

## Five Key Elements of Working Relationships based in TRUST

### Truthfulness

- Means being as honest, open, and straightforward as you are able.
- A good guideline is to try to speak in ways that are truthful and useful. Hurtful speech, even if it is truthful, does not build good relationships. It is often wise to pause before speaking and ask yourself if the other person really needs to hear what you are about to say. If they do, and the information may be hard to receive, ask yourself how it can be conveyed in a way that the other will be able to hear without being reactive. Often, what you want to say might be the truth, but saying it won't actually contribute to the relationship.

### Reliability

- Means keeping your promises, doing what you say you are going to do. It applies to even seemingly trivial things like returning a phone call when you said you would.
- It requires you to not make promises you can't keep.
- It is the foundation for relationships where you know you can count on each other. You know you will not let each other down.

### Understanding

- Means listening to the perspectives of others with an open mind and heart, with empathy. It sometimes requires listening between the lines.
- It means not jumping to conclusions.
- It means being willing to move off an ideological position that could be inhibiting communication.
- It means being willing to acknowledge one's mistakes and forgive those of others.
- It also means clearly understanding what the roles and responsibilities of the different participants in the relationship are.

### Self-awareness

- Means noticing when your own individual needs might be interfering with what is beneficial for the relationship.
- Means noticing when you are being emotionally reactive and then exploring the reasons for your reactivity.
- Ideally leads to a willingness to prevent toxic build-up in the relationship by discussing and resolving the underlying reasons for emotional reactivity.
- It also means recognizing the benefits and joys of working collaboratively.

### Timeliness

- Means responding to others' requests as quickly as possible. Sometimes this means giving an interim response just to let the other person know you haven't forgotten the need to follow-up. This is a sign of the importance you give to the relationship.
- Requires an ongoing assessment of priorities and an ability to adapt according to changing circumstances.