

What is Thoughtful and Reflective Questioning?

Thoughtful and Reflective Questioning is the second skill set of effective questioning. Questioning can serve two purposes:

- Help inform the coach of the team's knowledge and intentions
- Help the team clarify its thinking and uncover possibilities and solutions

Thoughtful questions are designed to help teams reflect on their practice. Using carefully chosen questions will allow the coach to probe for deeper complexity and encourage team self reflection. As a coach, careful thinking about the type of questions to ask is important. Considering the purpose and intended outcome will lead to choosing effective questions.

Why is Thoughtful and Reflective Questioning important?

As coaches develop the skill of thoughtful questioning, they can guide teams to be reflective of their practice. Thoughtful questioning helps build team capacity through evaluation of current status and determination of next steps.

How does a coach help the team develop the skills and competencies to function independently?

Carefully choosing specific, thoughtful questions is a process to help a team move forward with focus and intent. As a team moves through the planning and improvement process, a coach's use of strategic, open-ended questions supports team progress.

Asking the right kinds of questions empowers the team to move forward to action in powerful ways. Through questioning, the coach sends the message that the team's ideas are critical to the coaching process. The team gains confidence and becomes more skilled at working through tough problems or thorny situations.

A thoughtful question does more than convey respect for the team's ideas; it develops the team's problem-solving abilities. However, when a coach is overly directive, or asks questions that are condescending, disingenuous or put people on the spot, the confidence of a team is reduced and the team's performance and success are sabotaged.

The value of asking thoughtful and reflective questions supports both short-term and long-term capacity building goals: the short-term goal of helping the team to generate a solution to the issue at hand and the long-term goal of helping the team develop the skills and tools to handle similar issues in the future independently.

WORD BANK:

reflective, coach, outcome, process, communication, planning, reflect, solving, art, solution