

Fold me

"People may forget what you said — but they will never forget how you made them feel"
- *Maya Angelou*



positivity.project@oregon.gov

Fold me

ACTIVE CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONDING

 Varies

 Varies

 Varies

Active Constructive Responding

The theme of connecting in our communities includes creating and maintaining positive social relationships. Active Constructive Responding (ACR) is a technique that can help. ACR is a way of responding when someone shares good experiences or information. If the receiver of the good news actively and constructively responds it can often provide a boost in wellbeing to both people involved in the conversation (Lambert et al, 2013).

Research has found that people most commonly respond to good news in one of four ways:

Passive Destructive:

Characteristics: disinterest, does not pay much attention, changes the topic of conversation. *Body Language:* looks at watch, sighs, or turns away from the conversation. *Example:* “what’s for dinner?” - “guess what happened to me today?”

Passive Constructive:

Characteristics: passively engaged with little enthusiasm and doesn’t make a big deal of the situation. *Body Language:* a head nod and a gentle smile. *Example:* “that’s nice Dad.”

Active Destructive:

Characteristics: actively points out the problems associated with the ‘good’ news, creates doubt and concern about the scenario, completely kills any excitement. *Body language:* reactive or aggressive, authoritative movements. *Example:* “wow, are you sure you want to go there, it’s so dangerous – have you considered the risks?”

Active Constructive:

Characteristics: actively responds to the good news with interest and enthusiasm, asks questions to re-experience the moment, pleasant and joyful conversation. *Body language:* leaning into the conversation, an increase in movement/hand gestures, people show something to help communicate the experience. *Example:* “that’s amazing, I’m so happy for you – tell me how you felt when you found out!”

Benefits of ACR

Researchers examined the effects of ACR for people in relationships of longer than three months, as well as married couples. The below results were found:

Personal benefits

- Increased positive emotions
- Increased subjective well-being
- Increased self-esteem
- Decreased loneliness

Relationship benefits

- Increased commitment
- Increased trust, liking, closeness
- Increased stability

(Gable et al, 2010).

ACR conveys a response that demonstrates understanding, care, and validation not only of what the person has to say, but of your relationship with them. ACR is genuine and authentic.