

# DIALOGUE INHIBITORS AND ENHANCERS

**Inhibitors** are behaviors that tend to sabotage good dialogue. Inhibitors evoke defensiveness, less listening, less honest responses, and in the end produce less partnership & trust, while rarely changing anyone's opinions or actions.

**Enhancers** are behaviors that facilitate effective communication, good dialogue, and building shared understanding.

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## Enhancer #1: AUTHENTICITY

- We are in touch with what we really think and feel.
- We communicate our authentic experience in appropriate ways,
- We include the feelings we may have, in addition to our thoughts and perceptions.
- We are resonant with and serving our core purpose. (and/or the collective purpose to which you are both committed)

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## Inhibitor #1: INCONGRUENCE

- We are not fully in touch with what we think and feel.
- There is a gap between what's going on inside and what and how we communicate.
- We do not share what we feel.
- We are cut off from our deeper purpose.

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## Enhancer #2: CLEAR INTENT

- We know what we are wanting from the interaction.
- We communicate clearly what we are seeking:
  - simply to be heard
  - to understand the other's experience
  - to problem solve
  - etc.
- We make clear requests that are:
  - actionable
  - within the others power to meet
  - requests, not demands

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## Inhibitor #2: LACK OF CLEAR PURPOSE

- We're not sure what we are wanting from the interaction.
- We give unclear or mixed messages about what we seek from the other.
- We make no requests, or they are unskillful.

**Enhancer #3: OPENESS**

- While we may have strong opinions and feelings, we remember that we don't know everything.
- We appreciate that each person has their own perspective on the "truth."
- We understand that incorporating a diversity of views creates greater wisdom and better solutions.
- We therefore approach interactions with a spirit of inquiry, even curiosity.
- We make no assumptions about other peoples' motives, intentions or inner feelings.
- Our purpose is to learn.

**Inhibitor #3: CERTAINTY**

- We believe and act as if our view of reality is the only right one.
- We communicate an inherent lack of respect for the opinions of others.
- We are not seeking further information, because we seem to believe that we know everything that we need to know.
- Our certainty even extends to believing that we know the motives, intentions and inner feelings of others.
- Our sole purpose is to convince.

**Enhancer #4: EXPLORING CONTRIBUTION**

- We understand that each of us contributed to creating any give situation.
- These contributions may be active or passive.
- We seek to broaden our understanding of our own contribution, even while wanting others to take responsibility for their contributions.
- We seek dialogue that will advance our learning and ability to deal with the given situation.

**Inhibitor #4: BLAME**

- Our focus is completely on what the other did wrong.
- We fail to acknowledge our own contributions to the situation.
- Our tone is accusatory.
- Our sole purpose is to get the other person to agree that that are at fault.

**Enhancer #5: CONTACT**

- We are present with those to whom we are in communication.
- We listen deeply.
- Even while we are speaking, we remain aware of whom we are talking to.
- We communicate at a pace and in ways that are generally in tune with the person to whom we are speaking.

**Inhibitor #5: SELF-ABSORPTION**

- We are distracted, or preoccupied with our own experience.
- We have little attention for others in the interaction.
- We have difficulty listening.
- When speaking, we maintain little awareness of whom we are speaking to.
- Other people in interaction do not have the experience of being attended to or respected.