

ACTIVITY | Seeking to Understand



GOAL | To gain a more thorough understanding of alternative viewpoints and the rationale behind them.



RELEVANT FOR

- Executive
- Middle Manager
- Supervisor
- Caseworker



DESCRIPTION | Set up a face-to-face meeting with someone whose perspective typically differs from yours.

Treat this as a journalistic endeavor where you are seeking to understand the basis for the other person's opinions and positions.

Use the questions on the worksheet to guide the process.



Seeking to Understand

Identify a person with a different perspective than your own and set up a meeting with the explicit purpose of understanding their worldview. Ask questions such as:

- What values inform your thoughts on...?
- What are your most important interests related to this issue?
- When did you become passionate about this issue?
- How do you think your opinions were formed?
- What interests do we agree on? How are our strategies different?

Consider how you might integrate this new information and possibly change the way you interact with them.

- Spend some time reflecting on the interaction. Ask yourself the following questions:
- What did you learn from hearing the other person's perspective?
- What aspects of the person's thinking can you integrate?
- Will you interact differently as with this person result of this conversation? How?