OVERCOMING DEFENSIVE BEHAVIOR
LEAD Development Workshop

Materials Needed
- Participant workbooks
- Flipchart and Markers

Length of Training
2 Hours

Who Should Participate
- Shift Managers
- Assistant Managers

Learning Objectives
Learn how to maintain a positive and supportive work environment.
Learn how to recognize and manage defensive behavior in ourselves and in others.

Exercises
There will be various group exercises through out the module

Opening Script
- Introductions/Session opener pertaining to Overcoming Defensive Behavior
- Discuss the Action Plan at the back of the workbook
- Review logistics (i.e. cell phones on vibrate, breaks, etc.)
- Review learning objectives
Please note: This module contains an example of a recently updated employment related tool used by Arby’s Restaurant Group, Inc. (“ARG”) in the operation of its company-owned restaurants. We are providing this information only for informational purposes to be used as a tool to assist you with your business. You are not required to use this information. These tools are specifically geared for ARG’s business needs, and your needs and business and legal requirements may vary. ARG does not guarantee that your use of this information will alter your results, economically or otherwise. By receiving this information, you confirm that you are an independent contractor, and we are not your partner, joint venture or joint employer, nor are you our employee. Additional tools that may work for your organization are available through a variety of sources including consultants, periodicals and books, and software. In addition, small business owners should have their company’s hiring practices and assessment processes, including training of manager and employees, reviewed by a qualified attorney and/or consultant. It is your responsibility to ensure that some or all action items described in this document are permitted under your applicable state law.
LEAD Curriculum

This course is a part of the LEAD curriculum. Curriculum includes:

Learn – LEAD modules, training programs
Experience – Experience toolkit
Assess – Next level assessments
Develop – Development review process
Often, people automatically react defensively to situations when they feel there is a threat, conflict, or pressure. The defensive reaction has a negative impact on their ability to improve the situation.

Today, we have three learning objectives for Overcoming Defensive Behavior:

Learn to defuse the **attitude** that promotes defensive behavior

Learn how to maintain a **positive** and **supportive** work environment.

Learn how to recognize and manage **defensive** behavior in ourselves and in others.
Attitude is one of the easiest things to recognize when we talk about identifying defensive behavior. And it can also be the hardest thing to correct in other people.

To get everyone in the right attitude and ready to learn, we are going to do a quick exercise. The purpose of the exercise is to adjust everyone’s attitude and get you ready to learn. Sometimes, doing things outside of the normal routine gets people re-energized.

**TRAINER NOTE**

_Run the Scrambled Cities exercise_
**Scrambled Cities Exercise (3 minutes)**

The purpose of this exercise is to get participants to loosen up and get ready to learn. It is a quick 3 minutes that can make a huge difference when trying to get everyone in the mood to learn, to let down their guard and have some fun.

- Divide participants into groups of 2 or 3
- Mix people up - don’t let them pair with the people they are sitting with
- Give groups 3 minutes to get as many cities unscrambled as possible
- Have fun with it! Award a prize to the team who gets the most correct in the limited time frame.

1. OIAPER PEORIA
Popular American Cities

2. REEDVN DENVER
3. ITSUAN AUSTIN
Popular American Cities

1. TEEATSL
2. SEATTLE
3. TEEATSL
4. TEEATSL  SEATTLE
Popular American Cities

5. LUULOONH  HONOLULU
Popular American Cities

NEW ORLEANS

6. WNE ALROESN  NEW ORLEANS
Popular American Cities

SAN ANTONIO

7. SNA TANNOOI  SAN ANTONIO
Popular American Cities

T I D R E O T

DETOIIT

8. TIDREOT DETROIT
Popular American Cities

NACLROHETS

CHARLESTON

9. NACLROHETS  CHARLESTON
Popular American Cities

I A R T E B L O M

BALTIMORE

10. IARTEBLOM  BALTIMORE
Popular American Cities

ACHIWITI

WICHITA

11. ACHIWITI  WICHITA
Popular American Cities

XNOIEHP

PHOENIX

12. XNOIEHP  PHOENIX
Popular American Cities

Tampa

13. AAPTM  Tampa
Popular American Cities

ULTAS

TULSA

14. ULTAS  TULSA
Popular American Cities

G A C O H I C

CHICAGO

15. GACOHIC  CHICAGO
Let’s go back and talk about the first objective, which was learning to defuse the ATTITUDE that promotes defensive behavior.

