



Hi, supervisors.

This is Liz London.

I have a practice called Constructive Communities.

I do training, facilitation, and consulting with organizations and teams on how to work better together, how to manage conflict, how to create positive team culture, things like that.

So I wanted to offer a short video on a resource that I really love- kind of a concept that I have shared with a lot of folks that actually comes out of a Harvard Business review article from 2003.

The article is called 'Fair Process: Managing in the knowledge economy.'

You don't have to read the whole article- though it's quite interesting- but there's sort of a key takeaway that I like to share.

Really the piece is about what's important for managers when working with teams to create buy-in around decision-making.

They run through some case studies and talk about a company in which there were some big changes happening that really upset employees. That employees did not feel included in and bought in on and it created a lot of tension and fallout.

So what they talk about is they say, 'you know, looking across the board at different companies and organizations, there are some key principles that you want to keep in mind when you're managing people in terms of creating that sense of being part of decisions and being part of change which is a natural part of organizational life.

Counter to what you might expect, it's not the most important that people have their way or feel like the thing that they want to happen is what happens.

Certainly people like that, but actually what's most important are these three things that are often referred to as the 3 Es: explanation, engagement, and expectation clarity.

These are the 3 things that they see across the board that are most important to people.

Breaking each of those down- explanation is what it sounds like.

It's making sure that when you're making decisions or something is shifting, people feel like the reasons why and what's happening have been really clearly explained. People can have their questions answered, folks feel like they're part of this in some way because they have a clear understanding of what's going on.

The second E that we'll talk about is engagement.



This one is really important and this is kind of where a lot of my work lies is being thoughtful about- even if something is going to happen, that's not going to be by consensus. You're not going to be able to bring your whole team in and make a decision together. There's something that's just got to happen or the decision is going to lie with folks that are in leadership.

Can you engage people in a meaningful way in shaping that decision in thinking through what it could look like?

So even you know, let's say that you're going to be merging two teams, for instance, and that is not within your purview. It's not something that you can change. Can you engage the folks you manage in thinking through how that transition could look?

How that merger can be more successful?

What are their ideas?

It's important in engagement to do this in a sincere way. I think people can really see through efforts that seem like you're just putting on a show to seem as if you're trying to get their opinions, but you're not actually really curious and taking seriously what they share.

So can you find ways to to do that sincere engagement where people can weigh in and people can think through something.

Is it a focus group?

Is it a survey?

Whatever that might look like.

The last one is expectation clarity.

This is making sure that people understand what's expected before this transition or change might happen.

If we're looking at something that's going to change, being really clear about what is going to shift about your role, what's going to shift about our team, about our relationship, if anything.

What are you expected to do?

What are you expected to maybe do differently?

Again, making sure people's questions are answered and just being really clear about what all this is going to look like.



So those are what are referred to as the three Es. These key principles that create what this article refers to as Fair Process. That's what I want to leave you with.

Thinking about that, in decision-making in a leadership position, you're not always able to include everybody in an equal decision-making role. People are not always going to get their way.

However, if you can keep in mind those three Es, if you can make sure things are explained, if you can make sure there's meaningful engagement, and if you can make sure the expectations surrounding that decision are clear, then there's going to be a lot more buy-in and a stronger sense of cohesion and trust among your team.

So I hope that that is helpful and wishing you well on your supervisor journey.

Thanks so much.

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*Liz London is the founder and lead trainer of Constructive Communities. She has worked with community-based organizations, youth development practitioners, public schools, international non-profits, summer camps, universities, government employees, grassroots movements, and a wide variety of other communities and partners. She holds a Master's of Science in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University, where she now teaches Restorative Justice.*

*Liz creates customized, interactive workshops and facilitation that provide best practices and skill-building for teams looking to promote effective communication and tools for managing conflict. She is passionate about creating transformative experiences for clients that equip them with the tools to sustain healthy workplace culture, handle challenges more confidently, and work better together.*

*Outside of work, Liz loves to travel as much as possible, cook, practice yoga, and play with her toddler.*

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