A GUIDE TO FEEDBACK
Additional Handout for Leading Well with Others

SEQUENCE	EXPLANATION
1. 'When you...'	Start with a 'When you...' statement that describes the behaviour without judgment, exaggeration, labelling, attribution or motives. Just state the facts as specifically as possible.
2. 'I feel...'	Tell how their behaviour affects you.
3. 'Because ...'	Explain the effects of the behaviour
4. 'I realise...'	Empathise with the other person's situation, interests or viewpoint
5. 'I would like...'	Describe the change you want the other person to consider...
6. 'Because...'	...and why you think the change will alleviate the problem.
7. 'What do you think?'	Listen to the other person's response. Be prepared to discuss options and compromise on a solution.

How the feedback will work: when you (do this), I feel (this way), because (of such and such). I realise from your point of view (doing X), but I would like (you to do X) because I think it will accomplish (Y). What do you think?

Example: 'When you are late for meetings, I get angry because I think it is wasting the time of all the other team members and we are never able to get through our agenda items. I realise you don't intend to be late but I would like you to consider finding some way of planning your schedule that lets you get to these meetings on time. That way we can be more productive at the meetings and we can keep to our tight schedules. What do you think?'

Watch out for...

- **Don't use labels** Be clear, specific and unambiguous. Words like 'immature', 'unprofessional', 'irresponsible' and 'prejudiced' are labels we attach to sets of behaviours. Describe the behaviour and drop the labels. For example, say, 'You missed the deadline we had all agreed to meet' rather than 'You're being irresponsible and I want to know what you're going to do about it!'
- **Don't exaggerate** Be exact. To say 'You're always late for deadlines' is probably untrue and, therefore, unfair. It invites the receiver to argue with the exaggeration rather than respond to the real issue.
- **Don't be judgmental** Or at least don't use the rhetoric of judgment. Words like 'good', 'better', 'bad', 'worst' and 'should' place you in the role of a controlling parent. This invites the person receiving your comments to respond as a child. When that happens, and it will most of the time, the possibility of constructive feedback is lost.
- **Speak for yourself** Don't refer to absent, anonymous people. Avoid such references as 'A lot of people here don't like it when you...' Don't allow yourself to be a conduit for other people's complaints. Instead, encourage others to speak for themselves.
- **Restrict your feedback to things you know for certain** Don't present your opinions as facts. Speak only of what you saw and heard and what you feel and want.
- **Help people hear and accept your compliments when giving positive feedback** Many people feel awkward when told good things about themselves and will fend off the compliment ('Oh, it wasn't that big a deal. Others worked on it as much as I did.'). Sometimes they will change the subject. It may be important to reinforce the positive feedback and help the person hear it, acknowledge it, and accept it.