearing how you put this into practice.