



## EMPATHY IN THE WORKPLACE

I see articles and have attended training programs emphasizing the importance of “empathy” for supervisors. The dictionary defines empathy as the “ability to understand and share the feelings of another.” Why is this so important?

### EMPATHY

(n.) the ability to step into the shoes of another person, aiming to understand their feelings and perspectives, and to use that understanding to guide our actions.



Great topic! Empathy in the workplace is a powerful tool for supervisors. A simple example would be, to recognize an employee who is experiencing grief, and offer a supportive response. A more complex example would be listening to an employee’s complaints, but suspending your judgment and not labeling the worker as a malcontent. Instead focus on understanding and discover the thinking behind the complaints, and test out solutions in a way that may benefit the whole team.

Practical empathy requires “seek to understand” conversations, wisely used privately with individuals, and at times appropriate in group conversations.

When you carefully observe the behaviors of employees, engage with them and listen to them, you begin to identify their feeling states. Over time, ask those open-ended “How, What, When and Where” questions, and listen carefully to the responses! Employees will discover that you are truly interested in them. This does not make you a mind reader but the fact that you carefully LISTEN to responses has a huge side benefit – you will be more trusted as a leader! As you accurately detect issues and concerns affecting productivity and teamwork, the more your employees view you as a ‘safe’ person. As you build an environment of ‘safety’ you enhance loyalty and trust in the team!

### Leadership Orientation Session B

Watch for Up Coming Classes

#### CONTACT US TODAY:

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#### ATTENTION: SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS, ADMINISTRATORS:

Session A: “Leadership Orientation to the EAP”, is always available on the website.

Please check your wallet cards or contact your HR department for your username and password.

Website Information – Webinars are available in the Work/Life Services site. Log in on Connections website go to Employee or Leadership Resources tab to access webinars, continue to scroll down on the Work/Life Services opening page. (All webinars are archived for later viewing.)

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