

4. Ask yourself:

a) How could I ground check my assumptions? Or, can I set my assumptions aside and get curious, and what would that look like?

b) What questions could I ask, or what requests could I make of this person that might move us through the complaint to something more useful?

Questions That Are Often Useful:

- What's hard about this for you?
- What do you need/want? Or, what do you want to be different?
- What would make this easy/easier/better for you?
- What assumptions are you making? Are those assumptions useful? How could you ground check your assumptions?
- What are you concerned about?
- What are you uncertain about?
- What were you intending?
- What are you thinking? Or, what is your perception/opinion?
- What would make it fun?
- What requests could you make that might help change this for the better?
- What other actions could you take to shift this dynamic for the better?

Once the person complaining has articulated some requests that they might actually want to make and/or actions they might want to take, you might also ask: **What kind(s) of support do you need to be able to make the requests you want to make, or take the actions you want to take?**

If the support they need is from you, you get to decide whether you want to offer it or not. Remember that you can always offer different help – make a counter-offer – if you don't want to give them what they are asking for, but do want to help. Just check in to see if the help you want to give them is help they actually want.

If the support they need is from others, you can ask “what's going to be hard about making that request?” and/or “what would make it easy to ask them for that help?” and see if that helps them move forward.

If you are trying to create accountability around those requests (if, for instance, you are their supervisor and really need them to get proactive about solving this issue), once you have established that a request is one they agree they want/need to make to resolve the situation, you can ask “when will you do that?” and/or you can make a request like “Ok, my request is that you do that by Friday; will that work for you?” (leaving room for negotiating the timeline if possible can be helpful), and/or “Please come meet with me again after you've made that request and tell me how it went.”