



 **Concordia**  
Enabling Solutions




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# CALE - PROGRAM 3

## PARTICIPANT GUIDE - DAY 3

### Mastering Feedback with Emotional Intelligence

## **Session Objectives**

- Understand your interpersonal strengths and gaps in building high-trust relationships.
- Recognize different personality and work styles within your team and adjust your approach accordingly.
- Use emotional intelligence to influence and motivate diverse individuals and groups.
- Apply frameworks to manage team dynamics and conflict more effectively.
- Align your leadership communication with the psychological needs of your team members.

## **Session 1: The Importance of Feedback**

### **1. Why Feedback Matters in Public Service Leadership**

Feedback is the bridge between intention and impact. In public service, where we directly interact with citizens, small communication gaps can lead to big service failures. Leaders who provide clear, timely, and empathetic feedback help shape team behavior and elevate the quality of public experience.

Constructive feedback is not about fault-finding, it's about future-shaping.

#### **What is Constructive Feedback?**

Constructive feedback is:

- **Specific** – Targets a clear behavior or action
- **Timely** – Provided close to the observed event
- **Actionable** – Offers guidance on what to do differently
- **Respectful** – Delivered with empathy and care
- **Growth-Oriented** – Focused on development, not criticism

### **2. The 3Vs of Feedback**

In leadership, how feedback is received depends not just on what you say, but also how you say it, and how you appear while saying it.

**(i) Verbal (Words) - The content of your message**

- *Effective Verbal Example:*  
"I noticed a gap in today's coordination with the team. Let's explore what went wrong and how we can address it together."  
(This promotes reflection and collaboration.)
- *Ineffective Verbal Example:*  
"This was totally mismanaged. What were you thinking?"  
(This can trigger defensiveness.)

**(ii) Vocal (Tone) - The emotion and energy in your voice - pace, volume, inflection**

- *Effective Vocal Example:*  
Calm, steady tone when providing feedback about a mistake.  
E.g. "Let's talk about how that interaction went. I'd love to understand what you observed."
- *Ineffective Vocal Example:*  
Sarcastic tone or raised voice when talking about a mistake.  
E.g. "Well done! Another complaint! That's just great."  
(This immediately triggers resistance or shame.)

**(iii) Visual (Body Language) - What your face, posture, and gestures communicate**

- *Effective Visual Example:*
  - Open posture (not crossing arms)
  - Eye contact without staring
  - Gentle nods and neutral facial expression
- *Ineffective Visual Example:*
  - Rolling eyes, frowning, shaking head
  - Looking at phone while giving feedback
  - Finger-pointing or standing too close

**How the 3Vs Influence Citizen Experience**

**Scenario:** A junior staff member miscommunicates document requirements to a senior citizen, who becomes frustrated.

A leader using constructive 3Vs will say:

"Let's slow this down. I noticed that the citizen was confused. What could help next time?"  
(Supportive tone, warm body language, non-blaming words)

A leader using harsh 3Vs might say:

"What's wrong with you? Can't you follow simple instructions?"  
(Sharp voice, scolding tone, dismissive expression)

**Impact:**

The former builds ownership and learning. The latter damages morale and public trust.

### Self-Reflection: Checking Your 3Vs

Think of a recent time when you provided feedback to someone.

1. What words did you use?

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2. What tone did you use?

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3. What did your face and body communicate?

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4. If you were the receiver, how would you feel?

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### Mini Activity: 3V Awareness Moment

Pair Up. One partner reads a line of neutral feedback: "Let's revisit how you handled that citizen case yesterday."

Now try saying it in:

- A defensive tone with crossed arms
- A curious tone with relaxed posture
- A tired tone with a slouched posture

Discuss:

1. How did the meaning change?
2. Which version invited openness?

Notes:

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## **Session 2: Feedback Models – SBIBI & DESC**

### 1. **Why Use a Feedback Model**

In emotionally charged or high-pressure environments like public service, feedback can be easily misinterpreted. Models like SBIBI and DESC help structure feedback in a way that is non-threatening, clear, and growth-focused—especially when stakes are high and citizen outcomes are involved. They also help eliminate personal bias by shifting the focus from the person to the behavior and its impact.

