

Emotion Check-In Checklists

Healthy Boundary Checklist

Healthy boundary setting involves expressing the limits to your capabilities and comfort level. Telling people what you feel able and unable to do is an effective way to make sure you feel confident and have trust in a work environment. This includes being able to say “no” when needed in an effective and clear way to your colleagues and partners.

Healthy boundaries allow people in a relationship to communicate their own wants and needs and to respect the wants and needs of others; they protect us physically, mentally and emotionally.

Empathy Checklist

- √ Consciously try to view situations from the other person’s point of view. This is particularly important in conflict situations that can easily create a stalemate. Recognize that we’re all working from the knowledge and experiences we have — rather than judging the person as right or wrong or good or bad.
- √ In addition to looking at the person’s point of view, actually validate it. Let them know you understand where they’re coming from and that their perspective has merit.
- √ Examine your own attitude and motives. Do you just want to be right, to prove a point or win the argument, or are you truly interested in the best outcome or solution, even if it’s not yours?
- √ Practice active listening and reflect back on what the other person is saying, so it’s clear you both understand what’s being communicated. When people feel heard, they tend to be more willing to cooperate and compromise.
- √ Practice the Golden Rule — treat others the way you want to be treated in all situations.

Checking In With Yourself Checklist

- √ Practice noticing how you feel throughout the day and the source of your emotions. Recognize that emotions are fleeting and shouldn't be the root of communication or decision-making.
 - **Try a Body Check:** An easy habit to improve your identification of feelings and your self-awareness is to perform a "body check" periodically. All you need to do is take a moment to pause and identify how your body is feeling. Consider:
 - Notice body sensations - tightness or openness in your chest, feeling warm, cold, or prickling sensations on the skin, the feeling of a 'rock' in your stomach, tightness in your throat, tension in your jaw or neck,
 - If you're doing any behaviors that indicate unexpressed feelings (for example, clicking a pen, picking at nails, tapping a leg, etc.)When you listen to your body, mental images, feelings, and thoughts can find their way out in ways that help you manage/direct feelings.
 - Consider incorporating this habit into your daily life: When you experience an emotion or find it hard to make a decision, try the Three Whys activity. It is basically asking yourself, "Why?" three times. **For example:** You decide to go for a run after work.
 - Why do I want to go for a run? Because I feel stressed.
 - Yes, but why do I feel stressed? Because I'm doing a lot at work.
 - Why am I doing a lot at work? Because the deadlines are fast-approaching, and I feel like my coworkers aren't supporting me in my efforts.Bingo! Now, you you've labeled a feeling and identified a place to start in order to find a solution to the negative emotion.
- √ Consider how your negative emotions (anger, jealousy, frustration, disengagement, etc.) may have impacted your boss, clients, and co-workers in the past. Acknowledge the fallout and repercussions of your behavior.
 - Consider applying a quick "ABC check" to the situation in order to better understand our behaviors and the feelings behind them.
 - A:** Antecedent and attitude: what was the situation or event, and how did you feel about it?
 - B:** Behavior: what behavior did you take as a result of the situation and your attitude?
 - C:** Consequence: what was the result of your behavior?
 - **For example:** let's say a co-worker forgets to bring copies they agreed to make for you to an important meeting. You get angry and give them the silent treatment. Later, you complain about this colleague to lots of other members of the team, and creates lots of drama and bad will on the team. If you consider your ABC's, you can see:
 - A:** You felt like you couldn't depend on him and got angry.
 - B:** You chose to express your frustration by giving the silent treatment and gossiping.
 - C:** The team got disrupted by the drama, feelings were hurt, trust was loss, and productivity suffered.
 - Once you identify these three steps, you can reflect and consider which part – A or B – you can improve on for next time if you want a different consequence (result).
- √ Think about ways you can manage your emotions on the job, so you don't have knee-jerk reactions or make inappropriate or off-putting comments.

