

Builder & Barrier Group Discussion:

- 1) With your group choose one of the Barriers and its Builder. Then share your understanding of the definitions with each other.

- 2) Can you remember a situation where another person (co-worker, partner, friend, supervisor or your own parent) used a barrier behaviour with you?
How did you feel or behave in this situation?
How would you prefer to be treated?

- 3) Can you remember an “example” of a barrier behaviour that you used with another person? Who was it used with? What was the situation? Where did it take place? What happened?

- 4) Using the same example, how could you have communicated differently using the builder behaviour? Give examples of what you could have said.

*Remember: if you can stop a Barrier behaviour you will see communication improve dramatically.
Then later, if you want, you can try adding a Builder technique.*

Builders Scenarios to practice

Remember, if you don't relate to this exact scenario, think of something that happens in your own home and apply the Builder Communication techniques.

TRY CHECKING (not Assuming)

Instead of assuming you know what happened or what they should do, try Checking Out their ideas.

Situation: Your child has 3 tests and a project due next week. Have a conversation to check out how they plan to get their work done and still have fun on the weekend. Try not to assume the best way.

TRY EXPLORING (not Rescuing or Explaining)

Instead of Rescuing (giving them the answer) try Exploring what they think happened.

Situation: Your teenage daughter wears her favourite thin dress shoes when she walks to school on a cold and rainy day, and is upset they are stained. Try to 'explore' what happened.

TRY ENCOURAGING or INVITING (instead of over-directing)

Invite Cooperation—find out how they would like to get it done and what suits them.

Situation: Your teen has agreed in theory that everyone should do one chore once a week to help the home run smoothly. Collaborate on a plan of which chore they will do and generally when.

TRY CELEBRATING (instead of too high expectations)

Acknowledge effort; celebrate small steps in the right direction. Remember: Mistakes are a chance to learn.

Situation: All year your teen has been frustrated by her math teacher's expectations and amount of homework. She "says" she is trying harder in class this term. She brings home her report card and her grade went up from 72% to 75%.

TRY RESPECTING THEIR AGE & STAGE (don't be "adultist!")

Instead of setting expectations based on who they "should be"—try acknowledging their age and stage of learning and making mistakes.

You insist your son or daughter comes to a family event when they would rather go out with friends. When they arrive (late) they are wearing clothes you consider inappropriate.

