EMPLOYING EMPATHIC LISTENING TO BUILD A MORE INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE CLIMATE

Presenters
Breanne Taylor, M.S. & Robynn M. Pease, Ph.D.
University Ombuds Office
https://ombuds.oregonstate.edu/
ABCD Model for Conflict Resolution

Achieve Rapport

Boil Down the Issues

Clarify Interests

Develop a Game Plan
The Conflict Continuum

Empathic Listening & ABCD model may be appropriate

Miscommunications among colleagues
Friendly disagreements between coworkers
Creative & perspective differences

Additional assistance could be beneficial or required

A toxic work climate
Criminal violations
Harassment or Violence

Conflict is a “discomforting difference” – Michael Dues
Training Days 2019  
Employing Empathic Listening

Case Study

It’s 8:15am when MaryAnn enters the staff kitchen to reheat her coffee. She is new in her position and still getting use to the ebb and flow of the busy administrative unit. Her coworker, Linda, has been helpful but they don’t know each other very well. As MaryAnn waits for the microwave, Carl, one of the student workers, enters with coffee in hand to put away his lunch. MaryAnn asks Carl about his weekend and the two of them swap stories about what they did. During this exchange MaryAnn notices that the front desk phone is ringing nonstop. MaryAnn says farewell to Carl, now that her coffee is sufficiently heated, and returns to her cubicle. MaryAnn then overhears the following exchange:  

Carl: Good morning Linda. How are you today?  
Linda: I’d be a whole lot better if I had stopped for coffee this morning but someone needs to be on time to answer the phones.  
Carl: Oh well I’m sorry I was a few minutes late.  
Linda: Next time you’re running late skip the morning chitchat. Not everyone has time to socialize in the kitchen.

MaryAnn feels her face turn red as she realizes Linda must have heard her conversation with the student. MaryAnn feels a rush of emotions ranging from embarrassment to anger. As the day progresses she continue to overhear awkward exchanges between Linda and Carl. Linda is still angry and upset because she leaves at the end of the day without the normal chorus of goodbyes to all the staff. Let’s explore together how Empathetic Active Listening can be used to address this situation.
Empathic Listening Action Step: REFLECT

• How might this be an opportunity to improve the working relationship?

• Where might the conflict lie on the conflict continuum?

• Reflect on your own experience, emotions, and perspective within the conflict.
Empathic Listening Action Step: INVITE

• What kind of information would be helpful to share with the other person in advance of visiting?

• Consider where and when the meeting should take place.

• What are some ways you might invite someone to have a conversation?
Empathic Listening Action Step: ACHIEVE RAPPORT

• Continue to build momentum to achieve good rapport in the moment.

• Minimize potential distractions. Try not to interrupt.

• Focus on your own body language and what it is communicating.
Empathic Listening Action Step: BOIL DOWN THE ISSUES

• Ask questions to ensure you are talking about the same issues.

• Be curious and seek to distill the conflict into a few key issues.

• Gather information to help you understand the “whole story”.

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Empathic Listening Action Step: CLARIFY & EMPATHIZE

We can sometimes confuse empathy with sympathy.

Brené Brown’s short clip explores the difference between the two concepts.

https://www.youtube.com?v=1Evwgu369Jw
Empathic Listening Step: SUMMARIZE & DEVELOP A GAME PLAN

- Brainstorm possible solutions.
- Take time to confirm understanding of next steps, clarifying as needed.
- Establish a time to check back in, to ensure next steps are having the intended impact.
In closing

When employing empathic active listening to build a more inclusive workplace environment, be sure to:

• Listen for the whole message.
• Practice reflective listening & reframing.
• Don’t be afraid of silence.
• Seek additional assistance for conflict that involves a toxic climate, crime, or imminent risk of harm to self or others.
Last Word
Conflict is context dependent!

sigh, I don’t think I’m flying well

clap

aw, thanks for the encouragement
Presentation References


