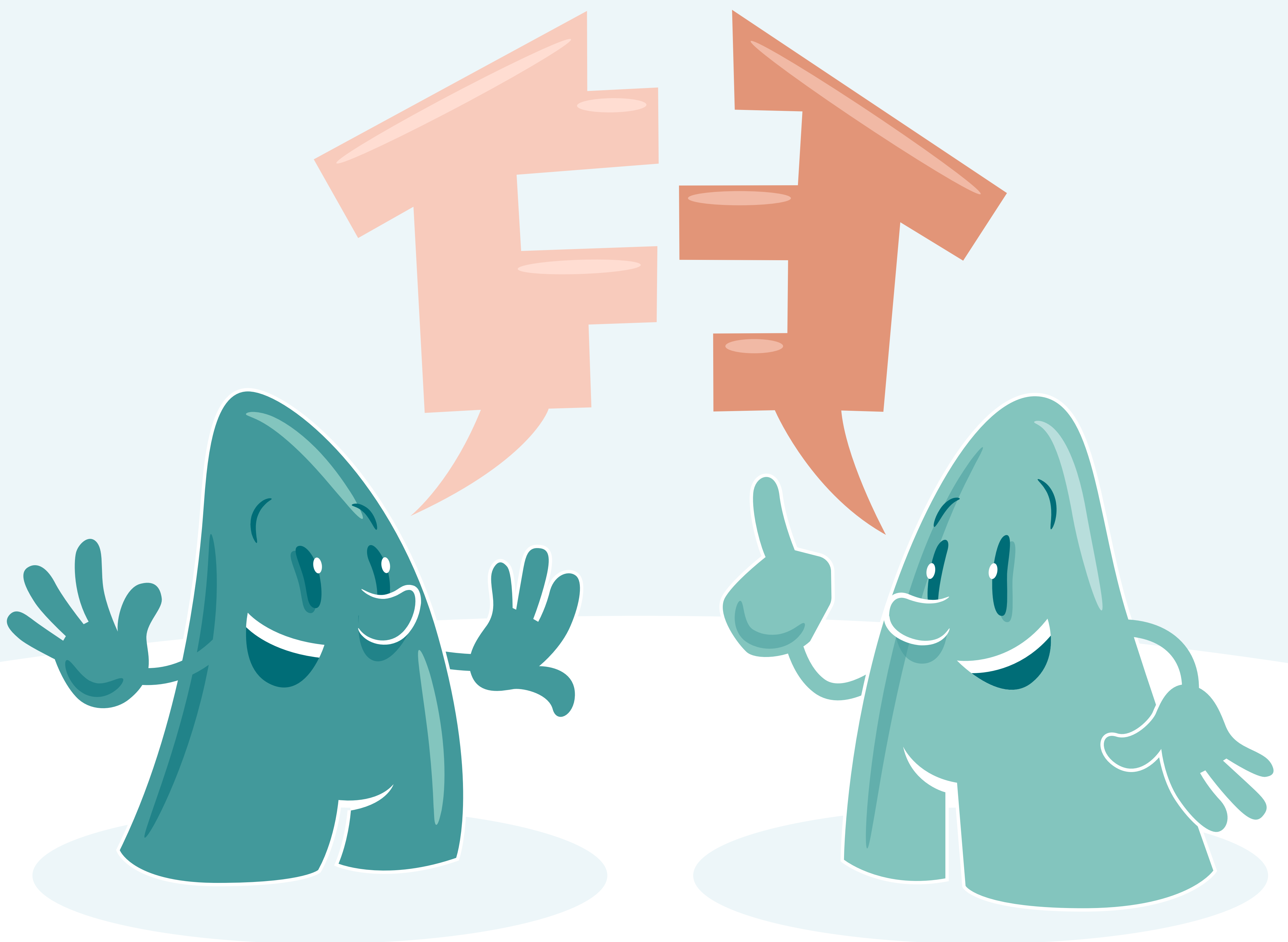


New Manager Strategies

Tips for Running 1-on-1 Meetings



What's in
this PDF:

- 1 Getting 1-1 meeting setup right
- 2 Questions to structure the discussion
- 3 How to stick to the plan, prioritize, and navigate topics
- 4 Signs your 1-1s are running smoothly

1

Getting 1-1 meeting setup right



Keep a shared notes document

If it's online, you can record the call and use a transcription software to make this easier



Share or request an agenda and desired outcomes beforehand

Without a specific focus, 1-1 meetings can derail into details or end early without meaningful communication. Agenda pre-sends allow either party to be prepared if specific information is needed to support the conversation



Keep 1-1s at a consistent time

Ideally 60 minutes bi-weekly so there's enough time to go deep



Choose the right time

Not before a stressful client call, after a meeting that runs long, or sandwiched between back-to-back meetings



Engage your body reset your mind for the meeting

Take 1-3 minutes to go for a quick walk, stretch, or do a breathing exercise to arrive and be present. Or turn the meeting into a walk with your report



Don't skip the 1-1 or show up late!

