



Welcome to the **Communication Toolkit Sessions.**

Where you will introduce
a chameleon and take your
lovely workshop participants
on a visit to the house that
communication built.



The check-in:

(10 mins)

You will need a small piece of paper for each person and enough pens for everyone.

Invite each person to write down on a piece of paper anything they are worried about or distracted by. Invite them to fold up this paper and put it in their pocket. Reassure them they are the only person who gets to see this note. They won't be sharing it. Remind them they can come back to anything that's worrying them at the end of your time together. But that this is a way to get everything out of their mind for a while.

Then tell the group you are going to ask them to complete two sentences. Choose two from the following list to help people a chance to be reflective and intentional about the space.

- 1 Today I feel...
- 2 I engage best when...
- 3 I am grateful for...
- 4 The world looks better when...
- 5 Today I will...
- 6 Today I need...

Don't forget to join in.



The values continuum:

(20 mins)

Make one end of the room “strongly agree” and the other end “strongly disagree.” You could even write this up on big pieces of paper and blue tack at either end of the space to make it easy.



Tip: use the diagonal if the room is not very wide, to create a decent length for the continuum.

Explain to participants that they should stand somewhere on the line between these points of strongly agree – strongly disagree – to show where they stand in relation to a set of statements you will make. No judgement, no wrong answers, just their response. It helps if you literally walk from one end to the other as you explain.

It’s good to start with gentle statements about preferences (e.g. toast) and then to move to deeper beliefs (e.g. marriage, honesty). You can substitute with your own examples but the statements below offer a well-tested start point.

- 1 Toast is best done very lightly.
- 2 Alcohol is a great way to relax.
- 3 You should always tell the truth when a friend asks if their bum looks big in that.
- 4 Marriage is a promise forever
- 5 If you’d otherwise be late for a really vital meeting and you’ve tried everything else, it’s probably okay to use an empty disabled car park

For each statement, facilitate discussion by asking people at either end of the continuum to express why they chose to stand where they are standing. Make sure that everyone in the room gets to speak at least once across the different continuums. As a facilitator, stay curious and express interest in people’s opinions. Be careful not to pass judgment on people’s choices, and reflect back what they have told you.

“so, for you, marriage is...”

“Have I got this right, you think that...”

When you have facilitated four to five statements, ask your group what the exercise is demonstrating, to see if they can identify that the continuum is related to values – and how we all have different values. Ask if they felt the room change when people connected to what really mattered to them. Explore the way two values can appear and then one ‘wins’ over the other – showing what the deeper values driving decisions are – such as maintaining a relationship versus honesty [does my bum look big...].



Group note: Explain that this is why your values matter, because **they are decision-making filters that drive every action a person takes.**

Write this up on the white board.

Connecting the company's values to thinking and behaviours:

(20 mins)

You can write up the values on the whiteboard (or hand out copies of 'living our values' – which is appended)

Now you will be asking the group to connect to the businesses organisational values, and how these are designed to anchor the business to keep to its purpose and serve the interests of all the different parts of the company's **eco-system**. The intention is for **individual** employees to understand and feel invested in what the brand stands for:

Ask the group to split into pairs and assign each of them a different value. If you only have 2 pairs give them 2 each. If less run it as a group exercise. Ask them to discuss what they think their value means and what their value is supposed to help people think and do. Give them five minutes to do this.

Now ask the same pairs to come up with **three concrete examples** from their own work or life, of something they do which is true to the brand value/s they are looking at. Give them five minutes to do this.

It is important that the examples are specific, and then shared as a larger group – the intention is to collaboratively build knowledge about how the brand values can be living and breathing day to day within the organisation – and how they often map well into our own values. And that they should – we hire for that! Allow each group to feed back how they understood their value. **Celebrate great examples**. Take 10 minutes to do this.



Part two:
The Chameleon



Introduce the Chameleon:

(15 mins)

How can we manage well when things get tense? Ninety-eight percent of the time, we do very well handling all sorts of situations – but we are in a dynamic ecosystem of systems, processes, stakeholders and customers - where uncertainty can be high, and challenging situations, and sometimes conflict, are an inevitable part of what we do. Examples: **Use a couple of common examples from life – such as traffic – or the workspace, such as a cross customer call.**

Introduce the idea that one thing we can learn to do well is to stay really calm, even in moments of high stress.

