

TOOLKIT – WORKSHEET

HOW SOFT SKILLS MAKE YOU A BETTER SAFETY PERSON

We'll be going through the below questions during the presentation, please follow along and add your answers/introspections.



- 1.** How do management/employees view you and your role?
- 2.** How do you want to be viewed?
- 3.** What causes (or allows) you to become aggressive in demeanor and/or verbally?
- 4.** How does lived experience come into interactions? Your own and others: What you/someone else brings to an interaction, the iceberg idea.



- 5.** Identify your triggers: List as many as you can think of from recent situations that ended up adversarial. Professional examples are ideal, but include personal if you want.
- 6.** Physical signs and symptoms: How do you know when you're stressed, upset, frustrated, etc.?
 - a.** What do you notice about others? How do you know when someone else is stressed, upset, frustrated?
- 7.** Beliefs: What are you thinking in these situations? What intent are you assigning to others?
- 8.** Tools: What tools do you currently use to calm yourself?
 - a.** What tools have you used to help calm others?
- 9.** Support system: Who is my mentor, my rock? Someone to help me calm down, provide an outside opinion, and with whom to practice difficult conversations.
- 10.** Power of Apology: Have you ever done this or experienced someone else apologizing? How did it feel? How did it help?

TOOLKIT – RESOURCES



HOW SOFT SKILLS MAKE YOU A BETTER SAFETY PERSON

The following are resources to help you continue the work. Good luck!



BOX BREATHING

Sources: Blue Ocean Brain lesson and <https://clevelandclinic.org>

Box breathing, also called square or four-square breathing, can help regulate the autonomic nervous system. This system keeps tabs on your fight-or-flight response and involuntary things like body temperature, heart rate, blood pressure, and respiratory rate.

To give it a try, sit upright, relax your hands (upward-facing palms in your lap), and focus on your posture. Then, follow these steps:

1. Breathe out slowly, releasing all the air from your lungs.
2. Breathe in through your nose as you slowly count to four in your head. Be conscious of how the air fills your lungs and stomach.
3. Hold your breath for a count of four.
4. Exhale through your mouth for another count of four.
5. Hold your breath again for a count of four.
6. Repeat for three to four rounds.

Interesting:

Holding your breath slowly allows carbon dioxide to build up in the blood. Exhaling then enhances the response of the vagus nerve, part of the autonomic nervous system responsible for de-stressing your body.



PRO TIP:

Box breathing isn't our typical breathing pattern and requires focus. It may feel strange at first—possibly even make you dizzy—but practice will help you get comfortable.



ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

Source: <https://ccl.org> (Center for Creative Leadership)



- 1. Pay Attention:** to what the other person is saying, your body language, and your frame of mind while listening. (Are you hearing what they are saying or working on a response?)
- 2. Withhold Judgement:** Be open to new ideas and perspectives. Avoid interruptions, criticisms, or selling your point right away.
- 3. Reflect:** Mirror back to the person what you think you heard them say, verify that your understanding is in line with them – that you're on the same page. Paraphrasing is a good technique to use here.
- 4. Clarify:** If you are unclear or don't understand, be comfortable asking clarifying, non-judgmental questions. Open-ended, probing, clarifying questions can help better your understanding and demonstrate to the other person you are really listening and hearing them.
- 5. Summarize:** Restate the key themes, decisions, and follow-up of the conversation, both what you and the other person are going to do. This ensures you are both in agreement and helps with accountability.
- 6. Share:** Active listening is first about understanding the other person, then about being understood as the listener. As you have a better understanding of the other person's perspective and experience, share your thoughts on the situation. This can shift the conversation into problem solving, together.



TEN DE-ESCALATION TIPS

Source: <https://crisisprevention.com> (Crisis Prevention Institute)



- 1. Empathetic and non-judgmental:** Do not dismiss the feelings of the other person, stay respectful in your interactions.
- 2. Respect personal space:** Physical proximity can increase anxiety and feelings threatened, watch your body language and how close you are to the other person. Respecting personal space can help the other person feel safe.
- 3. Non-threatening nonverbal behavior:** Be mindful of your gestures, facial expressions, movements, and tone of voice. Keeping your tone and body language neutral will go a long way toward defusing a situation.
- 4. Keep emotional brain in check/avoid overreacting:** Remain calm, rational, and professional. Pay attention to your own self-talk and keeping your self calm and positive about defusing the situation.
- 5. Focus on feelings, validate:** Facts are important, but how a person feels is the heart of the matter. Yet some people have trouble identifying how they feel about what's happening to them. Watch and listen carefully for the person's real message. Validate their feelings, even if you disagree or don't share their experience.
- 6. Ignore challenging questions:** Engaging with people who ask challenging questions is rarely productive. When a person challenges your authority, redirect their attention to the issue at hand. Ignore the challenge, but not the person and focus on solutions.
- 7. Set limits:** When the other person is escalating and struggling to stay calm, give them respectful, simple, and reasonable limits. Be concise and clear, speak simply and offer a positive choice first.
- 8. Choose wisely what you insist upon:** It's important to be thoughtful in deciding which rules are negotiable and which are not. If you can offer options, that can de-escalate the situation.
- 9. Allow silence for reflection:** Resist the urge to fill any silence, no matter how awkward. Give the other person a chance to think, reflect, and decide how to proceed.
- 10. Allow time for decisions:** When someone is upset and rushed, they might not think clearly and feel stressed. Give them a few moments to think about what you've said.



HOW TO HAVE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS: THE STAR METHOD

Source: HSI online course

This approach to difficult conversation can help you determine goals and approach the issue productively and respectfully:

1. **Situation:** Describe the situation that brought about the need for the conversation, focus on behaviors and facts, not opinions and judgements.
2. **Task:** What is the specific goal that is the result of the conversation, what does success look like?
3. **Action:** Describe what needs to be done to achieve the goal (come up with solutions, suggestions to fix things vs. just point out problems). This should be collaborative and involve the ideas/suggestions of the other person, not a directive.
4. **Result:** Describe the desired outcome going forward, the why.



Before having a difficult conversation, **PREPARE:**

1. **Goal:** What is your goal? What does success look like? What is the purpose of this conversation?
2. **How do you plan to show up?** Calm yourself, practice your introduction/starting the conversation. Engage a trusted person, mentor, support system to practice and get feedback on your approach.
3. **Environment:** The conversation will be more effective and likely calmer if conducted in private, not in front of others. An audience can create feelings of shame, public humiliation, and a desire to "save face".
4. **Time:** Make sure you have enough time to talk and aren't rushed, in a quiet environment without distractions or interruptions.





START – STOP – CONTINUE

Source: niagarainstitute.com

A communication technique that can be done with a group or individuals to improve performance, collaboration, and understanding. Ask open-ended questions to elicit feedback and to share feedback to employees regarding safety policies and procedures.

1. What should we start doing?
2. What should we stop doing?
3. What should we continue doing?

Example when used with an individual:

1. **Start:** Please start doing xyz, typically something new to the individual vs. more of the same.
2. **Stop:** Discontinue doing xyz (likely the reason you're having the conversation.)
3. **Continue:** Highlight what person is doing well, please keep doing xyz.



Examples of questions to ask: the why behind the action, without blame...

"In order for me to better understand and help, can you tell me what happened?"

"Let's review some safety rules, I just want to make sure we understand how the company wants xyz position to do abc, can you tell me your process?"

"Is there something about the PPE that isn't working for you? Comfort, fit, etc."

"May I explain to you why it's safer to do xyz this way so we can come to a joint resolution?"

"Show me this process. How do you do {task}? Walk me through it step by step so I can understand."