Why do you think I decided to run an icebreaker exercise first thing?

Possible Answers Include:
- Get people ready to learn,
- Break the tension in the room,
- Get people interacting with each other,
- Create an atmosphere of learning,
- Defuse any attitudes of defensive behavior.

This works in our restaurants as well, not just a meeting setting. How do you get team members comfortable on their shifts, and engaged?

Hold discussion; possible answers include:
- TIPTOP every team member, every day
- Create contests and fun environments on shifts
- Get to know your team – talk to them about their families/interests/school
- One on One’s with team members
- Group different people together so all can build relationships
**How to Maintain a Positive and Supportive Work Environment**

The best way to deal with defensive behavior is to prevent it in the first place. We each have a tremendous influence on the quality of the work environment or atmosphere in our restaurant.

If you approach your team in a negative or confrontational way, you will cause them to react to you in a defensive way. And when people become defensive, their ability to think and perform their jobs correctly can be greatly diminished.

This makes it much more difficult for you to do your job.

Two key elements in creating a positive work environment are **Leadership** and **Trust**.

Relationship building is critical with Trust. The better the relationship, the more trust individuals have in one another.
Leadership

What is Leadership? Leadership is influence. Being the person in charge or having a title doesn’t make someone a leader. Leadership comes from your ability to inspire trust in other people. If people trust you, they will follow your lead.

John C. Maxwell stated “The true measure of leadership is influence - nothing more, nothing less.”

What are some ways that we, as Leaders, can provide a positive work atmosphere during our shifts?

منذ TRAINER NOTE
Ask the group for suggestions and record answers on a flip chart. Compare those answers with the items listed below.

• Allow people to make mistakes.
• Respond to concerns and ideas quickly. A quick response is the best.
• Provide incentives to keep people communicating their concerns and thoughts on better ways to do things.
• Reward teamwork and “catch people doing something right.”
• Give people more positive feedback than negative.
• Always answer a call for help.
• Listen to your people. It’s a powerful way to show you really care.
• Train. Train. Train…and when you think you’ve trained everyone…train some more. It’s the employees that ultimately deliver the guest experience.
• Praise in public and criticize in private.
• Never use sarcasm toward another member of your team.
• Be the type of leader that you would want to work for.
• Use the Systems to prepare for each shift and make each shift “your personal best.”
Trust
We previously discussed good leadership as an element of a positive and supportive work environment. Now let’s talk about the second piece, trust.

Trust is the foundation for everything you want in your work environment. It is the foundation for communication, employee retention, motivation, and the extra effort you always hope your team demonstrates. When the trust is there, almost everything else is easier to achieve.

**TRAINER NOTE**
*Ask the group to write the following bullet points in their workbooks.*

Trust is the foundation for:

- Communication
- Employee retention
- Motivation
- Extra effort you always hope your team will demonstrate
Trust

Here is an acronym that gives some excellent insight on some of the components of Trust.

T.R.U.S.T. = Truthfulness + Results + Understanding Motives + Skill + Team Player

Truthfulness
Always Tell the Truth. Tell it like it is.

Results
Make Things Happen. Well-run shifts with happy employees and happy guests.

Understanding Motives
Why do we do what we do? We share the same motive or purpose: Inspiring Smiles Through Delicious Experiences

Skill
Increase your skill level. Learning never stops. You only get a chance to do more when you can prove you’re ready.

