



Exercise: Awareness of Other People's Emotions

Accurately understanding the emotion states workers are experiencing can be a tricky thing for a manager to accomplish. When people appear distressed, we tend to jump to non-specific, general labels (e.g., "he is upset") without really understanding the nuances of their emotional experience. But it is exactly these nuances that can provide vital information about how to handle a situation.

Understanding another person's emotions involves much more than just listening to their spoken words. It requires being attentive to the non-verbal emotional messages being communicated.

Think of a situation where you had to speak to someone who was distressed. Describe the situation here: _____

What verbal messages (words) did the person convey? _____

What non-verbal messages was the person projecting? Think of the following:

Posture: _____

Tone: _____

Eye contact: _____

Energy level: _____

Other: _____

Was there a discrepancy between the verbal messages and the non-verbal messages?

When you consider all information, what emotion state do you think the person was experiencing? _____



Throughout the course of your day, make an active effort to pay attention to other people's verbal and non-verbal messages. Take note of any discrepancies between the two. Think about what emotion(s) people are most likely experiencing when you consider both their verbal and non-verbal messages.

If you notice major discrepancies between a worker's verbal and non-verbal emotional messages, it may be a great opportunity to sit down with them and connect by asking them for feedback about anything you could do to improve their ability to do their job.