



TriMetrix®HD Understanding and Evaluating Others

Understanding and Evaluating Others

The capacity to perceive and understand the feelings and attitudes of others.

Why is this skill important?

Understanding and Evaluating Others well is the development of the capacity to discern individuality in people, whether they are business associates, social friends or acquaintances. Appreciating and adapting to different people increases the effectiveness of interpersonal relationships. This knowledge can be applied thoughtfully in a wide variety of scenarios, from everyday interaction with others to managing others.

A person with skill in the Understanding and Evaluating of Others is conscious of how his or her actions impact others because they are clearly aware of the life situations of others, seeing things from the other person's perspective and perceiving their needs. They can combine observation, memory, knowledge, and reasoning to yield insights into the thoughts and feelings of others, while remaining grounded in their own perspective.

Understanding and Evaluating Others enables you to make the most of your interactions with others. If you are attentive and understanding of other peoples' perspectives, you will be much more likely to meet and exceed their expectations by providing the best solutions and presenting them in the most effective manner. This promotes an environment of trust and understanding. You will build a reputation for being attentive and fair in your dealings with other people. Keeping your sights on Understanding and Evaluating Others will help you accomplish your goals and encourage effective teamwork.

What are skills associated with Understanding and Evaluating Others?

Understanding and Evaluating Others is linked to other interpersonal skills such as personal relationship building, balanced decision making and leading others.

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Understanding and Evaluating Others:

- Uses balanced decision making and a sense of timing, demonstrating an awareness of how actions will directly and indirectly impact others.
- Listens attentively with regard for the feelings of others.
- Values and respects the diversity of others and their beliefs, free from prejudices.
- Demonstrates realistic expectations by proactively thinking about situations from another person's perspective.
- Practices internal self control, choosing a positive attitude toward others which builds personal relationships.
- Is personally accountable for relating to others by understanding their motivational needs, correcting and leading them based on an orientation toward results rather than emotion.

How do you develop your own skills in Understanding and Evaluating Others?

Develop your capacity to be patient. Allow other people to contribute to the pace and content of an interaction. If you have important items to share, make sure you do so, but don't push your agenda to the point at which the other person's perspective is ignored.

- Listen to people without interrupting, concentrating on what the speaker is trying to convey. Try to put yourself in their shoes. What is his or her frame of reference for what is being said? Why do they think the way they do on the subject?
- Summarize the key points of any discussion as you listen. Paraphrase it out loud to the other person and ask them to confirm that you understood. Briefly restating what someone has just told you shows that you're listening carefully and that you want to understand what is being said.
- Listen non-verbally. Maintain eye contact with the speaker. Give signals that you are listening; nods or signs of agreement at appropriate times. Take responsibility for eliminating unnecessary distractions such as ringing cell phones.
- Observe non-verbal communication such as clenched fists, smiles, gestures of boredom and defensive postures. Try to guess why the person is sending those messages. Ask what the person is thinking or feeling if the person's non-verbal cues do not match his verbal communication.

- Use open-ended questions, such as, “Tell me about your meeting,” or “What makes you say that?” Questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no aren’t as useful for understanding others. Open-ended questions provide opportunities for the person you are talking with to express their thoughts on a topic and provide insight you might not have accessed otherwise.
- Allow people to disagree with you. This does not mean you have to change your own position, but seeking to understand when someone else states their point of view develops your respect for others.
- Establish an open door policy, and if someone wants to discuss a problem, be prepared to listen without making judgment. Recognize that a team is stronger when there is appreciation for different people.
- If someone comes to you for advice or help in resolving a problem, assist them to the extent that is appropriate and within your power. Do your best to suggest reasonable improvements or changes.
- Use equitable criteria when assigning projects and judging performance. This doesn’t mean that everyone is capable of doing exactly the same level or type of work, but everyone has a right to be assigned increasingly more challenging projects when they demonstrate readiness. Diligently examine how you make assignments to make sure you are considering the unique developmental needs of each individual.
- If you make a request of someone or give a work assignment, be clear about what specifically will constitute the desired results. Explain your rationale behind making decisions and listen to their responses. • Simple, sincere courtesy goes a long way in all interpersonal relationships. Be sure to say “Please,” “You’re welcome,” and “Thank you”.
- Publicly express your appreciation for another’s job well done. Praising an individual for good work one-on-one goes a long way, but public praise goes further!

Understanding and Evaluating Others

Activities

Activity 1: Investigating Another's Perspective

1. Make it a goal to use at least one open-ended question in every conversation you have tomorrow. If you have listened attentively and summarized the speaker's comments in your mind as they speak, this should be easy to do.
2. The next time someone disagrees with you, use it as an opportunity to learn about how he or she thinks. Ask him or her, "What information guided you to this opinion?" or "Tell me more about your position on this issue." Practice listening closely while they speak, without silently formulating a response.
3. The next time someone complains about a workplace issue or you observe people having difficulty with a company or department policy, question them about it. Ask what challenges and solutions they see and write them down. Notice and appreciate when someone else's point of view generates useful solutions that you may have overlooked.

Activity 2: Focusing On Other People

Make a list of people in your organization who have handled a difficult situation well. Add to that list people you know have put extra time and energy into achieving an important company objective. Resolve to compliment them on a job well done or treat them to a special reward. In order to decide the best way to express your gratitude, consider their point of view. What expression of thanks are they likely to prefer? What will best center attention on recognizing their efforts rather than on yours?

Next compose a list people who have come to you with concerns, either professional or personal, within the last few weeks. Think about their concerns and consider what is the most appropriate way you can assist them. Decide on specific ways to give positive attention to those people. Offer to help with a difficult task, to listen when they need someone to talk to or guide them to other resources which they might be unaware. Let them know that you care about how they feel.

Coworker	Issue	Action

Activity 3: Review of Your Skills

Use the following table to begin your plan for improving your understanding skills. Add any additional thoughts you may have for personal improvement in Understanding and Evaluating Others.

Activity	Start Date
Identify a person you'd like to understand better and ask them to join you for a casual lunch or cup of coffee. Ask them open-ended questions about themselves and practice really listening to their point of view.	
Move out from behind your desk when you are meeting with someone so you can literally view material from the same perspective.	
Double the number of times you paraphrase what a speaker has told you.	

Activity	Start Date
Ask someone you trust to count how many times you interrupt in various conversations.	
Take time for brief, informal chats with other people, and practice listening with genuine interest to what they share about their personal lives.	
Practice saying “please” and “thank you” when you ask someone to do something.	
Count how many times a week you allow someone to disagree with you without feeling the need to defend yourself or give in to their point of view.	
The next time you catch yourself silently criticizing another person, take a mental step back to shift your attitude. Develop your appreciation of their unique attributes by making a list of positive things you identify in this person.	
Others:	
Others:	