#### **Part A: SBIBI Model**

##### **What is SBIBI?**

SBIBI stands for:

- S – Situation
- B – Behaviour
- I – Impact
- B – Benefit
- I – Improvement

This model is used for developmental and real-time feedback, especially when a leader wants to help a team course-correct or grow in a supportive manner.

##### **Where Is SBIBI Commonly Used?**

- Performance Reviews
- Talent Conversations
- Team Communication
- Employee Coaching and Mentoring
- Customer Service Interactions
- Coaching, and Training and Development
- General Communication

##### **Why It Works in Citizen-Facing Roles**

- Removes ambiguity
- Focuses on what happened, not who the person is
- Encourages growth without shame
- Creates shared accountability for improvement

## **Examples (Public Service Contexts)**

### **1. Handling an Escalated Citizen Complaint**

“This morning, when the citizen raised his voice at the helpdesk (S), you also raised your voice in return (B), which escalated tension and attracted a crowd (I). If we maintain calm tones (B), we can de-escalate and model composure (I).”

### **2. Incomplete Reporting**

“Last week’s report (S) missed data on 3 localities (B), which delayed action on complaints (I). Including all field zones (B) helps us respond faster and strengthen public confidence (I).”

## **Part B: DESC Model**

### **What is DESC?**

DESC stands for:

- D – Describe the situation
- E – Express how it made you feel or its impact
- S – Specify what you need
- C – Communicate the consequences

DESC is best used for assertive feedback in situations involving recurring patterns, boundary violations, or emotionally difficult topics.

### **Where Is DESC Commonly Used?**

- Workplace
- Healthcare
- Personal Relationships
- General Communication

### **Why It Works in Citizen-Facing Leadership**

- Encourages clarity without aggression
- Supports leaders in setting boundaries while being respectful
- Useful when feedback must also express emotional impact or organizational risk

## **Examples (Public Service Contexts)**

### **1. Disrespectful Team Interaction**

“In this morning’s team briefing (D), you interrupted and dismissed your colleague’s point (E). It created tension in the group. I need everyone to speak respectfully and let others finish (S), or these meetings will become unproductive (C).”

### **2. Delayed Response to Escalation**

“When the ward-level complaint was escalated (D), you took two days to act (E), which worsened the citizen’s frustration and led to a public grievance post. I need escalations to be addressed within 24 hours (S) to avoid further backlash (C).”

### **Ineffective vs. Constructive Feedback**

<b>Ineffective Feedback</b>	<b>Constructive Feedback (Using SBIBI or DESC)</b>
"You're always careless."	"During last week's citizen visit (S), the ID wasn't checked (B), which risked service misuse (I). Ensuring ID checks (B) helps avoid errors and citizen disputes (I)."
"You never take ownership."	"Yesterday, you left without informing anyone (D), which caused confusion during handovers (E). I need prior notice if you need to leave (S), so operations run smoothly (C)."
"That was embarrassing."	"When you publicly corrected your peer (D), it seemed disrespectful and discouraged others (E). Please give feedback privately (S), or team morale may drop (C)."

### **Activity: "Feedback Sculpting"**

Objective: Practice structured feedback using either SBIBI or DESC + the 3Vs (Verbal, Vocal, Visual)  
 Instructions:

1. Choose a real-time (impacting) scenario (team or citizen related).
2. Write one feedback statement using SBIBI and one using DESC.
3. Pair up and roleplay both versions.
4. Reflect:
  - a. Which model worked better for the situation?
  - b. How did your tone and body language affect the delivery?

**Notes:**

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## **Session 3: Understanding Feedback Triggers**

### **1. Why Do People React Badly to Feedback?**

Even when feedback is well-intentioned and delivered respectfully, it can still trigger defensiveness, denial, or withdrawal. This happens because feedback often touches core beliefs, self-worth, or perceived identity.

These internal reactions are called feedback triggers - emotional, mental, and physical responses - that make it hard to take/receive feedback constructively.

