



## COACHING FOR SAFETY

Safety Coaching is the day-to-day hands on process of helping employees achieve, maintain, and improve safety performance. It is an active process that requires a continual shift in the role of the coach, from assisting with the acquisition of the required safety knowledge and skills, to identifying and addressing inadequate safety performance, to recognising and supporting safe behaviours and practices.

### SAFETY COACHING SKILLS INCLUDE:

1. LISTENING
2. QUESTIONING
3. GIVING FEEDBACK
4. HOLDING EFFECTIVE TEAM MEETINGS
5. FACILITATING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS
6. DIAGNOSING PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS
7. SETTING HEALTH AND SAFETY OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS



# COMMUNICATION: LISTENING



Good communication is a fundamental component of safe work practices. A good communicator *listens*, ask questions, uses positive body language, and gives feedback.

Listening involves more than just hearing the words that another person is saying. Active listening involves the listener taking responsibility for hearing the speaker's message and understanding it correctly and from the speaker's viewpoint. When communicating:

## ■ Listen for Content

- Probe for more information
- Summarise what you have heard to check understanding
- Avoid interrupting
- Avoid making assumptions

## ■ Listen for Feelings

- Notice speaker's tone of voice.
- Notice body language and facial expressions that may be clues to feelings.
- Notice choices of words that may indicate how the speaker feels.
- Ask how the speaker feels about what he or she is saying.

## ■ Listen with Attentiveness

- Be attentive -rather than deciding what you will say next
- Maintain good eye contact.
- Show interest with body language by using nods and smiles.
- Don't listen to your own 'mental chatter'

## ■ Listen with Feedback

- Show empathy for what the speaker has said or is feeling.
- Check for understanding if you are confused.
- Summarise key points the speaker has made.
- Respond directly to something the speaker says.



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### **SAFETY COACHING SKILLS INCLUDE:**

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# COMMUNICATION: QUESTIONING



Good communication is a fundamental component of safe work practices. A good communicator listens, *ask questions*, uses positive body language, and gives feedback.

When communicating use a wide range of questions.

■ **Closed questions** are those that can be answered by a “yes” or a “no.” Closed questions are mainly used to verify information or to confirm agreement or commitment, e.g.

*“Have you got your PPE in the truck?”*

■ **Open questions** explore opinions, encourage feedback, and establish rapport, e.g.

*“What PPE do you need for that job?”*

■ **Reflective questions** explore the feelings and emotions of the other person. Reflective questions are a good way to let a person know that you are listening and that you are sympathetic to their point of view e.g.

*“It sounds to me that you feel as though your work colleague has let you down?” “How do you feel about this?”*

■ **Clarifying questions** help the speaker to crystallise his or her thoughts and reduce ambiguity for the listener e.g.

*“When you say... what do you mean?”*

■ **Probing questions** encourage the speaker to explore an issue more deeply e.g.

*“Could you say a bit more about that?”*

■ **Challenging questions** encourage the speaker to look at an issue from other angles e.g.

*“What makes you think this?”*

*“Could you look at this situation another way?”*

■ **Justifying questions** provide an opportunity to explore reasons behind the way something is done. e.g.

*“Tell me about why you chose that method?”*



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# COMMUNICATION: FEEDBACK



Good communication is a fundamental component of safe work practices. A good communicator listens, ask questions, uses positive body language, and *gives feedback*.

## ■ When giving feedback ensure that it is:

- Face-to-face and owned by you.
- Timely and regular.
- Given in an appropriate time and setting.
- Clear, specific and unambiguous.
- Descriptive not labelling.
- Short and focused on key issue not every issue.
- Factual.
- Solution focused.
- Understood by the other person.
- Treated as confidential.

## ■ A structured format for giving feedback

Use the following 4-step structure when giving feedback.

### 1. Opening statement

*"I want to talk to you about..."* – describe the category of performance (e.g. your attendance record, your accident rate)

### 2. Observation

*"I've observed or noticed that..."* – describe the results and or patterns of behaviour – (e.g. you have been late to work every Monday for the last month).

### 3. Impact

*"I am concerned about this because..."* – describe the impact on the job being done.

### 4. Request

*"From now on, I'd like you to / how can we..."* describe how to improve performance / behaviour.

