Feedback training exercises

Feedback training exercises give people a rehearsal before a real conversation. This page has six fictional role-play scenarios in three rounds of practice, an observer sheet for the third person in each trio, and a structure for putting feedback into words.

60 minutes | 6–18 participants | Online and adaptable in person

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The outcome

Participants practise describing an observation, checking the other person’s view and agreeing a practical next step.

Before the session

- Create trios with speaker, receiver and observer roles. Use fictional examples to avoid turning practice into a live performance discussion.
- Explain that this is a practice activity, not an assessment of competence. Participants can observe or write instead of role-playing.
- Share all six scenarios and the observer sheet in advance. Prepare a private way for participants to raise a concern and a clear route back from breakout rooms.

Included in this kit

A facilitator run of show, participant worksheets with real tables, reference tables, debrief questions, adaptation notes and a follow-up plan. Use the editable Word copy to tailor examples and prompts before delivery.

Original material by Superglue. Timings are suggestions; adjust them to your participants. This resource has not been independently evaluated.

What is inside

The participant sheets come first so you can print one page per person. Your own facilitator section follows them.

- Scenario cards — Print one page per trio and cut along the table borders.
- Observer sheet — One page per observer.
- Facilitator run of show, reference tables, debrief questions and adaptation notes — for you, after the participant sheets.

Scenario cards

Print one page per trio and cut along the table borders. Each card holds one fictional situation and a line for your own note.

Scenario	Situation	What to practise	My note
1. Partial information	A project update reached the planning meeting without the figures another team was still preparing.	Naming what is not ready yet, and agreeing a sooner handover.	
2. The interruption	A colleague interrupted twice while a decision was being explained.	Describing the interruption without judging intent.	
3. The missing owner	A handover document omitted a named owner.	Saying what was missing, and where ownership will be recorded.	
4. Late review comments	Comments arrived after the work had been sent on.	Raising timing as a process question, and proposing cover.	
5. The decision that moved	A recorded decision changed after a side conversation.	Checking what you understood, and asking where changes are recorded.	
6. Asking for help late	A colleague asked for help twenty minutes before a known deadline.	Saying what the late request cost, and agreeing an earlier signal.	

Observer sheet

One page per observer. Write exact words where you can; leave the rest blank rather than guessing.

What to record	Notes
Exact words for the situation	
Behaviour described without interpretation	
Effect stated in the first person	
The request, and what was offered	
What the speaker checked	
What the listener committed to	
The next step both people accepted	

Facilitator run of show

1 Introduce the practice | 8 minutes

Explain the four moves: describe a specific event, explain its effect, ask for the other person's perspective, and agree a next step. Say: "We are practising curiosity and clarity. You do not need a perfect script." Avoid presenting this as a validated assessment or a guaranteed conflict-resolution method.

2 Demonstrate and notice | 7 minutes

Model: "In yesterday's handover, the due date was missing. I could not tell which request to start first. What was happening from your side?" The receiver explains a competing constraint. Together agree a small change. Ask what made the opening specific and where the speaker left room for correction.

3 Practise in three rounds | 24 minutes

Each eight-minute round has one minute to prepare, four minutes to talk and three minutes for reflection. Rotate roles so everyone has one turn as speaker, receiver and observer. Use a different fictional scenario each time. Observers describe words or actions they noticed rather than rating personalities.

4 Compare learning | 10 minutes

Return to the main room. Invite patterns, not details about another participant. Ask which question opened the conversation and where an assumption crept in. List helpful wording. Discuss how the speaker could check the accuracy of an observation before giving feedback.

5 Draft a transfer plan | 6 minutes

Individually choose a low-stakes future conversation. Write the observation, effect and opening question. Do not include private names or sensitive details in the shared document. Identify what information you would need to check before the real conversation.

6 Close and make room for questions | 5 minutes

Invite each person to share one phrase they want to practise, or pass. Remind the group that serious misconduct or an unsafe power relationship needs a suitable organisational process, not simply a better feedback sentence.

Reference tables

The four-part feedback structure

Part	What it holds	Example sentence
Situation	When and where it happened	In Tuesday's planning call, when we got to the delivery dates,
Behaviour	What you observed, without interpretation	you said the estimate was wrong before I had finished the numbers.
Effect	What happened for you or the work	I lost the thread and we left the date unresolved.
Request	What you would like next time, and an offer	Could you flag your concern after I finish, and I will bring the numbers first?

Debrief and next steps

Questions for reflection

- Which wording described behaviour without labelling the person?
- Where did asking a question change your understanding?
- Was the next step explicit and feasible for both people?

Adapt the session

- With four participants, use two pairs and replace the observer with a written self-reflection after each round.

- For multilingual groups, allow preparation in a preferred language and extra thinking time. Keep the scenario details simple.
- If role-play feels uncomfortable, write two possible openings and discuss their likely effects instead.

After the session

Invite participants to reflect privately after a low-stakes real conversation: what did I check, what did I learn, and what was agreed? Do not request recordings or confidential details as evidence.

Questions people ask

How do I run feedback role-play without it feeling awkward?

Use fictional scenarios, keep rounds to eight minutes, and put everyone in a trio so one person always observes. Nobody practises a real grievance about somebody in the room.

How many practice rounds fit in an hour?

Three rounds of eight minutes with a short debrief after each. The run of show on this page uses 24 minutes for the three rounds inside a 60-minute session.

What should the observer do?

Write down exact words, the question the speaker asked, and the next step both people accepted. Observers report what they saw, not what they thought the speaker meant.

Do these exercises use real workplace conflicts?

No. All six scenarios are invented for practice. Use the structures with a real situation only in private, with the person concerned, and with support if the topic is sensitive.

Use and sharing

Free to use and adapt in your own training sessions, including paid client work. Do not resell or redistribute the unmodified download as a standalone product. Share the resource page instead.