Understanding these triggers helps us:

- Offer feedback with greater empathy
- Recognize resistance as a signal, not an attack
- Create space for growth instead of shame

### **2. Types of Feedback Triggers**

Below are the most common feedback triggers, along with how they might show up, and how to manage them as a leader.

#### **1. *Truth Trigger***

- What it is: The content of the feedback feels wrong or unfair.
- Sounds like: "I never said that." / "That's not what happened." / "That's not accurate!"
- Body language: Defensive arms, furrowed brow, stepping back.
- What's really happening: The person believes the facts are incorrect.

#### **How to respond:**

"Thanks for sharing your side. Let's explore both our perspectives calmly."

Use clarifying questions to reduce misunderstanding.

#### **2. *Relationship Trigger***

- What it is: The authority of the feedback giver is challenged or questioned.
- Sounds like: "You've never liked me anyway." / "Why didn't my manager tell me this?" / "You're not the right person to tell me this."
- Body language: Avoiding eye contact, shifting away, crossing arms.
- What's really happening: Distrust of the messenger overshadows the message.

#### **How to respond:**

"I understand this may be difficult to hear from me. My intention is to support your success and the citizens we serve."

Focus on shared goals and the impact on service.

#### **3. *Identity Trigger***

- What it is: The feedback threatens the receiver of how they perceive themselves.
- Sounds like: "Are you saying I'm not good at my job?" / "I always give my best."
- Body language: Shrinking posture, red face, visible emotion.
- What's really happening: The feedback feels like a personal attack.

### How to respond:

"This feedback is about a specific behavior, not who you are as a person. Your commitment is clear - this is an area that we can fine-tune."

Use reassurance + specificity.

### 4. Competence Trigger

- What it is: The feedback may imply the receiver to be incapable.
- Sounds like: "So you think I can't handle this?"
- Body language: Forced smile, clenched jaw, silent but tense.
- What's really happening: The person feels their abilities are being questioned.

### How to respond:

"I know you're capable - that's why I'm sharing this. I want to support your growth, not limit it."

Acknowledge strengths before redirecting.

### 5. Fairness Trigger

- What it is: The feedback makes the receiver feel singled out or cornered.
- Sounds like: "Others do this too - why only me?"
- Body language: Eye-rolling, defensive laughter, sarcastic tone.
- What's really happening: The person perceives partiality or injustice.

### How to respond:

"I hear you. I'm addressing this with everyone who's involved; but today, I'm speaking to you about your role in it."

Reaffirm consistency in standards.

### 6. Autonomy Trigger

- What it is: The feedback may make the receiver feel controlled or disciplined.
- Sounds like: "I know what I'm doing - let me handle it."
- Body language: Crossed legs, leaning away, tapping foot.
- What's really happening: The person feels their independence is being threatened.

### How to respond:

"I trust your judgment. Let's co-create a solution that works for you and also aligns with what citizens need."

Offer choice and agency.

Provide reassurance + specificity.

### Notes:

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**Activity: Feedback Trigger Awareness**

Step 1: Think of a time you reacted strongly to feedback (at work or otherwise).

1. What was said?

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2. What did you feel?

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3. Which trigger might have been activated?

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Step 2: Journal your answers to these prompts:

“What would I have needed to feel safer in that moment?”

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“How can I create that for others when I give feedback?”

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**Leadership Tip: Triggers ≠ Bad Attitude**

*“Resistance is a signal that something important is at stake.” – Stone & Heen*

Learn to observe the reaction without reacting to the reaction. The goal is not to win the conversation; it’s to preserve dignity and openness.

## **Session 4: Psychological Safety in Feedback**

### **Refresher: What Is Psychological Safety?**

**Psychological safety is the belief that you can:**

- Speak up without fear of punishment or embarrassment
- Admit mistakes and ask for help
- Challenge ideas or offer feedback
- Be yourself without fear of ridicule or rejection

**In Day 2, we explored how leaders build this through:**

- Curiosity, not certainty
- Vulnerability, not control
- Support, not silence

### **Why Psychological Safety is Essential in Feedback Conversations**

**In feedback settings (especially in public service roles), employees often worry:**

- “If I admit a mistake, will I get in trouble?”
- “If I give feedback to a senior, will it backfire?”
- “If I’m corrected, does it mean I’m not good enough?”

