

# Respectful **Resolution**

## **Step 2. Reflect**

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**A guide developed by colleagues to help you reflect on and understand issues of inappropriate behaviour.**

Bullying is usually a repeated negative behaviour, that harms someone's physical or psychological wellbeing.

This guide will help you reflect on what's happening and identify the behaviours, to make it easier to talk about and resolve.



# Step 2.

## Reflecting on the situation

Our aim is to create a culture where people consistently demonstrate our values and behaviours.

In a high pressure environment people may still display or experience actions or behaviours that are inappropriate.

If you are involved in a situation like this, this guide is intended to help you reflect on the situation, as the first step in our respectful resolution process.

This guide will help you to describe the behaviour you have experienced, witnessed or have had alleged against you. Making it easier to discuss and resolve.

It starts with a behaviours diary so that you can more accurately recall what happened. All of this will make it easier to discuss, give feedback and resolve the situation. Try to describe the specific behaviours you have observed, as factually as you can. Using words like 'inappropriate', 'bullying' or 'harassment' can raise the temperature of a situation, and make it more difficult to resolve.

The next step is to explore the facts in more detail, the behaviours you experienced and how they affected you.

A flow chart will help you think this through and allow you to note down your experiences. There is also guidance on acceptable and unacceptable behaviours that has been developed by colleagues and unions.

Studies have shown that by stepping into other people's shoes for a moment, imagining what might have been going on for them, we boost empathy and understanding, which can also help to resolve conflict. A first step you might like to take is to reflect on the situation and the interaction using the 'give / get' coaching model later in this guide.

If you would like support using these materials at any point, speak with your manager, a colleague or your union representative who may be able to help.

All related materials are available to download on the intranet.

## DESCRIBE the behaviour...

This flowchart will help you get clear about what's happening so you can decide what to do next.

It asks if you can describe the specific behaviour you've experienced. Why might it be helpful to do this - rather than lump it all into 'bullying'?

Calling it all 'bullying' is an easy short-hand. But it's subjective. It's possible people may disagree. And calling someone 'a bully' may seem fair to you. But it's a judgmental term. It can be hard to hear and can make people defensive.

And disagreement and defensiveness are not great places to start from, when you want someone to hear you, to talk and to change

Describing behaviours factually, objectively and

without judgment, de-personalises the situation and takes the heat out any discussion.

It's easier to hear, it's easier to discuss, it's easier to resolve. And it's easier for the other person to stop or change a specific set of behaviours than to unpick a personality trait like 'being a bully'.

The most effective feedback starts by setting out the behaviours in this factual and objective way.

You may like to take a moment to reflect on what you experienced, saw, or have been accused of. Think through the situation and what happened, who said what, who did what. Or talk it through with someone you trust. It can also be helpful to fill out a behaviours diary.

Behaviours diary						
Date and time	Behaviours What did they do? Words, action, tone.	Who was involved?	Impact on you How did you feel?	Response How did you react?	Actions you took afterwards	Witnesses Who was there?

## ...and the **impact** it had on you

You may have noticed in the behaviours diary, that while it helps you log the person's behaviour. It also helps you to capture and understand the impact that the behaviour had on you.

- How did it make you feel?
- Did it impact on your wellbeing?
- Did it impact on your ability to do your work?

You can also record how you reacted at the time.

And if you took any actions afterwards, spoke to anyone, or asked anyone to respond for you.

