

### Exercise 6.1 The intervention style indicator

Five scenarios (problem situations) are presented and, for each case, there are five examples of how a change agent/helper could respond. For each of the five responses to each case, circle the number on the scale that most closely reflects the probability that you would use that response. For example:



There are no right or wrong answers.

#### Scenario A

A newly appointed supervisor has complained to you that her subordinates are hostile, moody, only hear what they choose to hear, and often fail to obey instructions. She likened their behaviour to rebellious school children who are determined to 'break' the new teacher. Her account placed all the blame for the rapidly deteriorating situation onto her subordinates. You had not expected this kind of conversation because she had joined the company with glowing references and a 10-year record of successful people management. In addition, her work group has never been the source of problems before. All of them have been with the company for at least 10 months, most are well qualified and two have recently been through the company's assessment centre and have been identified as having potential for promotion.

How likely is it that you would use each of the following responses? Circle one number on each of the five scales.

1. Introduce the supervisor to a theory that might help her better understand the situation. For example, you might explain the basics of transactional analysis and ask her to (a) apply it to her problem and consider whether her subordinates see her as a controlling parent dealing with a group of inexperienced children rather than an adult interacting with other competent adults, and (b) speculate how she might apply the theory to improve the situation.

A1 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

2. Tell her that she has failed to recognize the quality of her subordinates, she is undervaluing the contribution they can make, and she needs to delegate more and give them greater responsibility.

A2 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

3. Listen carefully and attempt to see the problem through her eyes in the hope that, by being supportive, you can encourage her to open up and tell her story, which, in turn, may help her to develop a better understanding of the problem and what needs to be done about it.

A3 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

4. Suggest to her that it may not only be her subordinates who hear what they choose to hear, and ask her if she has really paid attention to all the messages she has been sent by the members of her work group.

A4 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

5 Help her to get to the bottom of the problem by assisting her to gather more information, which she can use to develop a better understanding of what is going on and what can be done to improve matters.

A5 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

### Scenario B

You have been approached by the head of a strategic business unit in your organization with a request for help. She has been in post for six months and has come to the view that the way her top team is working together is adversely affecting performance.

**How likely is it that you would use each of the following responses? Circle one number on each of the five scales.**

1 Offer to collect information from people who are affected by how well the team is performing and feed this back to her and her senior colleagues to help them review their performance and agree what they need to do to improve matters.

B1 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

2 Offer to bring in a trainer to run a workshop for her top team, which would introduce them to the concept of team roles and help them use Belbin's model of team roles to diagnose how well they are working together and what they might do to improve their performance.

B2 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

3 Adopt a supportive approach and encourage her to talk about her concerns in order to help her clarify her own thoughts and feelings and develop for herself a better understanding of the situation.

B3 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

4 Interview all members of her top team and the people who are affected by how well the team is performing in order to prepare a report that lists a set of recommendations that she should implement to improve the situation.

B4 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

5 Focus attention on her behaviour and consider whether this might be contributing to the problem. This approach might involve challenging some of the assumptions she is making and/or drawing attention to discrepancies between what she says she does and what you observe her doing.

B5 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

### Scenario C

You are the HR manager of a large utility company. An employee (a 40-year-old widower) was recently promoted and moved from a busy office in the city, where he had spent most of his working life, to manage a small but strategically important office in a relatively isolated small town. He has come to see you because he is unhappy with the new job. He misses his friends, does not enjoy being the boss in

situation where he has no colleagues he can relate to, and he reports that the people who live locally are cliquish, aloof and unfriendly.

**How likely is it that you would use each of the following responses? Circle one number on each of the five scales.**

1. Tell him there is a vacancy at his old grade in the department he used to work in and indicate that you think the best solution would be for him to move back.

C1 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

2. Explore how he feels about the situation without passing judgement or jumping to conclusions. Make sure that you really understand why he is unhappy and do everything you can to help him clarify his own feelings about what the problem might be. You might listen hard to what he has to say and then reflect back to him the essence of what you think you heard. For example: 'What you seem to be saying is ... Have I got it right?'

C2 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

3. Help him adopt a balanced problem-solving approach and encourage him to thoroughly explore every aspect of the problem and, where necessary, gather information that might help him identify and evaluate possible solutions; for example, by helping him to identify opportunities to meet new people.