These internal fears block honest dialogue and slow down learning.

Creating a feedback culture grounded in psychological safety helps teams:

- Reflect honestly on citizen interactions
- Learn quickly from small mistakes
- Build trust vertically and laterally
- Stay resilient in high-pressure situations

### **What It Looks Like in Citizen-Facing Teams**

#### **Before Psychological Safety**

- People hide mistakes out of fear
- Blame spreads silently
- Junior team members never speak up
- Frontline feedback never reaches leadership
- Citizens experience inconsistency, miscommunication, or delays

#### **With Psychological Safety**

- Frontline workers flag system gaps early
- Seniors admit missteps and course-correct
- Feedback flows in all directions
- Mistakes become case studies/use cases for learning
- Citizens experience greater transparency and responsiveness

## How to Build Psychological Safety Around Feedback

### 1. Normalize Feedback as Routine - Make it expected, not exceptional

- “We’ll debrief at the beginning of each day - what went well, what we can improve.”
- “Every Friday, we’ll give and receive one piece of feedback.”

### 2. Separate Behavior from Identity - Focus on what happened, not who made the mistake.

“This form was incomplete” vs. “You’re careless” “We missed one detail” vs. “You failed”

### 3. Model Vulnerability as a Leader - Admit when you get it wrong.

- “I mishandled that interaction because I was tired. I’ll try to reset before such calls.”
- “Thanks for pointing that out. I didn’t realize it came across that way.”

### 4. Protect and Acknowledge Courage - When someone speaks up or takes feedback well, publicly appreciate it.

- “Thanks for being honest. That takes courage.”
- “You took that feedback really constructively. That shows maturity.”

### 5. Use Safe Language - Avoid accusatory tones. Try:

- “Let’s reflect on how this went.”
- “Let’s look at this as a team.”
- “What do you think could’ve gone differently?”

Unsafe Feedback	Psychologically Safe Feedback
“You’ve failed again.”	“Let’s walk through what happened and how we can improve next time.”
“Why didn’t you think?”	“What was going through your mind when you made that choice?”
“You always do this wrong.”	“This seems to be repeating—what support do you need to get it right?”

**Activity: Create Your Safe Feedback Phrasebook**

1. Write down 3 feedback phrases you commonly use.  
Then reword them to sound safer, more constructive, and less threatening.

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2. Share one reworded phrase with a partner and reflect:
  - How does the new version feel?
  - Would you be more open to receiving such feedback?

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**Wrap-Up Reflection**

“When was the last time someone made it feel safe for you to grow through feedback?”

“How can you become that person for your team?”

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**SESSION 5: Future-Focused Feedback – Feedforward & Appreciative Inquiry****Part A: Feedforward Model****What Is Feedforward?**

The Feedforward model was developed by Marshall Goldsmith, a renowned executive coach, as an alternative to traditional feedback. Feedforward methods are commonly used in control systems to anticipate and counteract disturbances before they affect the system's output.

Unlike backward-looking feedback, which focuses on what went wrong, Feedforward is:

- Future-oriented
- Constructive and non-judgmental
- Focused on solutions, not shortcomings
- Easier to receive and less likely to trigger defensiveness

## Core Elements of Feedforward

1. Focus on the Future: What can the person do differently going forward?
2. Be Specific & Actionable: Offer one or two practical suggestions.
3. Keep it Positive: Emphasize potential, not failure.
4. No Judgments, No Dwelling: Avoid blame, comparisons, or reviewing past errors.
5. Partnership Tone: Assume the person wants to grow and support them.

## Why It Works in Citizen-Facing Roles

- Public-facing employees work under pressure. Past-focused criticism can demoralize or lead to fear-based compliance.
- Feedforward creates space for learning while protecting dignity, promoting agility, and encouraging initiative.
- It reinforces a solutions mindset, which is critical for improving systems that impact citizens.

