

Getting to Know Others' BICEPS Core Needs

If you're a manager, I highly recommend leading a Team BICEPS Check-in quarterly or twice a year: First, have the whole team [read the BICEPS handout](#) ahead of time, and then in a meeting share & check-in:

- Two minute quiet writing: "What are one or two BICEPS core needs that feel really nourished right now at work? What is one specific example of that in action?"
- Two minute round robin: Have each person share in 2 minutes one they wrote down, example: "One core need that keeps coming up for me is Belonging, and an example of when that felt great was when I was asked to share my expertise for 10 minutes at a team meeting my first week, that really made me feel understood and like both I belonged and I mattered.
- Two minute quiet writing: Have everyone take quiet time to write down: "When are the 1 or 2 next times when you really want to make sure your BICEPS core needs are met at work, and how can the team support this?"
- Two minute round robin: Have each person share in 2 minutes each, their answer, for example, an employee might share that because of their ADHD, one of the core needs that they really want to focus on is predictability, because it helps their brain get extra time to plan and prepare, and one way the team can help with that is maybe if they send help requests via email at least 2 days in advance when possible, so it's written down but also there's a little extra time for them. The team then can take 2 minutes to offer ideas or ask clarifying questions (or you can do this offline).
- After the round robin, you usually will find there are clear themes that your team can tackle together. For example, after one BICEPS check-in my team realized that pretty much everyone would prefer more weekly updates from each team member to get their core needs met for the upcoming busy month or quarter.

If they are a coworker

Make time to have one-on-ones with people and ask questions such as:

- What's your favorite project right now? What makes it your favorite one?
- I've been reading about this [BICEPS model](#) [*share briefly the six core needs*], and realized one of my core needs I want to focus on right now is _____, and it made me curious about our team, which do think matter most to the team right now? [*the point isn't to train them on it, but to safely open the conversation to talk about core needs, and they often will then start offering their own thoughts on core needs/ including their own*]

- I noticed at the meeting you asked about _____, it seems like something you're really passionate about, would you share more about it? *Showing interest in their passions is a great segway to then ask for depth around the core needs, such as: "Ah yeah, it seems like having autonomy is a big reason why you care so much about this?" Ask this last part truly as an inviting question, letting them correct you if it's actually about something else, the point is to lead conversations past the surface towards the underlying core things that each person deeply cares about.*

TIPS for one-on-ones:

- ALWAYS confirm with them if your inference is correct: "So, it seems like one big concern for you right now is how unpredictable things are right now, does that sound right?"
- Ask them to expand so you can understand the *underlying* core needs. If they say "Ugh, my project is going fine I guess..." ask them to expand "Say more about that..." or "Hmm...what do you wish was going better about it?"
- Check your tone and nonverbal communication: The right tone and body language matter more than the words you say. I promise. So check your tone and body language so that it truly conveys you truly care what they say and are genuinely interested in their core needs.
- Conflict = Data: When you get in a conflict or or negative space with someone at work -- don't get defensive -- this is data likely about their core needs. Instead, get curious. Conflict or resistance is the clearest indication that the issue or problem hits on something the person really cares about - when they're saying No, what are they saying Yes to? Use open questions and make more time to listen to what they're saying so you can leverage the opportunity to get to them what matters most to them, which is critical for effective problem solving.