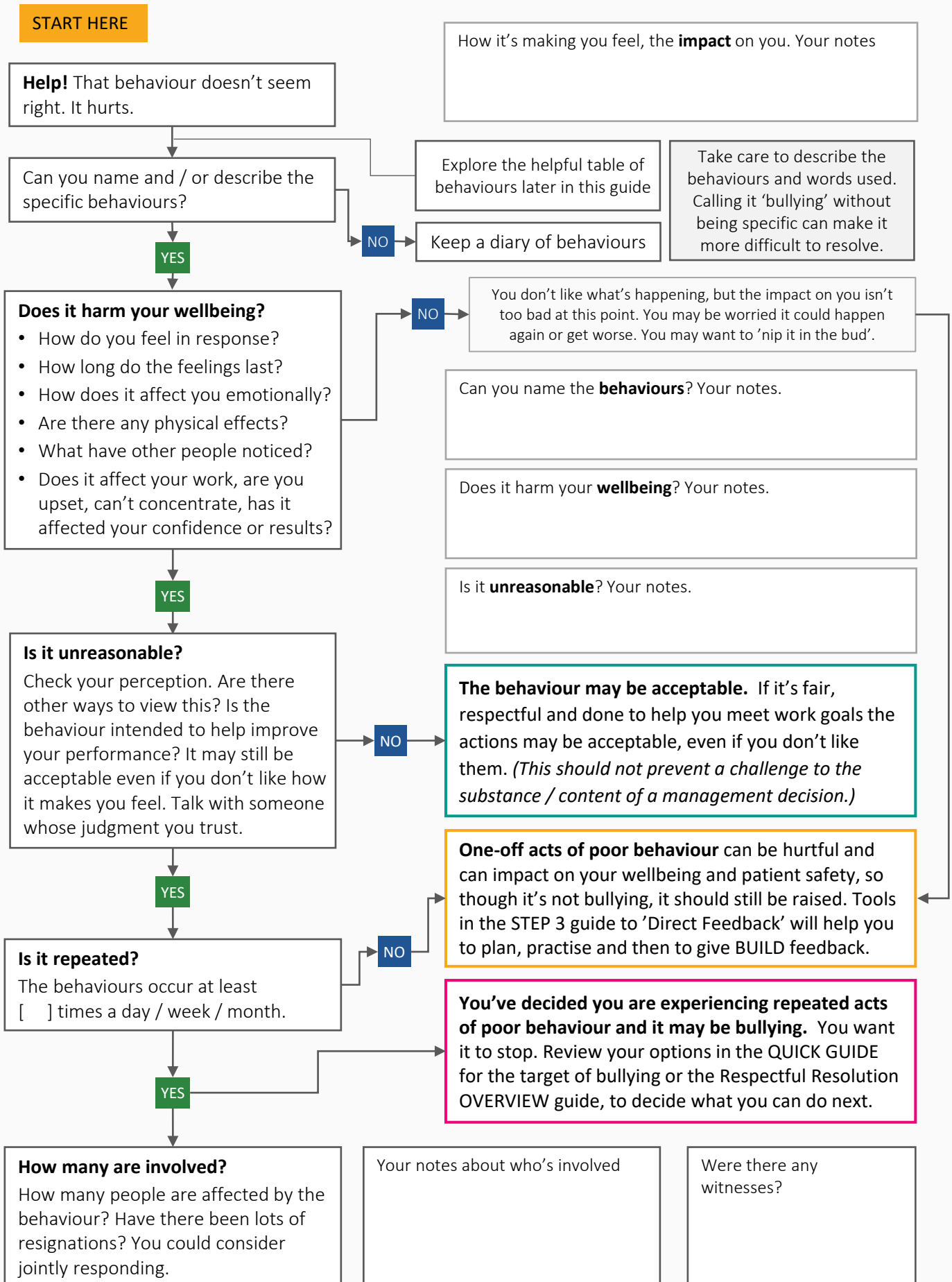
See if you can separate out the *facts* of the behaviour from the *feelings* in the impact e.g.

**Behaviour:** 'They did this.'

**Impact:** 'It felt like bullying to me.'

Now you've thought about the behaviours and the impacts, it's time to work out whether you feel now this is bullying, or if it may be something else.

# What is this type of behaviour?



## Our aim is to create a safe, values-led culture

It's important in healthcare to consistently role model values-led behaviours. When people always live up to shared values, there's no room for bullying. Every team should make time for discussions to define the culture and behaviours they want to see, and how they will reduce poor

behaviours.

If you are involved in a situation where behaviours are not up to the standards we all expect, take a moment first to reflect on the discussions you have had as a team to agree your culture and behaviours.

### **We care**

Everyone is entitled to the highest quality care.

### **We respect**

Everyone should be treated with kindness and respect.

### **We are inclusive**

Everyone should have access to our services when they need them, and we actively seek suggestions on how we can improve.

What is your team's definition of our values?  
What can you agree this looks like in day-to-day behaviours?

What behaviours did you agree as a team you wanted to role model and remove?

If your team hasn't yet had these discussions, you may want to suggest now is a good time to do so.

You can use the guide 'Step 1. Creating a safe culture' to guide discussions.

*We care*

*We respect*

*We are inclusive*

## **Our AIM: A SAFE, VALUES-LED CULTURE**

**Our aim is to create a safe culture where people consistently demonstrate our values and behaviours.** All individuals and teams working in our organisation will be expected to proactively develop a safe culture, to be role models of our behaviours, and to support others to do so.