Team Player/ Builder
Build teams by caring for your people. Take responsibility to build your team. Share the credit - “We Did It Ourselves” builds confidence and improves performance.
TRAINER NOTE

Break into groups of three or four. Have the participants answer the questions and discuss their responses as a group. Ask for volunteers to share their answers with the class and discuss.

Communication Climate Exercise (15 minutes)

Read the descriptions at the end of each scale. Indicate where you think your restaurant falls by circling the number.
**Communication Climate Exercise**

1. People are critical, judgmental and will not accept employees’ explanations. 

   People communicate clearly, describe situations fairly and present their views without judging.

| -5 | -4 | -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +5 |

For example,

The lower end of the scale is:
People are critical, judgmental and will not accept employees’ explanations.

The higher end of the scale is:
People communicate clearly, describe situations fairly and present their views without judging.

On a scale of -5 to +5, where would you score your restaurant? In this example, we would rank the restaurant at a +2.

Read through all the questions and score your restaurant.
**Scoring**

Record your scores in the space provided and add them together.

Your final score tells you the general nature of the communication climate in your restaurant.

An overall negative (-) score means the climate tends to be defensive.

An overall positive (+) score indicates a supportive climate.

Once you’ve determined your overall climate score, circle the scale at the bottom to show where your restaurant stands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Climate</th>
<th>Defensive Climate</th>
<th>Supportive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>-30 -24 -18 -12 -6 0 +6 +12 +18 +24 +30</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Now refer to the interpretation guide.
Interpreting Your Score

Interpretation Guide

**Point Range**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Action to Take</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+24 to +30</td>
<td>Your communication climate is very supportive. Discuss ways to keep an open work climate. Well done!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+6 to +23</td>
<td>Your communication climate is supportive. Review the questions to discover ways to improve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-5 to +5</td>
<td>Your communication climate is inconsistent. Look for ways to build a positive climate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-6 to -23</td>
<td>Your communication climate is somewhat defensive. Review your responses to the questions to identify areas needing improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-24 to -30</td>
<td>Your communication climate is very defensive. Review the questions to identify areas needing improvement. Discuss these with your management team. Set goals to improve and put your plans into action now.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Summary
A supportive communication climate leads to higher job satisfaction among each member of your team. It is reflected in the service your guests receive and ultimately in the results of your restaurant. Supportive climates don’t just happen. You and your management team should constantly work at it by communicating freely with each other and with the team. Practice Positive Mental Attitude by example. This way, everyone wins.
Recognizing Defensive Behavior

The first step is to recognize your own defensiveness. As we said earlier, people become defensive when they feel threatened.

When do you feel threatened? How do you feel when you’re threatened?

Possible answers include: rapid breathing, sweaty palms, high-pitched voice, tightness in the chest and fidgeting.

The process to overcome defensiveness has five steps:

TRAINER NOTE
Ask the participants to record their answer in the blocks below.

1. IDENTIFY YOUR “HOT BUTTONS”
2. IDENTIFY CAUSES
3. CALMLY RESPOND WITH QUESTIONS
4. UNDERSTANDING & PREVENTION
5. CONFIRM AGREEMENT

This simple five-step process will help you accept responsibility for your actions, identify the cause of your actions, and determine the threat you are reacting to. By using this defensive behavior technique, you’ll reach agreements with the other party and implement agreed upon solutions.
IDENTIFY YOUR “HOT BUTTONS”

1. **IDENTIFY YOUR “HOT BUTTONS”**

The first step is to identify your “Hot Buttons”. Emotions play a key role in defensive behavior. Recognizing the emotions that trigger the defensive behavior is important. How do you feel about the cause of your defensiveness? Identify the situations, words, and topics that you know will create a strong emotional response.

### TRAINER NOTE

- Give an example of a personal “hot button” and ask the group to give examples of “hot buttons’ that they are aware of for either themselves or for others.
- Record the answers on the flipchart.