## Examples of Feedforward in Action

### 1. Queue Management Feedback

“Going forward, try using the microphone to update citizens about wait times every 15 minutes. It will help reduce frustration and improve cooperation.”

### 2. Citizen Complaint Handling

“Next time a citizen raises their voice, try pausing before responding. A calm tone can help shift the energy of the conversation.”

### 3. Field Documentation

“Next inspection, consider checking off items using the updated digital form. It’ll save time and improve report clarity.”

## Where Feedforward Has Been Used (Industry Examples)

- Healthcare: Coaching nurses to improve patient communication during rounds
- Customer Service: Training teams to suggest better handling techniques for future calls
- Police & Municipal Staff: Equipping teams with future-based scripting for dealing with public questions and pressure
- Education: School leaders encouraging teachers to explore new approaches without criticism

## Part B: Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

### What Is Appreciative Inquiry?

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was developed by David Cooperrider and is widely used in leadership, change management, and team-building processes. It is a strengths-based approach to learning and development.

Instead of focusing on what’s broken, AI asks: “What’s working well, and how can we do more of it?”

## The 4D Model of Appreciative Inquiry

1. **Discover** – What’s already working?
2. **Dream** – What could it look like at its best?
3. **Design** – How can we make it happen?
4. **Deliver** – What steps will we take together?

### Why it Works in Public Service?

- Teams who constantly face complaints, stress, or emergencies need regular reinforcement of what’s going right.
- AI boosts confidence, resilience, and collaboration, especially in multi-stakeholder environments.
- It promotes inclusive improvement, helping teams design better service for citizens with the team, not for the team.

- **Examples of AI in Action**

#### **Ward-Level Team Debrief**

“Your team managed yesterday’s sanitation drive smoothly - updates were timely, and citizens were cooperative. What practices can we carry forward into next week?”

#### **Helpdesk Efficiency**

“We had fewer escalations this week. What changes contributed to that? Let’s unpack the practices and celebrate them.”

#### **Community Engagement**

“The way you explained the pension scheme during the town hall was so clear. How did you prepare for that? Let’s replicate that approach in other sessions.”

### Where AI Has Been Used (Industry Examples)

- Jaipur Traffic Police: Built community-friendly communication protocols by identifying and repeating respectful field practices.
- Kerala Disaster Management Teams: Debriefs focused on “what worked” to inform future emergency response.
- UNICEF Projects: Used in child education programs to reinforce teacher and community strengths.
- Local Governance: To design citizen grievance redressal systems based on past successes, not failures.

### Activity: Your Feedforward & AI Toolbox

1. Think of one person in your team whose behavior affected citizen experience.
2. Reframe your feedback to include:
  - o One Feedforward suggestion
  - o One strength you’ve seen them use in the past (Appreciative Inquiry)

Example:

“I noticed how calm you were during last week’s escalated call queue. Going forward, could you try briefing new team members using that same approach? It might help them feel more grounded.”

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### Wrap-Up Reflection Questions

- Which model - Feedforward or AI - comes more naturally to you?

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- How can you intentionally use these models during your next team debrief, 1:1, or post-call review?

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## **SESSION 6: The Conversation Circle**

### Why This Activity Matters

Real feedback conversations often feel unpredictable. Practicing in a safe and structured environment builds confidence and helps leaders:

- Refine their delivery
- Regulate their tone and body language
- Develop presence and emotional awareness
- Make feedback more purposeful and citizen-focused

This activity simulates real-life citizen-impacting scenarios and encourages reflection on both what is said and how it is said.

### Activity Overview

You will work in triads. Each person will move through 3 roles:

1. Feedback Provider – Uses either SBIBI, DESC, Feedforward, or AI

2. Feedback Receiver – Listens and responds with openness
3. Observer – Uses a checklist to note tone, language, empathy, and psychological safety

## Instructions

Step 1: Choose roles (Provider, Receiver, Observer).

Step 2: Choose a scenario.