Sometimes we may experience behaviours that don't live up to our expectations. When that happens we can better discuss and resolve the situation by understanding what kind of behaviour it is.

### **ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR** (even though some people might not like it)

**Constructive, supportive guidance or feedback with the intention of helping an individual or group to meet their work goals or improve their job performance,** in a kind and respectful way.

You might not like the actions or behaviours, but if they are being done with the person's best interests at heart and can reasonably be considered appropriate in the circumstances, then they are acceptable.

### **UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

**One-off acts of unwelcome behaviour which are inappropriate and don't meet your behaviour standards.** May be unintended incivility or rudeness, or deliberately unkind.

Whilst not bullying, one-off behaviours can harm wellbeing, damage teamwork and make errors more likely. If unchecked a single act of inappropriate behaviour could create a culture receptive to bullying and so should be raised and resolved.

### **BULLYING OR HARASSMENT**

**Repeated negative behaviour that harms or undermines the psychological or physical wellbeing of an individual or group of people.** (Though it can also be a one-off incident.) They may feel intimidated, offended, humiliated, undermined, distressed or isolated. Harassment is similar behaviour targeted at protected characteristics such as race, religion or different ability.

The person acting this way may be doing so intentionally or may be unaware of the impact of their actions, until they have been told about it.

# DECIDE if it's bullying

See if you can find the behaviour you've identified in this list. Which column is it in? Why might it be there?

## Values-led behaviour

The foundation behaviours framework in 'Creating a safe culture' provides a detailed reference for discussions about values-led behaviours.

*We care We respect We are inclusive*

## Acceptable behaviour

**Constructive, supportive guidance or feedback** with the intention of helping an individual or group to meet their work goals or improve their job performance, in a kind and respectful way.

You might not like the actions or behaviours, but they are being done with the person's best interests at heart and can reasonably be considered appropriate in the circumstances.

### Behavioural

To do with the person's body language, tone of voice or other day-to-day interactions.

- Respectful body language and tone of voice
- Raised but calm voice if there is a safety concern
- Some forgiveness when people are stressed, listen and offer advice and encouragement
- Jokes or humour that are not harmful to anyone
- Putting forward your opinions or views
- Not noticing someone if you are lost in thoughts

### Personal

Words or behaviour directed at an individual, their views, culture, beliefs or gender.

- Being vigilant, challenging unsafe practice, speaking up about errors or behaviour you find offensive
- Taking disciplinary action if appropriate
- Giving constructive feedback to help you grow, improve performance or behaviour e.g. BUILD
- A hug or other physical contact if you've checked it's ok with them e.g. 'would you like a hug?'

### Social

How people work together and involve each other as a group or team.

- Respectful colleagues need not be best friends
- People being different and not always getting on
- Being open about differences of opinion
- Asking questions and clarifying, being accountable
- Reasonably declining a request e.g. if safety is at risk
- Accusing someone of bullying, when you have a genuine concern about their behaviour and its impact
- Offering or discussing a different point of view

### Work-related

Affecting your work, role, tasks, objectives, rostering, performance or development

- Robust, supportive management - clear, fair expectations about job performance and time management
- Reminding people about targets or objectives
- Checking in on people's work to ensure quality, constructive criticism, expectations, accountability
- Reasonable rostering or declining leave request
- Clear performance management or discipline
- Firm but fair management: staff may not like what's happening but understand why it's happening. However this should not prevent a challenge to the substance / content of the management decision.



# Our definition of inappropriate behaviour

If the behaviour you have experienced is not on this list, talk about where you feel it might fit.

## Inappropriate behaviour

**One-off acts of unwelcome behaviour** which are inappropriate and don't meet agreed behaviour standards.

Behaviours may be unintended incivility or deliberately unkind or rude.

If unchecked a single act of inappropriate behaviour could create a culture receptive to bullying and so should be raised and resolved.