#### Examples might include:
- Being called stupid
- Phrases like, “you always…” or “you never…”
- Politics
- “What were you thinking?”
- Religion

To acknowledge your emotions, make a very brief “I” statement. It might go like this:

“I am angry that…”
“I am disappointed because…”

“I” statements place ownership of the defensiveness where it belongs – with you! Notice how different “I” statements are from statements that place blame like:

“You make me angry…”
“You disappoint me…”

By accepting ownership of your defensiveness, you gain control of it.
2. IDENTIFY CAUSES

The second step is to Identify Causes. This helps to complete the “I” statement. Why do you feel threatened? What caused the negative emotion? State the cause in clear, objective terms. Focus on what the other person did, not the person’s character, personality or your opinion of them.

For example, your manager has scheduled you to work on a Friday night that you had requested off a month ago. You’re really angry because you made plans for that night.

A defensive response would be: “You ruined my plans again. Why can’t you remember when I ask for a day off?”

The manager’s oversight is not the problem. The real problem is the conflict created by the Friday schedule.

A positive “I” statement might be: “I’m disappointed that I’m scheduled to work Friday night because I made plans after you told me it was “OK’ to have the night off.”

This statement acknowledges your ownership of your disappointment and identifies the cause in a positive way. Chances are the manager will respond supportively, not defensively.
3. CALMLY RESPOND WITH QUESTIONS

The third step is to Calmly Respond with Questions. Use this step to keep yourself from reacting impulsively without thinking through your response. This is a step that requires the most practice.

In the example of the Friday schedule, you might ask the manager an open-ended question such as, “I noticed you scheduled me to work on Friday after I had asked for the day off. What can be done so I can have Friday off?” This encourages your manager to check the schedule and confirm it or make the necessary changes.
4. UNDERSTANDING & PREVENTION

The fourth step begins the process of Understanding and Prevention. The goal of this step is to try to prevent repetition of the event that caused your defensiveness.

Begin by asking open-ended questions to explore preventive solutions. You might ask, “How can we?” prevent such schedule problems?” or “What can be done to solve the problem?” It is important to involve the other person and to focus on prevention without placing blame.
5. CONFIRM AGREEMENT

The final step to change defensive behavior is to Confirm Agreement. What will each of you do in the future to eliminate misunderstandings and confusion? What can be done to make the system work better?

In our scheduling examples, you might agree to put the request for time-off in writing and to place the request closer to the date you want off. The manager might agree to confirm the request before making out the schedule. These actions will eliminate the need for defensiveness.
Summary
To overcome your own defensiveness you must first recognize why you’re defensive. What is the cause? Then, follow the five-step process.

- Acknowledge your defensiveness with an “I” statement.
- Identify the causes of your defensiveness.
- Calmly respond with questions.
- Gain understanding and prevent a re-occurrence.
- Reach and confirm agreements.

TRAINER NOTE
Allow participants 5 minutes to complete the exercise. Discuss results.

Gathering Information Exercise (10 Minutes)

Instructions
Identify someone you usually feel defensive around. Use the five-step process to address your defensiveness. Complete the following action plan.
How to Overcome Someone Else’s Defensive Behavior

When people become defensive, they automatically take on a defensive attitude. No matter what you say to them about a problem, they can explain…Why they couldn’t help making a mistake…Why they are not to blame because they meant well…Why it’s your fault that they made the mistake.…

They’re so defensive that sometimes it’s a real issue just trying to get them to address the problem.

One way to overcome a defensive attitude is to ask questions that almost force people to think through the current situation in depth.

For instance, if you ask a question like “Tell me what happened first” and then ask “then what happened?” you are asking the employee to take a step back from the emotional defense they have created and look at the situation overall. You are asking them to tell you what happened, not defend why it happened.

By recognizing the situations that cause them to become defensive, you will be in a better position to deal with them. This will allow you to overcome their defensiveness and move on to addressing the real problem and help them improve performance.

A second thing you can do is acknowledge and empathize with the employees point to help them feel heard. People tend to act and remain defensive when they feel they are not being heard.

