

SETTING CLEAR EXPECTATIONS:

Real Talk Job Aid



Leadership Labs

Practical tools. **Real** conversations.
Stronger leaders. **Better** outcomes.

Clear expectations are the foundation of accountability.

6 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

BE CLEAR ABOUT THE OUTCOME

Don't assume people know what success looks like.

Instead of saying:
"Take care of this."

Say:
"Please submit the completed report by Thursday at noon with the monthly metrics included."

2

DEFINE SUCCESS UP FRONT

Answer the key questions:

- ✓ What needs to be done?
- ✓ By when?
- ✓ What does good look like?
- ✓ Who owns it?
- ✓ How will we know it's complete?

3

CONFIRM UNDERSTANDING

Don't ask, "Any questions?"

Instead ask:

- "Can you walk me through your understanding?"
- "What will your first step be?"

This checks for alignment instead of assuming it.

4

DOCUMENT IMPORTANT EXPECTATIONS

Not every expectation needs to be written, but important ones should be.

Examples:

- priorities
- deadlines
- responsibilities
- follow-up commitments

Documentation reduces confusion later.

5

FOLLOW UP

Setting expectations is only the beginning. Great leaders:

- check progress
- remove obstacles
- provide coaching
- reinforce accountability

6

CLEAR IS CONTINUOUS

Expectations can evolve. Communicate changes as soon as they happen to keep everyone aligned.

COMMON MISTAKES LEADERS MAKE

- ✗ Assuming everyone interprets expectations the same way.
- ✗ Being vague.
- ✗ Waiting until something goes wrong before clarifying.
- ✗ Expecting mind reading.
- ✗ Changing expectations without communicating them.

REFLECTION QUESTION



Think about a recent situation where expectations weren't met.

- Were the expectations actually clear?
- Did everyone define success the same way?
- What could have been communicated differently?



Clear expectations build accountability.



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