- Strongly negative body language, no eye contact, sneering, eye-rolling, tone of voice e.g. sarcastic
- One-off aggressive behaviour: shouting, hitting out, being short or snapping, intimidation
- Unwelcome humour, innuendos, jokes, swearing, remarks on personal characteristics, unkind humour
- Invading personal space, standing over someone, being overfamiliar
- Ignoring e.g. not responding to a greeting

- Critical feedback that picks fault without helping to improve, may be in front of others
- Talking over someone, continually interrupting
- One-off insensitive or thoughtless comments about race, culture, gender, appearance, etc.
- Lack of manners, rude, sharp, direct, intimidating
- Unwelcome physical contact or endearments

- Excluding someone on one occasion, interrupting or ignoring, not saying hello
- Insensitive or disrespectful to cultural backgrounds
- Public shaming that belittles or demeans
- Talking about someone behind their back, gossip, cliques
- Singling out or making an example of someone
- Accusing someone of bullying in a way that is in itself aggressive or disrespectful

- Unrealistic expectations of a job or project
- Blaming their own non-performance on others
- Occasional micro-management, bypass to manager, undermined, degrading to 'junior' staff, assuming limits to job role capabilities
- Applying different rules for different people
- Misuse of power, manipulation, lying, punishment through shift rostering

## Bullying or harassment

**Repeated negative behaviour that harms or undermines the psychological or physical wellbeing of an individual or group of people.** (Though it can also be a one-off incident.) They may feel intimidated, offended, humiliated, undermined, distressed or isolated. Harassment targets protected characteristics like race, religion or different ability. The person acting this way may be doing so intentionally or may be unaware of the impact until they have been told about it.

- Consistent negative body language or tone of voice, including passive-aggressive actions, intimidation
- Repeated anger, shouting or aggression
- Continuing banter or humour, name-calling, derogatory terms after they're told it is unwelcome
- A range of repeated rude or unkind behaviours, remarks about appearance or competencies etc.
- Repeated intimidation, threatening behaviour
- Ignoring feedback about unwelcome behaviour

- On-going criticism, undermining, belittling, or humiliation, ridicule, 'making an example of'
- Unpredictable so people 'walk on egg shells'
- Persistent judgmental comments about for example gender, beliefs or appearance
- Treated differently due to a protected characteristic
- Sexual innuendo, jokes, requests or harassment

- Exclusion, isolation or 'the silent treatment'
- Continually bad-mouthing another team, personality assassination
- Gossiping, ganging up or spreading rumours
- Ongoing scapegoating or victimisation
- Consistently ignoring views, exclusion
- Accusation of bullying without justification
- Humiliation or targeted personal remarks, insults, putting down of others

- Setting up to fail by withholding information, unrealistic work demands
- Taking credit for other people's work
- Consistently questioning someone's capabilities
- Excessive supervision: 'watching over like a hawk'
- Taking away responsibilities without justification
- Favouritism e.g. allocation of leave or tasks, not involving in decision making
- Continued abuse of power, blame

# DEVELOP a deeper understanding

Our behaviours impact each other all the time.

If you have had an allegation made against you, it can be helpful to reflect on what happened to develop a deeper understanding.

It may be that the behaviour wasn't intended to offend, but it did anyway. Different people are allowed to react in different ways.

