

Reframing Hostile Language

Peoplenovate® Dialogue

In conflict, people often communicate through accusation, blame, exaggeration, or emotional language. Reframing does not mean agreeing with hostile behaviour. It means translating emotionally charged language into language that can result in a constructive dialogue.

1. From Accusation → To Facts

Hostile:

“They always do this.”

Reframed:

“It seems like this has become an increasingly common occurrence.”

Hostile:

“They are fraudulent.”

Reframed:

“It seems increasingly likely that there could be an element of fraud involved here.”

Hostile:

“They have ruined the project.”

Reframed:

“Their conduct has had a significant impact on the project that cannot be taken lightly.”

2. From Absolutes → To Specific Issues

Hostile:

“They are terrible.”

Reframed:

“There seems to be a recurring issue of missed payments.”

Hostile:

“No one trusts them.”

Reframed:

“There may be broader concerns about trust and communication with them.”

Hostile:

“We are ruined.”

Reframed:

“We have incurred a loss of £500,000 – this is massive for a business like ours.”

3. From Emotion → To Underlying Need

Hostile:

“This process is ridiculous.”

Reframed:

“This process is not helping us meet our needs and interests.”

Hostile:

“We can’t do this anymore.”

Reframed:

“Unless we receive clarity on two issues at the very least, it is not possible for us to think about a resolution.”

Hostile:

“Their proposal is ridiculous.”

Reframed:

“We cannot accept delayed delivery, even as an exception. At least 50% needs to be delivered within the next week, or we need to be compensated for our loss.”

4. What Reframing Is Not

Reframing is not:

- agreeing with an incorrect fact or view;
 - minimising or negating harm/injury/loss;
 - avoiding accountability; or
 - “positive spin.”
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A space for mediation, dialogue, and human-centred conflict resolution.