Self-Regulation Checklist

- √ Practice waiting before responding or making a decision when a situation is emotionally-charged or difficult.
 - Consider a simple Breathing Exercise: When people are anxious or upset, they tend to take rapid, shallow breaths that come directly from the chest. This type of breathing causes an upset in the oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in the body and creates an even stronger stress response. Breathing exercises help put your body in a relaxed state and, when your body is relaxed, your brain becomes more relaxed too.
 - You can perform this simple breathing exercise as often as needed. It can be done standing up, sitting, or lying down. If you find this exercise difficult or believe it's making you anxious or panicky, stop for now. Try it again in a day or so and build up the time gradually.
 1. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose. Keep your shoulders relaxed. Your abdomen should expand, and your chest should rise very little.
 2. Exhale slowly through your mouth. As you blow air out, purse your lips slightly but keep your jaw relaxed. You may hear a soft “whooshing” sound as you exhale.
 3. Repeat this breathing exercise. Do it for several minutes until you start to feel better.

- √ Try to stay uninvolved in office politics, drama, or conflict. Don't allow your desire to be part of the group to undermine your integrity and professional behavior.

- √ Accept that uncertainty, frustrations, and disappointments are simply part of any work environment. Rather than complaining or acting out, brainstorm alternatives or solutions that might be beneficial to you and your company. Present those ideas in a professional and calm way.

- √ Find ways to release and manage stress outside of work through exercise, meditation, talking with friends and family, and other hobbies or interests. Don't allow stress to compromise your work relationships or integrity.

Reflective Listening Checklist

What is reflective listening?

Effective listening is actively absorbing the information given to you by a speaker, showing that you are listening and interested, and providing feedback to the speaker so that he or she knows the message was received. Effective listening is a way of showing concern for others, and that fosters cohesive bonds, commitment, and trust. Effective listening tends to reduce the frequency of interpersonal conflict and increases the likelihood that when conflicts emerge they will be resolved with a "win-win" solution.

Reflective Listening. Reflective listening is a special type of listening that is useful when strong feelings may be a part of the conversation. As mentioned above, when we listen, we should show the other party that what they are saying to us is being heard. Since we can think at about four times faster than we can speak, our brains have room to process the meaning of what's being said (and to misinterpret what is being communicated). Reflective listening is paraphrasing back to the speaker what they said. A lot of us have difficulty with this skill. Reflecting without sounding phony or like a parrot takes creativity and lots of practice. Reflecting can include paraphrasing back to someone what was just said or summarizing what is heard, or asking a question for clarification or elaboration.

We often notice when we reflect during a conversation that the meaning we have thought was being communicated was not really what the speaker intended to convey. When speakers hear us reflect, they get a chance to correct any misunderstanding that we have. This improves and clarifies communication.

For most of us, it takes a lot of practice before we become natural and effective at reflective listening. Our first few efforts may sound forced or phony. However, that doesn't mean we should give up learning how to use reflective listening. The benefits of using this technique outweigh the awkwardness when we first begin applying the process.

The benefits of reflective listening are that it can:

- Increase the listener's understanding of the other person.
- Help the other person clarify their thoughts.
- Reassure the other person that someone is willing to attend to their point of view and wants to help them express their thoughts.
- What does reflective listening involve?

When practicing reflective listening, you should:

- Listen more than you talk.
- Responding to what is personal in what's being said, rather than to impersonal, distant or abstract material.
- Restate and clarify what the speaker has said; don't ask questions or say what you feel, believe or want.
- Try to understand the feelings reflected in what the speaker is saying, not just the facts or ideas being presented.

- Work to develop the best possible sense of the speaker's frame of reference while avoiding the temptation to respond from your own frame of reference.
- Respond with acceptance and empathy, not with indifference, cold objectivity or false concern.

How do I know when I'm using reflective listening effectively?

To identify ways in which you could improve your reflective listening, ask yourself, did you:

- Allow speakers to completely state their thoughts or opinions without interrupting?
- Actively try to remember the important facts or points made by others?
- Jot down any details or points raised by others?
- Repeat back the gist of, or summarize, the points of view expressed?
- Keep an open mind, even if I found the points made by others disagreeable?
- Avoid being hostile towards views that differed from my own?
- Express genuine interest in the conversation of others?

Adapted from R.F. Stein and S.N. Hurd (eds) (2000), *Using Student Teams in the Classroom: A Faculty Guide*, Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc., pp. 57–58; and D. Fisher, *Communication in Organizations*, St. Paul, MN: Jaico.