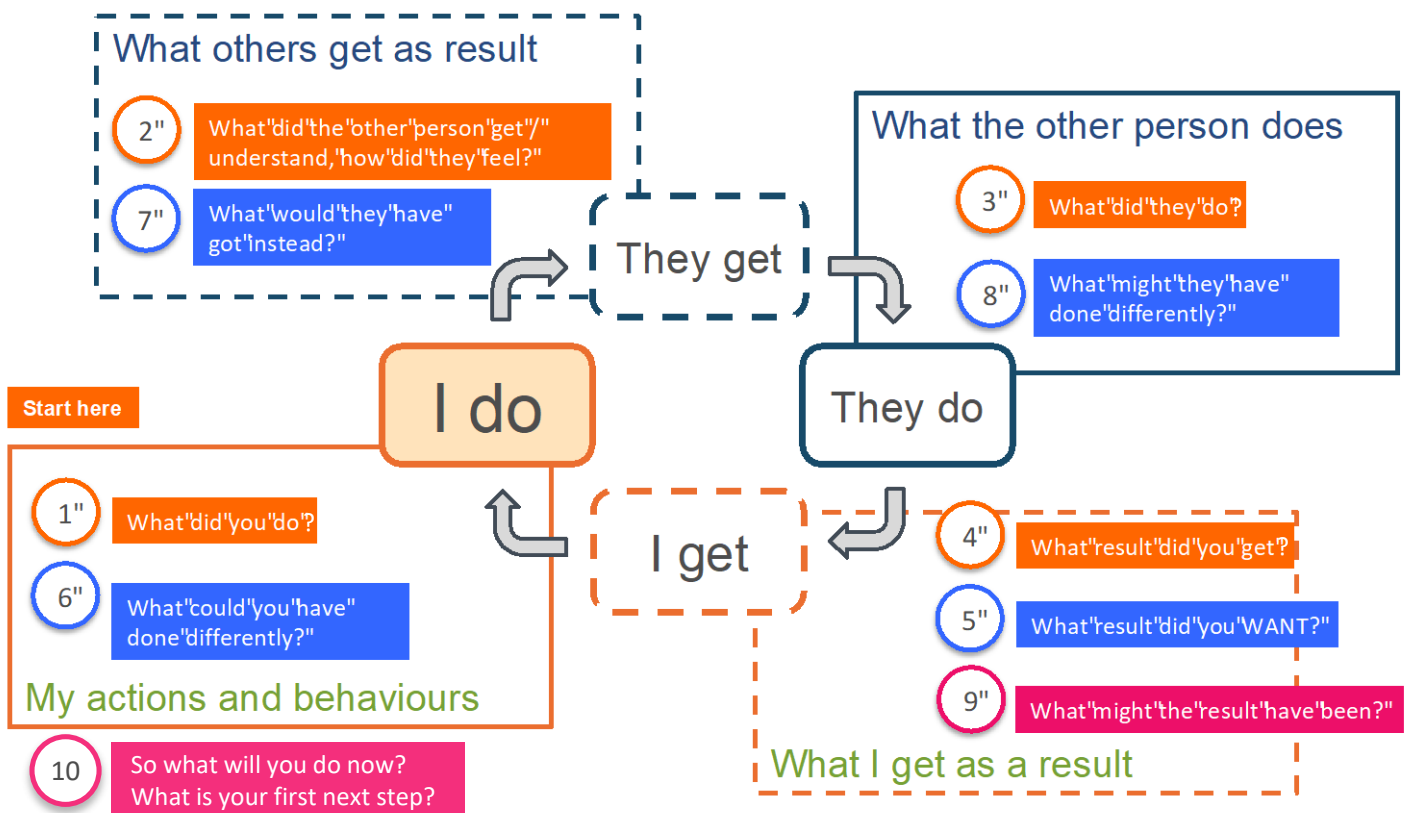
It could be that on reviewing the behaviour you still feel the same way, but rather than get entrenched in an unhelpful discussion about who is right and wrong you could think about how a different behaviour might get a different result or reaction. How we behave is a choice.

Think about the outcome you would like, and how a different behaviour might be more helpful in achieving that result, in the relationship.

You might be on the receiving end of behaviour you don't like, but it can still help to reflect on the interaction, who did what, and how the different people might feel about it.

Whatever your position, this coaching model can be helpful to review what happened, to see things from the other person's point of view and to help identify your most helpful next step.

Perhaps you could find a trusted friend or colleague to sit with you and ask the questions...