The last thing you can do to overcome a defensive attitude is to provide the employee with feedback. Let them know that you can tell they are becoming defensive and that you do not want them to feel that way. Ask open questions to clarify what is making them feel that way and work together to better the situation.

By the very nature of your role as the manager, it is easy to threaten employees. Even if you would never knowingly threaten an employee, the reaction is the same. That’s why you need to be sensitive to employees and how they perceive you. In this section, you will learn an approach you can use to overcome defensive behavior in others.
Instruct participants to record their answers in the blocks below.

To overcome someone else’s defensiveness, you will:

**Step 1. Recognize the Other Person’s Feelings**
When you sense another person is defensive, recognize their feelings. Remember that defensiveness takes many forms, so look for signs other than just outward hostility.

For example, an employee may have suddenly stopped talking to you. This sudden change is a sure sign that something is up. It may have nothing to do with you, but by affirming the behavior you’ll quickly find out what is wrong. Here’s how to do it. Simply make a “You seem...” statement. For example; “You seem unusually quiet, is there something wrong?” “You seem to be upset; can you tell me what’s bothering you?”

**Step 2. Listen**
Practice active listening. Be prepared to ask open-ended questions to explore the problem. Confirm facts with closed-ended questions.

Use your listening skills and show respect by assuming value in what the employee has to say.
Step 3. Give Clear Feedback
Give feedback that focuses on the job or specific behavior, not on the person. Your feedback should focus on the facts.
Chances are the employee will ask for feedback, so be prepared with feedback that focuses on the desired behavior. Remember, your feedback should be designed to help overcome the problem, not prove your point.

Step 4. Problem Solving
Focus on what can be done and what both of you are willing to do to prevent the cause of defensive behavior and create a supportive work relationship. Who will do what by when?

Step 5. Confirm Agreement
If necessary, record your agreement in writing. At a minimum, confirm the agreements by summarizing what will be done when. Communicate to the employee your commitment to helping them improve.
Defensive Behavior Exercise

Instructions:

• Identify an employee who usually acts defensively around you.

• Use the defensive behavior approach to help him/her handle the defensiveness.

TRAINER NOTE
Break into groups of three or four. Have the participants answer the questions and discuss their responses as a group. Ask for volunteers to share their answers with the class and discuss.

Summary
In this module you have learned the negative effects of defensive behavior on communication and performance. It’s important to understand the “roadblock” that defensive behavior can create on the path to great performance. You’ve also learned how to provide a supportive communication climate and how to overcome your own, as well as someone else’s, defensive behavior.

Take the new skills you have learned today and practice them. Use them in your everyday life and you will grow to become a supportive communicator and proactively identify defensive behavior.
OVERCOMING DEFENSIVE BEHAVIOR
Overcoming Defensive Behavior

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE
Understands how to recognize and manage defensive behavior in themselves and others.

MAINTAINING POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT
– Leadership - T.R.U.S.T.

OVERCOMING YOUR OWN DEFENSIVE BEHAVIOR
– Identify “Hot Buttons”
– Identify Causes
– Calmly Respond with Questions
– Understanding / Prevention
– Agreements

OVERCOMING SOMEONE ELSE’S DEFENSIVE BEHAVIOR
▪ Recognize others feelings
▪ Listen
▪ Give Clear Feedback
▪ Problem-solve
▪ Confirm agreements

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observe over the next period &amp; give feedback on maintaining a positive work environment, diffusing defensive behavior &amp; handling conflict appropriately</td>
<td></td>
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PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARDS</th>
<th>COMMENTS / IMPROVEMENT NEEDED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trainee demonstrates leadership 7 T.R.U.S.T. in creating a positive work environment</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainee appropriately addresses conflict &amp; problems without becoming defensive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainee diffuses defensive behavior in others &amp; handles conflict appropriately</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Manager Signature: _________________________ Date: _____________
Supervisor Signature: _________________________ Date: _____________