Tell them that today they will meet a chameleon, who can help them stay anchored when things get tense. But first they will be doing an exercise to introduce the new tool and its central idea. Set up another continuum:

For your Continuum, use these examples or substitute/add your own:

1 Terrible food

You're at a restaurant and your food was terrible. Confront the staff or don't say anything and don't go back. Identify that one side of the room is for those who'd 100% confront running through to the other side which is 100% - don't say anything

2 Tension at work

When your co-workers starts trying to rope you into a really tense heated debate - Do you get immediately involved? Or do you want to get away and make an excuse to avoid it?

3 Stepping in to help

When you see someone you care about being given a really hard time by someone else and you know it's not fair. It's pretty aggro. Do you step in and get involved or not.

Each time, invite people to stand where they would feel most likely to be on the continuum. Facilitate a discussion about where people are placing themselves and how they would feel in that scenario. See if people can identify the continuum as differentiated by those who step towards conflict and pull away. Describe the zone where people rise up as 'RED' and where people retreat or shy away as more 'BLUE'. Anyone who is in the middle of the continuum, who might seem to be even-handed about the situation, we can call pretty neutral – or 'AMBER'.

Be sure to talk about this as being based on their survival response – the unconscious 'autonomic nervous system' at work, and that it is an involuntary reaction, so there is no 'wrong' way to respond. It's just how we have evolved, though our own physiology and our learning. For example, a child whose parents always said : be careful, versus a child whose parents always said: go on have ago...

Explain that we are not fixed either - in different scenarios, we will be at different points on the BLUE/RED scale. For example, a usually very BLUE person might go RED to protect their child or a someone they care about.

Explore this with them. Offering the important idea that a strong enough reason can always move us. Tell them to hold that thought.



Note: again, like the values continuum – notice how different people are.

What are RED and BLUE and what is AMBER:

(10 mins)

Ask how participants might know if they are heading into RED or BLUE. Briefly record the examples they come up with on a whiteboard as they do – and use a couple of the ones below as thought-starters if needed.

How might it feel in your body?

- Stomach gets tight (digestion shuts down)
- Throat gets dry
- Breathing gets shallow
- Start to sweat

What emotions might you start to feel?

- Overwhelmed
- Frightened
- Intense anger or frustration
- Sense of emotions rising but repressing them

What behaviours might you start to exhibit?

- Raised voice
- Start pushing your point of view
- Trying to be right/win
- Trying to avoid embarrassment



Group note: explain again that the way we respond in tense situations is set through a lifetime of experience. It's not a choice, it's a less conscious part of our brain jumping into the drivers seat. But when it does all the blood goes out of our brain and into the fight or flight response. So once that happens, are we doomed?

No. The good news is, **you can reboot your system.** And yes, you should definitely try this at home.



Introducing the Chameleon's Magic Trick:

(15 mins)

We are all chameleons, we can **always** move back into AMBER. If you recognise your body going into RED or BLUE, you can override the response and get the blood back to the thinking part of your brain using the Chameleon idea. It's Balanced Wisdom in action. How? **You perform the magic trick of asking yourself an anchoring question.**

What do I really want from this situation?

For myself, for others, for the relationship?

This question is your ANCHOR, and making yourself genuinely connect with it – thinking about it seriously - will actually force your mental processing to kick into gear. And get you back into amber.

Link this back to the shift that can take place for a blue person when someone they care about is under threat. They can move out of their preferred zone. Your big question is exactly like that – it can move you into amber.

How it works: Asking yourself a hard question about what **really matters** to you right now actually forces the blood back to the front of your brain – as you think – and it is that which takes you into AMBER.

In pairs ask people in the room to tell each other about a time they have gone into RED or BLUE, when they might have used this trick to find their way back to AMBER. Ask them to think about what the answer to the Magic Trick (what they really want) might have been in that situation now they look back on it.

Give them 5 minutes.

Facilitators should make sure they have an example up their sleeve from their own life if the room is super quiet.

Get the group to then share their thoughts on how this tool might help in the high stress of busy days in their work. 5 Minutes.

It can help here to say that you can get to AMBER with a couple of deep breaths but, sometimes space is required to get to AMBER. Share that one of the trainers developed a personal rule that if they felt they were outside of AMBER they would very politely find space – go away and process what they were thinking and feeling [sometimes with a trusted friend to help them get perspective] to their big question about what really mattered and then have the conversation later. They didn't have an argument with their partner for 12 years using this technique at home.