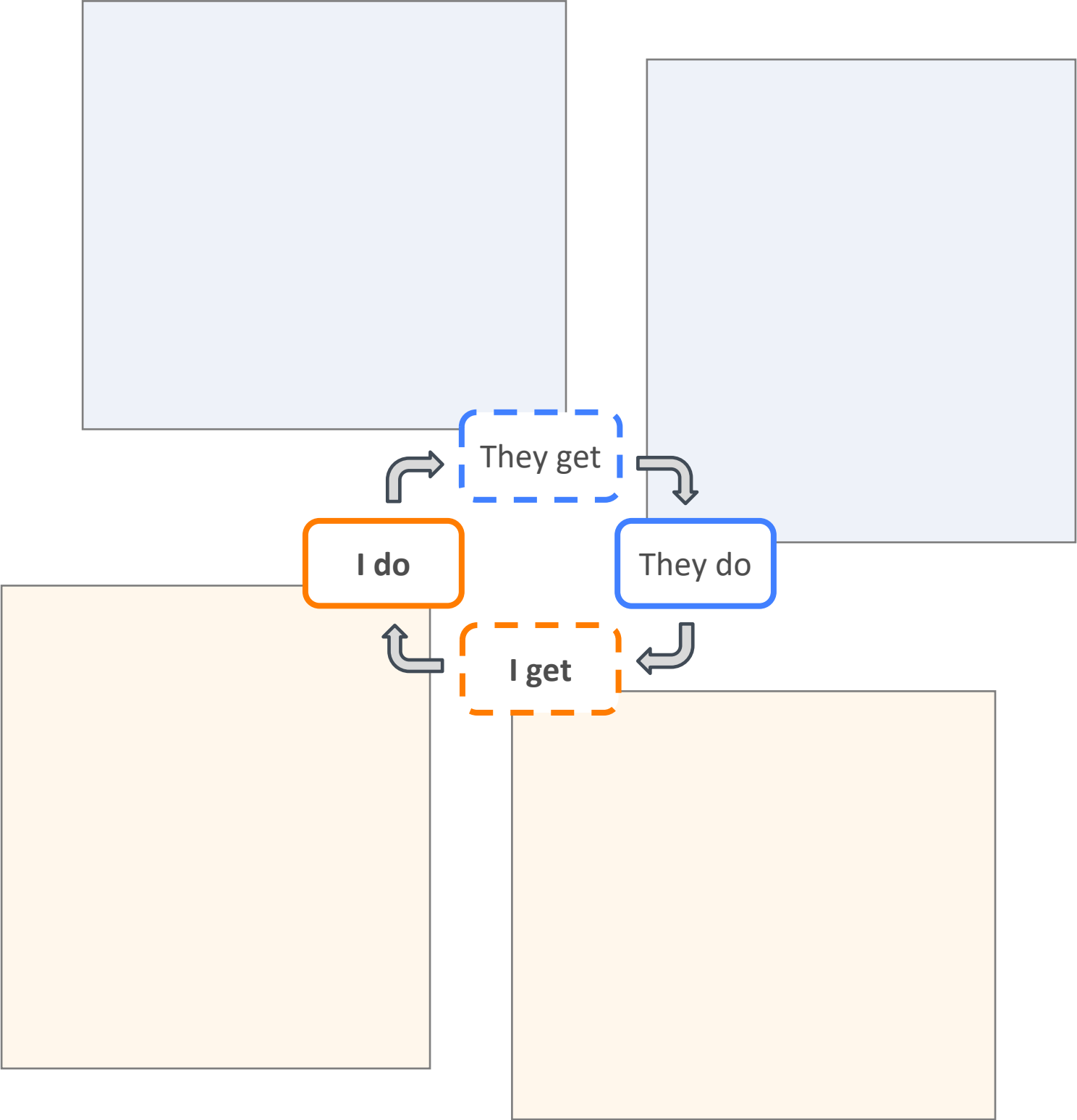
## We can *change* what we DO

- Our actions are up to us
- Our behaviours aren't fixed, we have choices
- Focus on outcomes, what result do you want?
- What can you do differently, so you get a different reaction or outcome?
- Think about words, tone and body language

## We can *change* what we GET

- Our thoughts are up to us
- "We make a judgment about the event and then react to our own verdict."
- Can you reframe your reaction - 'it's interesting', 'what can I learn?', 'it's fine...'

# Your notes



## Further support and guidance

If you feel you need more guidance on what to do next, you can visit the intranet where you can download the following tools and resources:

### For you

- Information about our approaches, policies and procedures
- Guidance on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- Who to speak to for support
- Step-by-step guides walking you through all of your options

### For your Team

- Guides and templates to help you discuss and improve team culture
- Roles and responsibilities
- Guide for managers

This is one in a series of guides to support anyone who is a target of inappropriate behaviour, has witnessed or had an allegation of such behaviour made against them, and for managers dealing with poor behaviours in their teams.



For more assistance accessing these materials or if you have any questions, you can get in touch with the people listed below who can advise you on informal/formal procedures and support you throughout the process.

- [Health & wellbeing pages on the intranet](#)
- HR team
- [Freedom to Speak Up Guardian](#)  
[elft.freedomtospeakup@nhs.net](mailto:elft.freedomtospeakup@nhs.net)  
Tel: 07436027388
- Occupational Health  
[elft@teamprevent.co.uk](mailto:elft@teamprevent.co.uk)  
Tel: 01327 810777
- [Carefirst](#)  
Tel: 0800 174 319
- Or contact your Union rep

### Our approach to giving feedback

We use the A Kind Life approach to giving and receiving feedback – including the ABC of Appreciation and the BUILD kinder feedback model. You can learn more about this in the guide to Step 3 of our Respectful Resolution pathway. And in a suite of e-learning tools which you can find on our Learning Management System.