C3 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

4. Give him the kind of feedback that might push him into taking a new initiative, for example by telling him that you have listened to what he has said and not once heard him mention anything he has actually done to try to make new friends; in fact, all he seems to do is moan about others and complain that they do nothing to make him welcome. You might try to encourage him into action by asking him if he has thought about what he might do that would make others want to get to know him better.

C4 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

5. Lend him a copy of Dale Carnegie's book *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936) and suggest that if he could master some of the techniques and skills it contains, he might more easily make new friends.

C5 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

#### Scenario D

The CEO of a fast-growing software company has approached you for help following the second time in 12 months that a project team has failed to deliver a major project within budget and on time. She told you that, on both occasions, similar problems appear to have been associated with the failures. She also told you that relationships between members of the project team have deteriorated and they all appear to be blaming each other for the failures.

**How likely is it that you would use each of the following responses? Circle one number on each of the five scales.**

1 Interview the CEO and the manager in charge of the project team to ensure that you have a good understanding of what happened before advising the CEO what she should do to ensure that future projects will be managed more efficiently and effectively.

D1 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

2 Run a workshop on new approaches to managing projects and use the models presented to help team members review the way they managed the last two projects and identify lessons they might use to inform the way they will manage the next project.

D2 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

3 Talk to each member of the team individually in order to help them express any frustrations, anxieties or other feelings that might be inhibiting their ability to make an objective assessment of the situation.

D3 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

4 Interview all members of the project team and other stakeholders in order to identify key issues related to the failures and then convene a workshop where you can feed this information back and use it to stimulate a discussion of the problem and help them explore ways of improving their performance.

D4 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

5 Work with the CEO to help her clarify the issues she wants to raise with the project team, and then facilitate a meeting where she can confront members with her concerns.

D5 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

### Scenario E

A colleague has come to you for help. He does not want to be an autocratic boss and believes that people work best when they are given the freedom to get on with their jobs. However, his department is beginning to gain a reputation for not getting it right. He has explained that while he always tries to pursue an open-door policy, there are some people who never cross his threshold. Consequently, he is badly informed and avoidable mistakes have been made. He is obviously upset and you suspect that he has just had a rather fraught meeting with his manager about this.

How likely is it that you would use each of the following responses? Circle one number on each of the five scales.

1 Share with him a similar problem you once had and tell him what you did about it. Also, suggest that there can come a time when democracy has to go out of the window and you have to read the riot act, which is what he should do now.

E1 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

2 Tell him about a theory you are familiar with, which argues that the best style of leadership might vary from one situation to another, and suggest that one way

forward might be for him to consider whether his current style appears to be a 'best fit', or whether the theory would suggest an alternative leadership style.

E2 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

3 On the basis of what you have observed, challenge his view that he always operates an open-door policy. You might, for example, tell him that you have heard that he is never around when he is needed, and that, while he might believe he is approachable, others see him as aloof and distant. You might follow this up by asking him to consider how true this is.

E3 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

4 You can see that he is upset, so decide that the best thing you can do is to sit him down with a cup of coffee and let him get it off his chest.

E4 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

5 Help him identify some specific circumstances where things have gone wrong, and then question him about a number of these problems to sort out precisely what happened and whether there are any patterns he could do something about.

E5 Never use → 

1	2	3	4	5
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 ← Definitely use

## SCORING

In the grid below, all the available responses to each case have been arranged into columns that reflect five different styles of helping.

- Taking each scenario in turn, enter the *number you circled* for each response alongside the appropriate response code in the grid. For example, for case A, you may have circled ② for response A1, so enter '2' in the square for A1, and you may have circled ⑤ for response A2, so enter '5' in the square for A2, and so on.

**NB:** For cases B to E, the response codes are presented in different sequences and are *not* arranged in order from 1 to 5.

- Calculate the total score for each column and enter this in the box provided. The total score for each column indicates your relative preference for the different helping styles.

Response grid						
	Theorizing	Advising	Supporting	Challenging	Information gathering	
Scenario A	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	
NB: From B to E, the response codes are not arranged in order from 1 to 5						
Scenario B	B2	B4	B3	B5	B1	
Scenario C	C5	C1	C2	C4	C3	
Scenario D	D2	D1	D3	D5	D4	
Scenario E	E2	E1	E4	E3	E5	
TOTAL						