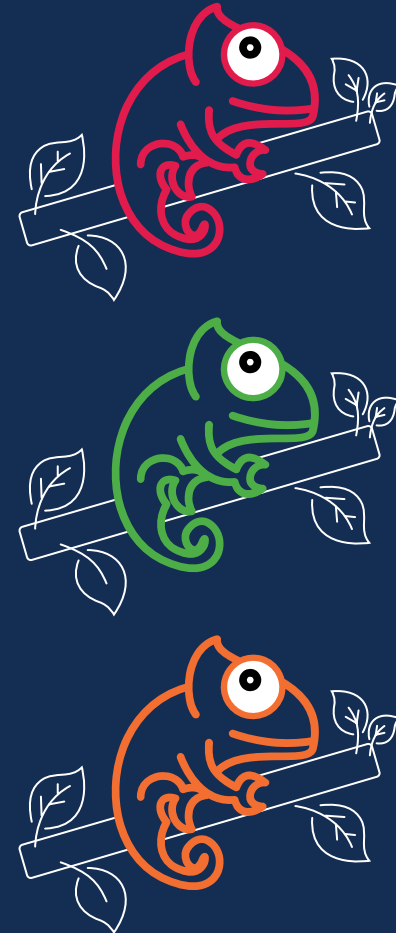
Where are we going?

(5 mins)

Explain that so far today we have been introduced to a new tool: a simple but amazingly effective tool for keeping your cool - the Chameleon, a basic tool for managing stress and good communication.

Explain the next session is an introduction to the second tool for today - the house - a simple framework for great communication - for both short term relationships.

Explain this is a first introduction and more training will follow.



Part three:

**The house that great
communication built**



Building Great Communication Outcomes:

(5 mins)

You need paper and coloured pens for everyone.
Preferably large A3 sheets of paper.

Ask them to write a list or even to draw a picture and use words to illustrate it – about what they think makes for really great communication (5 mins)
– tell them that there are no wrong answers – you are tapping into their collective wisdom about what works.



Collective Knowledge Sharing:

(30 mins)

Allow each person a chance to explain their version of great communication to the group. Give them a couple of minutes to unpack/share their thinking. As you go round, record the key points from each person on the white board. Try to highlight things that come close to the house framework.

Some good things to watch for:

Right time, right place, right headspace.

Always two sets of stories, they will be different and the job is to connect them.

What you're trying to achieve – motive - needs to be transparent and shared.

Solid facts are important.

Sometimes you need to stop and **collect facts** to progress.

Open minds

Fully transparent **not manipulating**.

Solutions that are right for everyone involved.

Clarity. Making sure that everyone knows what will be done, by when, by who and how, and when any follow up will take place.



Reveal the House Framework:

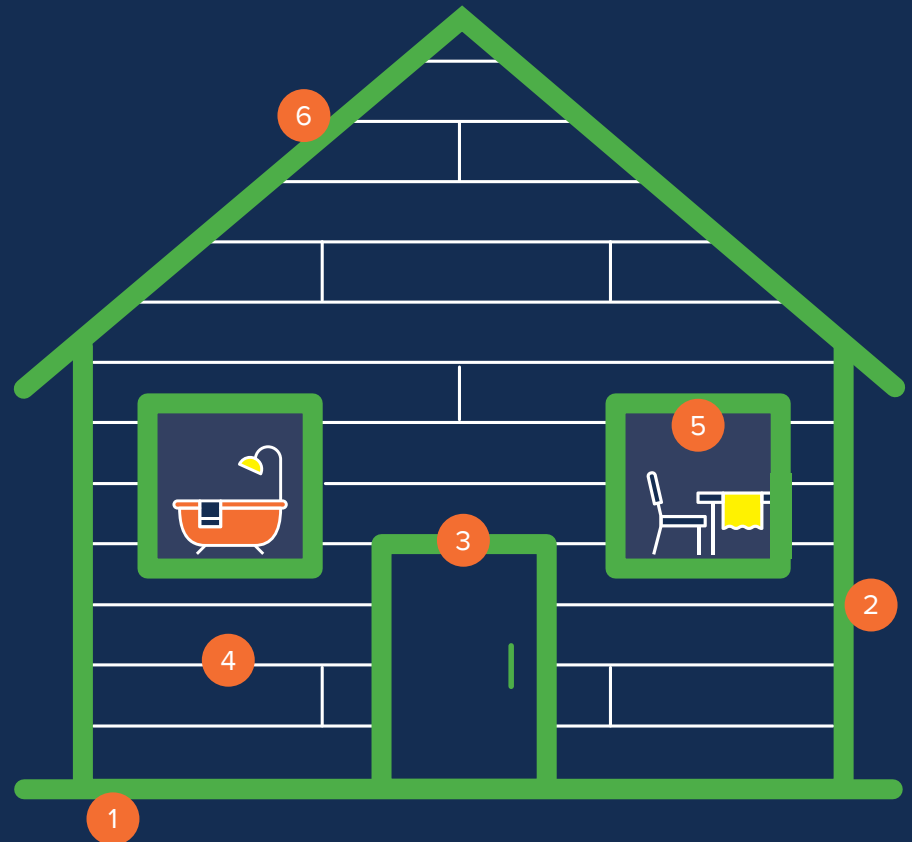
(20 mins)

Draw the diagram of the great communication build framework on the board as you explain it. Below is a quick walk through the framework, to introduce the ideas. The intention is not to overwhelm them, but to visually 'place' each idea.