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# COMMUNICATION: HOLDING EFFECTIVE TEAM MEETINGS

## 4

### ■ The main purposes of meetings are:

- **Information giving** – To provide team with relevant information
- **Information exchange** – To obtain views of team
- **Fact finding** – To obtain relevant facts about a problem or situation
- **Problem solving** – To identify a problem and discuss alternative solutions
- **Achieving consensus** – To agree on an appropriate course of action

Before calling a meeting decide whether the meeting is needed, who should be invited, what the purpose of the meeting is and where the meeting will be held and when.

### ■ To run an effective team meeting ensure:

- The meeting has a clear purpose. The team need to know why they are meeting.
- The meeting is pre-planned. Give the team adequate notice of meeting and issues to be discussed at the meeting
- Someone takes notes
- Meeting starts on time
- The purpose of meeting is clear
- The meeting keeps moving
- All people are encouraged to contribute to the discussion
- The discussion is summarised from time to time
- The meeting ends at a scheduled time
- Notes/ minutes from meeting are distributed





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# FACILITATING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS



Regardless of the purpose of the meeting, the person holding the meeting needs to ensure that the meeting is well facilitated. Good facilitation requires a focus on both the task and relationships.

## ■ Task behaviours include:

- **Seek information** – Ask for clarification, ask for facts and figures
- **Give information** – Offer clarification, provide facts and figures
- **Initiate discussion** – Give ideas and propose solutions
- **Elaborate** – Build on previous ideas
- **Co-ordinate** – Show links between ideas and facts
- **Summarise** – Bring ideas together

## ■ Relationship behaviours include:

- **Encourage** – Be supportive and value contributions made
- **Gate keep** – Ensure all members make a contribution; encouraging quieter members to contribute and louder members to hold back
- **Set Standards** – Provide guidelines or ground rules for interaction
- **Listen Actively** – Listen for both content and feeling
- **Mediate** – Resolve tensions between members
- **Relieve tensions** – Use humour when appropriate

## ■ Avoid the following behaviours:

- Blaming and criticising
- Blocking or rejecting ideas out of hand
- Contradicting
- Negative humour
- Seeking sympathy or recognition
- Losing interest or withdrawing



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# DIAGNOSING PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS



**The following diagnostic questions are useful in helping you determine the possible cause(s) of particular unsafe practices.**

1. Is the person aware that his/her behaviour / practice is unsafe? If not, give feedback on unsafe behaviours / practice.
2. Does the person know what is expected of him/her? If not, provide clear expectation and goals.
3. Does the person know how to do the work safely? If not, arrange for training.
4. Does he/she know why he/she should do it? If not, explain why.
5. Are there external factors causing the unsafe behaviour / practice? If yes, remove barriers if possible.
6. Does he/she think something else is more important? If yes, explain priorities.
7. Are there positive consequences for working safely well? If not, provide rewards.
8. Are there positive consequences for *not* working safely well? If yes, change rewards.
9. Are there personal problems that may be impacting on working safety? If yes, help person address issue.
10. Could he/she work more safely if he or she chose to do so? The person has the skill but not the will. If yes, arrange meeting to discuss person's unsafe behaviour / practice.

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# SETTING HEALTH AND SAFETY OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS



It is important that all teams have a clear understanding of what they need to do with regard to achieving the organisation's health and safety goals and objectives.

Health and Safety objectives provide an overall direction for health and safety goals.

Health and safety objectives need to be consistent with the organisation's Health and Safety Policies and other legal requirements.

## ■ Health and safety objectives may be to:

- Reduce or eliminate the number of accidents and injuries in a particular site
- Reduce hazards and risks in a particular site

## ■ Health and Safety Targets may be to:

- Reduce sprains in site A by 10% in the next 6 month period
- Increase incident and near miss reporting by 20% in the next 6 month period

## ■ Targets need to be:

- **Specific** – Related to a clearly defined outcome. It needs to be sufficiently detailed and focused to provide direction.
- **Measurable** – The results can be measured in terms of quality, quantity, time, cost etc., so that progress can be assessed.
- **Attainable** – Accomplishing the target needs to be challenging, but within reason for the person's ability and resource constraints.
- **Relevant** – The targets are appropriate to the needs of the organisation
- **Time-bound** – Specific deadlines are set for accomplishing the target.

*Example of a SMART target:*

Organisation A will reduce the incident rate of sprains and strains by 10% by the end of the year.

## ■ Health and Safety Performance Indicators

Health and Safety Objectives and Targets should cover both lead and lag Health and Safety Performance Indicators.

*Lead Indicators* are proactive measures of performance. It aims to find problems before incident or near misses occur e.g. number of audits completed in a period

*Lag indicators* are reactive measures of some aspect that has failed e.g. reported injuries in period