

Effective Questions

Effective questions *open up* the dialogue, rather than shut it down. They invite your colleague to share their thinking and perspective more openly. They encourage understanding and learning, rather than competition and blame. *Which effective questions can you add to your listening toolkit?*

Low Quality

Closed Questions (Yes/No)

- ☐ Do others feel that way, too?
- ☐ Does that make sense?
- ☐ Do you understand now?
- ☐ Did you talk to anyone else?

Problem Focused

- ☐ Why can't we do this?
- ☐ Where did your team go wrong?
- ☐ Why isn't this working?

Forced Choice

- ☐ Would you prefer X, or Y?
- ☐ Did you do that because of X, because of Y or because of Z?

Seek Compliance

- ☐ Why don't you just try?
- ☐ You agree, don't you?

High Quality

Open Ended

- ☐ How do others feel?
- ☐ What do you think about what I said?
- ☐ What questions come to mind for you?
- ☐ What did she say?

Solution Focused

- ☐ What would it take?
- ☐ What does your team need to win?
- ☐ How can we make it work?

Exploratory

- ☐ What led you to do that? What was your thinking/concern/interest?

Encourage Challenge

- ☐ What about my idea raises doubt?
- ☐ In what ways is your view different?

Effective Questions (Cont.)

Low Quality

Leading or Rhetorical

- ☐ Don't you think that ...?
- ☐ Wouldn't you agree that...?

Imply Others are at Fault

- ☐ Why didn't you just tell me?
- ☐ Why didn't you take care of this?
- ☐ Why can't you understand?

Encourage Motivational Attributions

- ☐ Why don't they like it?
- ☐ Why didn't she come to the meeting?

Encourage Blame

- ☐ Whose fault is this?
- ☐ Who is responsible for this?

Elicit Excuses

- ☐ Why can't we do this?
- ☐ Why didn't you do it?
- ☐ What went wrong?

High Quality

Advocate, then Encourage Challenge

- ☐ My view is ... How do you see it?
- ☐ What alternative options are possible?

Examine your Contribution

- ☐ What prevented you from telling me? I'm wondering if I said or did something that made it difficult.
- ☐ Is there any part of this that I can restate more clearly?

Generate Observable Data

- ☐ What did they communicate in response?
- ☐ What did she say about coming to the meeting?

Gain Understanding

- ☐ What happened that led to the problems?
- ☐ What can we learn so that we can improve?

Promote Action

- ☐ What results do we want to achieve?
- ☐ What would it take to make it work?
- ☐ What choices would we have to make?
- ☐ How might we do both/and rather than either/or?