Step 3: The Giver prepares feedback using any of the following:

- SBIBI – if it's a behavioral correction
- DESC – if the situation requires assertiveness
- Feedforward – to suggest improvement without blame
- Appreciative Inquiry – to build on what worked well

Step 4: Conduct the conversation (3–5 minutes).

- Giver practices verbal, vocal, and visual delivery.
- Receiver practices listening, asking, clarifying questions if needed, and reflecting without reacting.

Step 4: Observer provides feedback using the checklist (as below).

Step 5: Rotate roles. Everyone gets to practice all three.

## Scenarios to Choose From (Realistic - Team-related or Citizen-Facing):

1. Misinformation at Helpdesk: A junior staff member gave outdated information about a citizen scheme, leading to a complaint.
2. Escalated Citizen Complaint Not Logged:  
A peer failed to escalate a serious issue, which led to a delay in redressal.
3. Rude Interaction with Senior Citizen:  
A staff member raised their voice while trying to hurry a slow-moving elderly citizen.
4. Report Submission Delays:  
A colleague repeatedly delays their weekly report, affecting planning for the next week's work planning.

## Observer Checklist

Use this to offer feedback after each round.



Criteria	Notes
Did the Provider use a clear structure (SBIBI, DESC, etc.)?	
Was the tone calm, respectful, and composed?	
Did the body language show openness and empathy?	
Did the Receiver stay open and ask clarifying questions?	
Was the conversation psychologically safe?	
Were citizen outcomes or service impact referenced?	
What was done well?	
What could be improved?	

### Debrief & Group Reflection

After all triads finish, come back as a group and discuss:

- What felt hardest about giving feedback?

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- What helped you feel safe receiving it?

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- Which model worked best in your chosen scenario?

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- How did you stay focused on the citizen experience while giving feedback?

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## **SESSION 7: Action Planning & Wrap-Up**

### **Why Close with Commitment?**

Feedback is a daily leadership tool. But like any skill, it becomes powerful only when practiced intentionally. This final session helps you:

- Reflect on the insights you've gained today
- Identify one or two habits to shift in your communication
- Anchor your goals in EI/EQ
- Create accountability through shared pledges

### **Part 1: Personal Feedback Commitment Plan**

Use this template to outline how you'll begin applying what you've learned.

1. A citizen-facing moment where I'll use feedback tools this week:

(e.g., Debriefing an error in handling citizen grievance, reviewing a helpdesk interaction, discussing tone in public-facing communication)

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2. Who I will give or invite feedback from:

(Name + role)

(Consider a peer, junior, or someone you usually avoid giving feedback to)

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3. The model I will use:

- ☐ SBIBI
- ☐ DESC
- ☐ Feedforward
- ☐ Appreciative Inquiry

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4. How I'll prepare to make the conversation psychologically safe:

(What tone, space, or mindset will you bring?)

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Choose one behaviour you will practice this week to strengthen your EQ in feedback conversations.

Examples:

"I will pause and breathe before responding to difficult feedback."

"I will ask at least one team member: 'How can I support you better?'"

"I will stay curious when someone disagrees with me."

"I will give one positive, appreciative comment before giving a correction."

My EQ Micro-Goal:

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### **Part 3: Leadership Feedback & EI Pledge**

This is your public declaration of your commitment to lead through feedback, trust, and emotional intelligence. You'll read or share it with your accountability buddy.

#### **Write Your Pledge:**

"As a leader, I commit to using feedback as a tool to build trust, support growth, and improve the citizen experience.

I will lead with empathy, communicate with clarity, and create emotionally safe spaces for honest dialogue."  
(Feel free to personalize your version.)

Who is your accountability partner for this pledge?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

When will you check in with them?

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Optional Reflection Prompts (for journaling later)**

- What is one thing I learned today that surprised me?
- What part of providing or receiving feedback felt most natural?
- Where do I need more practice?
- How will I know I've improved in how I use feedback?

"A feedback-rich culture is a growth-rich culture."

Your willingness to lean into courageous, kind, and clear conversations is what will shape not just better teams, but better citizen outcomes.

Keep practicing. Stay open. Lead with purpose.