

## Empathy Best Practices

“Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”-Steven Covey, author of 7 Habits of Highly Successful People

### **Create a Safe Environment**

Meet regularly with your colleagues to safely discuss ideas, problems, issues and next steps for projects and assignments. A safe environment where employees are not judged or criticized allows more employee interaction and engagement and allows them to discuss challenges with work assignments and possible solutions to those challenges. It also helps others better understand their roles and responsibilities.

### **Be emotionally curious**

Don't always use your time meeting with others as an opportunity to provide status updates and direct reports. Get creative with it. Ask questions that spark emotion and engagement: Ex. *What wins are you celebrating? What are you most curious about? What are you looking forward to the most? What about this project are you most passionate about? What about this situation do you find frustrating?*

### **Listen, Understand, and Validate (LUV)**

Really listen to the other person's perspective and hear the entire message. Give that person your full attention. Put down the phone, stop typing the email. Reassure them that what they say is important. Refrain from judging, criticizing, or persuading, and focus on listening intently and observing their tone of voice to better understand the situation. Remember, it's not about being right, it's about listening.

Ask questions to validate your understanding, and clarify anything that does not make sense. Use positive productive language such as: *What are your choices? What worked well for you? What can you do the next time?*

### **Empower, don't micromanage**

Giving people latitude is gratitude. Empowering them to get the work done instead of leading every detail of the assignment will go a long way. It builds trust, respect, and accountability. People will be more engaged and are more willing to participate in work activities.

### **Celebrate small and large wins**

This boosts confidence and keeps you from always focusing on the negative. Acknowledge the efforts no matter how big or small they might be. Failing to do this is a lost opportunity to reflect on your progress and acknowledge your success.