

## Concise Language

The skill of Concise Language is the ability to select and use the right words to give honest information. In performance management this means telling the truth to people when speaking to them about their performance.

Concise language is applied in bringing precision and clarity to communication and giving the other person the respect of being direct, non-judgmental and honest. Concise language is particularly critical when dealing with issues with employees to ensure that they do not take a defensive position.

Acquiring the skill of conciseness involves eliminating unessential words, which are often used only to camouflage or cushion meanings. The skill involves increasing your vocabulary to use the precise words that say the most to make the point.

The skill is comprised of three broad components:

1. **The honest use of words:** telling the truth
2. **Brevity :** keeping it simple and short and not repeating yourself
3. **Elimination of couching:** not cushioning (softening) the facts.

### *Discussion:*

As a small group, engage in a brief discussion on using concise language in your workplace by answering the following questions.

*When is being concise particularly difficult for you? In these areas, what do you do instead? (Are you vague, Do you repeat? Do you couch?)*

---

*As a leader, how well do you state issues? (What don't you do, but should do? What should you stop doing?)*

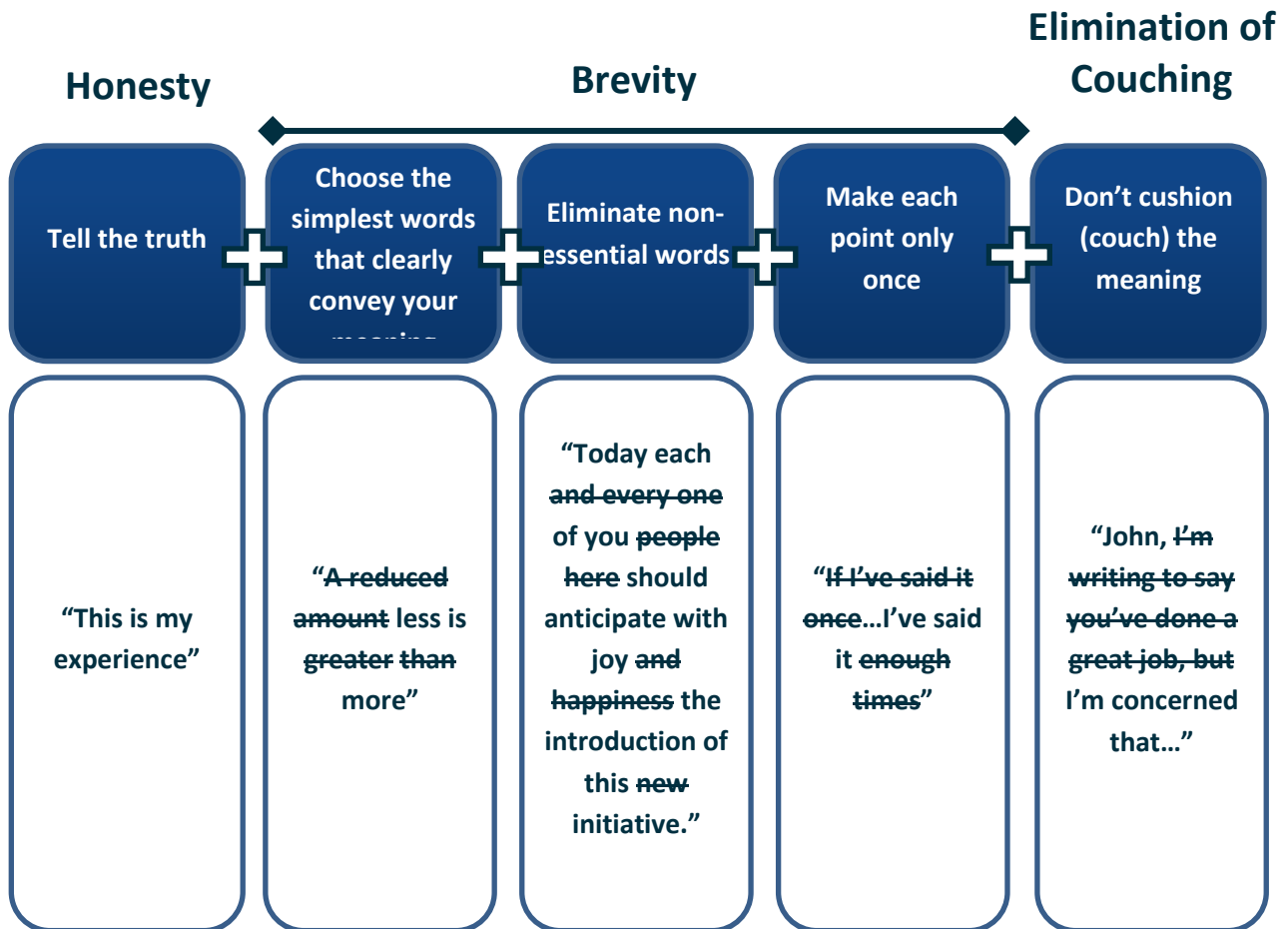
---

*What are the forms of couching you hear in your workplace*

---

## Concise Language Skill Grid

The diagram below sets out the five application steps of the skill of Concise Language under the three broad components of **Honesty**, **Brevity** and **Elimination of Couching**. The + signs between the steps indicate that all steps must be applied to be concise, however there is no specific order in which they must be applied/



### Workplace Scenarios of Concise Language Skills

1. A member of your team has raised that they are interested in moving into a more senior role and would like to add this into their development plan to work on. The staff member is currently meeting all but one aspect of their work performance, which is due to the fact that they are often assisting their peers with their with questions.
2. A staff member has raised that they are interested in a more senior role and would like to add this into their development plan to work on. The staff member is meeting all aspects of their role, although you have had to speak to them on numerous occasions about inappropriate humour.