

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS



Session Leader Guide

Throughout life we all have good days and bad days. With everything going on around us in our daily work we all know that changes is a way of life, and we all react differently to change. As a team you either drive change or work to take on changes. It is very common that we judge the expected reaction from others based on our own thoughts and feelings.

During turbulent times of change or if you are unsure of what is going on “beneath the surface” in your team, you could make it a habit to ask these “Important Questions”. This will give you and the team a better, updated picture of how your group feels and thinks at the moment, and we advise you start your meetings with these opening diagnostic questions especially when your team goes through more difficult times.

If you make it a habit of asking these questions even under “normal” times, it provides you and your team with a base for more connectivity and learning, and it will help to bond your team and make them more viable and independent.

The important questions are:

1. How are you feeling right now? How do you think your colleagues feel?
2. If any, what are your major “energy leaks” today? What about your colleagues?
3. What is the most important question for you right now?

PURPOSE

To create a better and mutual understanding of the group's present concerns, feelings and expectations. To surface individual and collective needs for action to deal with the current situation in the best way.

OBJECTIVE

At the end of this exercise you should be able to listen better and align your planned actions.

TIME

You will need 20-30 minutes, including the introduction, exercise and reflection. The time will differ depending on how often you ask these important questions, the scope of the change your team faces at the moment, the level of trust in the group, etc.

STEPS TO TAKE

1. After completing the introduction phase of your meeting (e.g. Purpose, Objective and Agenda) you should explain the purpose of this exercise.
2. Write the three Important Questions on the whiteboard or flipchart.
3. Give everyone a few minutes to reflect individually on these questions and write down their answers on a piece of paper. After a while, encourage the group to share in pairs what they have written. Close by sharing your reflections with the whole group. Write key comments and conclusions on the whiteboard or flipchart so that everyone can read them.
4. NB! If the level of trust is low or has not been developed yet in the team, then have the team only discuss and share question number 3. Make the other two questions optional to share if they want to.
5. Take time to really understand what is being said. Ask for clarification and paraphrase to ensure that both you and your group have understood what has been said.
6. If the response and reaction is very strong to these questions, you may need to reconsider your original agenda and spend the rest of the meeting trying to understand and listening to the group's concerns. Remember, you do not need an answer to all questions. If you are unable to answer, say so. It is also important that you show integrity and are consistent in your beliefs and messages. The key purpose of the meeting is to listen and show you care.
7. Conclude the session by reading aloud your conclusions from what has been discussed and when and how you intend to revert to the issues. Be open to comments and adjustments.

AFTER THE SESSION

1. As the leaders of the team, reflect upon the outcome of what your team has shared. What are their key concerns, questions, dreams and desire at this moment? Where is their energy and focus? How do you need to respond as a leader to this? What actions, support and leadership is needed at this moment to take your team further and grow and develop?
2. Make sure the collected call for answers and actions are addressed (individually and/or collectively). Make sure you meet the expected commitments you have made.
3. Ask for help, if needed.