



# Transforming from **DEFENSIVE** to **SUPPORTIVE** Workplace Environments



**STEP 1:**  
**Learn the habit of calling people in versus calling people out**

When you feel triggered to defend an action of yours or someone else's team, make it a habit to **FIRST** ask more questions. Calling a person in means to inquire or ask questions versus making statements likely backed by unsubstantiated assumptions.



**STEP 2:**  
**Listen to the answers**

Be fully present to their answers, check for understanding, yet continue **ONLY** to ask questions until you can (at least) relate to the feelings caused by the experience.



**STEP 3:**  
**Demonstrate empathy**

You do not need to be able to relate to the exact experience. Empathy is one's ability to relate to the feelings expressed. Enter the conversation through the common ground of shared emotions. As a matter of fact, ask for permission to share a moment where you've experienced similar feelings.



**STEP 4:**  
**Talk about intent and impact**

Whether or not it was your (or the other employee's) intent, the impact to the individual is worth an acknowledgement and merits resolution. Focus on the acknowledgement and resolution.



**STEP 5:**  
**Demonstrate allyship**

The most powerful question you can ask is this: "How can I be most supportive to you in this situation?" Listen to their answers. Make sure you are clear on ideal outcomes. What would a resolved scenario look like in their eyes? Discuss actions you can support and share resources for actions you may not be able to support, if applicable.



**STEP 6:**  
**Take immediate action**

Create S.M.A.R.T. goals for resolution and plan a future check in to follow-up.



**STEP 7:**  
**Follow-up**

Ask if the individual has experienced the same scenario and or the same feelings since your previous conversation. As needed, repeat steps 1-6.

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