

Diagnostic Tools Template

It is important to note that these tools are not fool-proof but they can help break down issues into manageable discussion points and provide direction for those who come to you for assistance.

- ▶ When someone comes in to discuss an issue or concern, use the following questions:
 - Is the person just coming to vent?
 - Is the person coming to share or receive information?
 - Is the person coming to look for affirmation or encouragement?
 - Is the person asking for advice to solve the issue?
 - Is the person asking for action/ decision on your part to solve the problem?
- ▶ Ask the person what he or she would like to see happen: What suggestions or solutions would work in this situation?
- ▶ Try to diagnose the issue by asking yourself two questions:
 - What is the *emotion* behind what the person is saying?
 - What exactly is the person concerned about; that is, the *content*?

Sometimes getting to the content takes a little digging. Sometimes people skirt the issue and it takes time and further questioning to find out what is really going on.

- ▶ Once you have some idea on both emotion and content, test out what you have heard. For example say something like: *It seems like you are frustrated because Jenny did not submit that report on time. You also feel like she does not respect your deadlines. Is that accurate?*
- ▶ Once you have accurately understood the other person's expectation in coming to you, as well as the issue's emotion and content, here are a few next steps:
 - If the person has come to vent, the primary focus is emotion and the primary action is to reflect care and concern.
 - If the person has come to share or receive information, the primary focus is the content matter and the primary action is to accurately capture or communicate the details.
 - If the person has come for affirmation or encouragement, the primary focus is likely a blend between content and emotion while the primary action is expressing the desire to support.
 - If the person is seeking advice or action in resolving the issue, more diagnosis/ information is needed. You will need to determine if the problem is *structural* (Is it a faulty process, a lack of supplies, poor organization), or is the problem *behavioral*? (Does someone's behavior need to be addressed, corrected, or redirected?)