

Seek First to Understand

Exercise

Person A Scenario:

You are frustrated that a classmate (Person B) has frequently asked to copy your statistics homework. You decide you need to talk to him about the issue. You have noticed that he seems more withdrawn lately and has missed a number of classes. The next time you see him, practice “seeking first to understand” before expressing your frustration.

Ask questions/gather information:

You might begin by saying, “How are you? I noticed you’ve missed some classes, is there something going on?...”

Show empathy/seek to understand:

You might say, “It must be difficult for you right now. I had a similar situation once....”

Reflect what you have heard: It sounds like you are pretty stressed right now, and you are worried about getting behind and worried about keeping up with the homework.

Express your need: “I want to help you, but I don’t know if copying my homework will help you in the long run.”

Seek a win/win outcome: “Would you like me to help you get a tutor?”

Person B Scenario:

You have had a death in the family and have had to miss some school. You are really struggling in your statistics class and have been copying a classmate’s homework to try and get back on track. You know that this is just a short-term resolution and need to figure out how to get more support in statistics so that you can truly learn and understand the assignments.