

Role Play Scenario

Halting the Creeping Rationalisation

Theme	Inference
Roles	Supervisor – Kerry Team Member – Morgan Morgan’s staff person – Val (not present in the role play) (Observer)
Situation:	Kerry is a senior manager and Morgan is a manager who reports to Kerry. It has come to Kerry’s attention via several people, independently of each other, that they have felt bullied by Val, one of Morgan’s senior staff. Not all of these people currently work under Morgan but have done so in the last couple of years. At least one of these people reported the incidents to Morgan. Morgan was quite sympathetic and offered supportive advice to help the person cope with Val’s behaviour. Morgan also explained that Val is under quite a bit of stress “at the moment.” Kerry is aware that Morgan doesn’t supervise Val closely. Val operates out of a different location and sends reports to Morgan. As such, it is possible that Morgan is getting a sanitised view of what happens from Val. Kerry is also uncertain about how many other people raised with Morgan their concerns about their treatment by Val. The chief concern for Kerry is that Morgan probably has enough information to know that Val’s behaviour is unacceptable, regardless of the reasons. Kerry suspects that Morgan has made a series of inferences that rationalise away Val’s behaviour. Worse still, Morgan may be normalising Val’s behaviour and putting responsibility for dealing with it on the people complaining, ie. they need to learn how to cope with it. In all this, Morgan is probably trying to be a good, supportive manager.
Starting Point:	Kerry and Morgan have just finished a team meeting and Kerry has asked Morgan to stay behind to discuss some matters.
Objective:	Identify the inferences Morgan is making that justify Val’s behaviour and clarify with Morgan what really needs to be done.
Focus:	Inference