You will draw in the **Solid Ground** line and the **house**:

Your house notes: When we think about what makes for awesome communication our house can be a great model. Here's how it works:

- 1 Set yourself up on solid ground – the right place to start because it is well anchored in right time, right place right headspace.
- 2 Remember – you have to have two outside walls - you outside one wall and the other person outside the other – representing the fact that there are always two sets of stories, they will be different and the job is to connect them.
- 3 The only way in – the shared door – is shared Motive.
- 4 The connecting boards, the solid facts that can bring things together. Sometimes you need to stop and collect some facts to progress.
- 5 The windows – open minds and fully transparent.
- 6 The two-sided roof – representing the need to find water tight solutions that are right for everyone involved. What nails them down means making sure that everyone knows what will be done, by when, by who and how, and when any follow up will take place.



As you draw it up you can explain it:

Here is how we look at communication: it is always about building something together, **not building over someone**. This might be a colleague, a customer, another team member or someone else in the company's eco-system.

Or – it might be you at home.

First of all, you need to build on solid ground which means you start from a place that respects the other person and where they might be coming from, and with a **motive** that serves both of you.

You also need to 'anchor-in' to that solid AMBER place by making sure you **know where you are at mentally, before you start**.

For real dialogue to take place, you need to separate the story that each person has from the actual facts. One wall is the story that you bring, the other is the story brought by the person you are in dialogue with. **There are always two walls**.

The shared facts are the connective links that can build the wall that can connect you to each other. Sometimes you will need to stop and collect more

facts to progress. The door in is your shared motivation. The windows are your transparency [nothing to hide] and your open mindedness [not judging their story]. The roof is always two sided and needs to be able to serve both sides.

As a process it always needs to be open-minded and truly collaborative. The ultimate goal is a house is built on the company's values xx, xx, xx.

Stop and notice the way the house holds all their collective wisdom in one place.

Now ask them to get into pairs [or through a group discussion]. Ask them to talk together about a time when they could have recently used this model. 10 minutes.

Come back as a group and share key thoughts about how a framework like this can help people in their day to day work. 5 minutes.

Explain that over the coming weeks, this Communications framework will be developed with them, one piece at a time - so they can become experts with the toolkit. Eventually, they will become brilliant at jumping into AMBER and at building an awesome house at a moment's notice, when it matters the most.

Summarise, Connect and give Takeaway Assignments:

(5 mins)

Come back to the tools that you have introduced today – the Chameleon and the house and explain that these are very carefully designed pieces to make sure that everyone across the team has these super simple shortcuts. So that everyone can feel they have the tools they need to do awesome work.

Invite the team to use the new concepts today immediately, by remaining self-aware of their own responses. Here are the **two takeaway assignments** for the group:



Active Listening: challenge each person to practice ‘active listening’ for the next week. This means they may not interrupt a single person when they are speaking. They must wait for them to finish. Tell them they will report back on how that went in a week’s time.



Staying Colour Aware: Take note of how many times they recognise their RED or BLUE flags over the next week, and see how often they can reboot their own system back into AMBER using the tool they’ve learned today. Tell them they will be reporting back in a week’s time.

Final check-out:

(5 mins)

It can be helpful – and important – if you have ‘opened’ a safe space, to ‘close’ it again. ‘Closing’ is about allowing each person to reflect on the time you have spent together. Choose a couple of these sentence starters for people to complete. If you are short on time, insist that they have to choose only ONE word for each response. Make sure everyone has a chance to feedback.

I was challenged by...

I was surprised by...

I wonder if...

I was delighted by...

I’m taking away...

Invite them to take their piece of paper back out of their pocket, and see if they need to bring a touch of the Chameleon to what is written there.

Your workshop **assets** Checklist



Check in:

You will need a small piece of paper for each person and enough pens.



Continuum:

Big pieces of paper and blue tack if you want to signal a strongly agree – strongly disagree end.



Values session:

Pens and paper. And a sheet with the values on for each pair. [Make sure they know which value they are focussed on.]



The House:

A big A3 pad and coloured pens.



Be the chameleon



The house that communication built



When we think about what makes for great communication, our house is a great model...



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