If need be, reschedule it or send a heads up before the call happens, not 5 minutes before



2

Questions to structure the discussion

What are you excited about right now?

This is not only a fun question, but can generate key insights that can inform your people development strategy

Are you clear on our team priorities and vision?

1-1s are a great time to check in with your reports on important objectives and the broader vision. Ask whether the way you communicate these items is clear, and clarify if there is a gap. This is especially important during change management

**What's top of mind?
Or – where's your head at?**

Focus on helping them to identify their blockers, resources, options, and evaluating the best route forward.

How do you feel about your professional development?

Gather insights for your own planning purposes, put out feelers, or plant seeds where appropriate, but at the same time, save the heavy lifting and official decisions to the official check-ins.

2

Are there any pressure points in or outside of work you want to put on my radar, even if there's no solution?

This gives you a heads up for managing expectations. We all have cycles of productivity, and sometimes we all need some space. Even if your report doesn't proactively raise issues, it doesn't mean there aren't any

What's your biggest takeaway from our discussion?

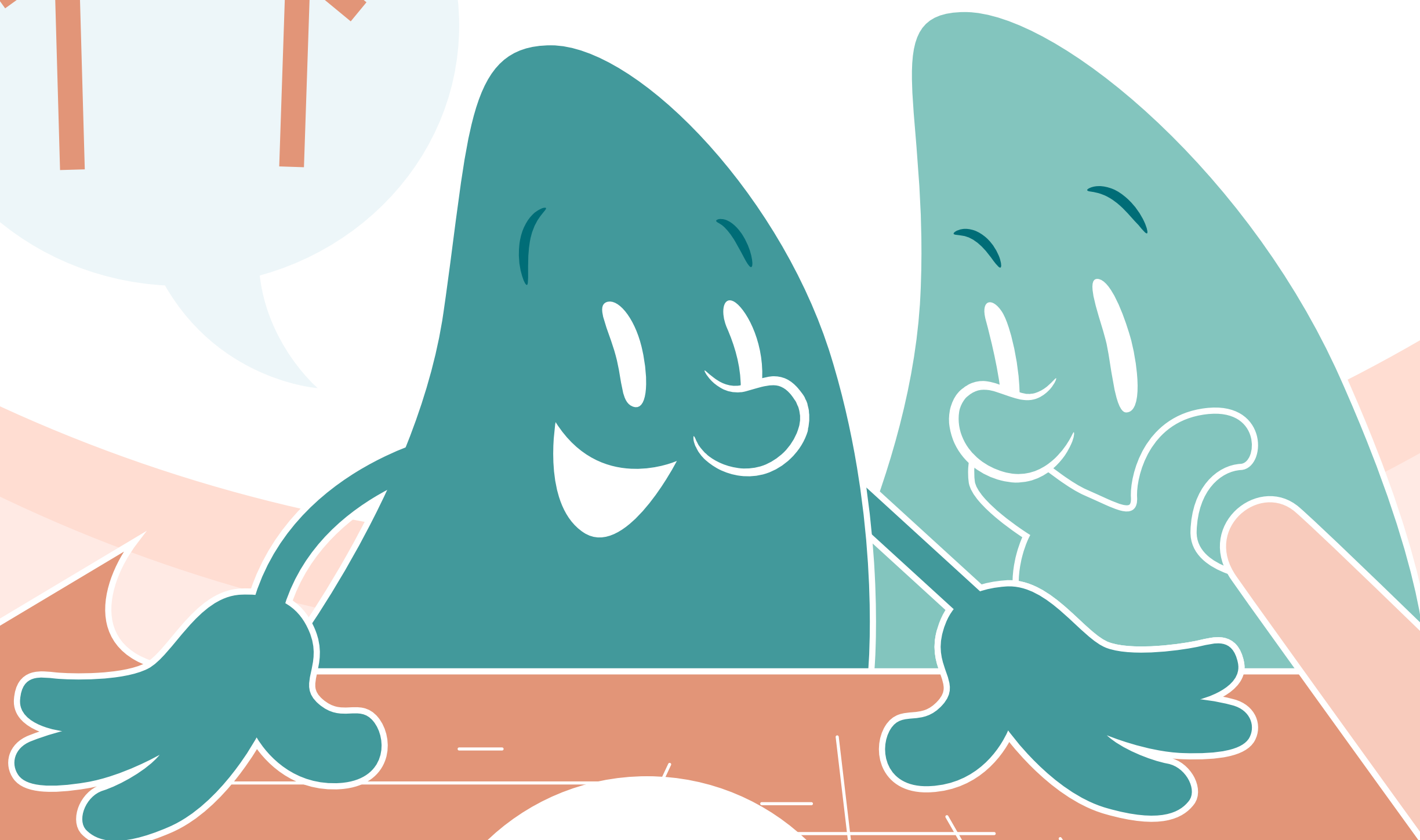
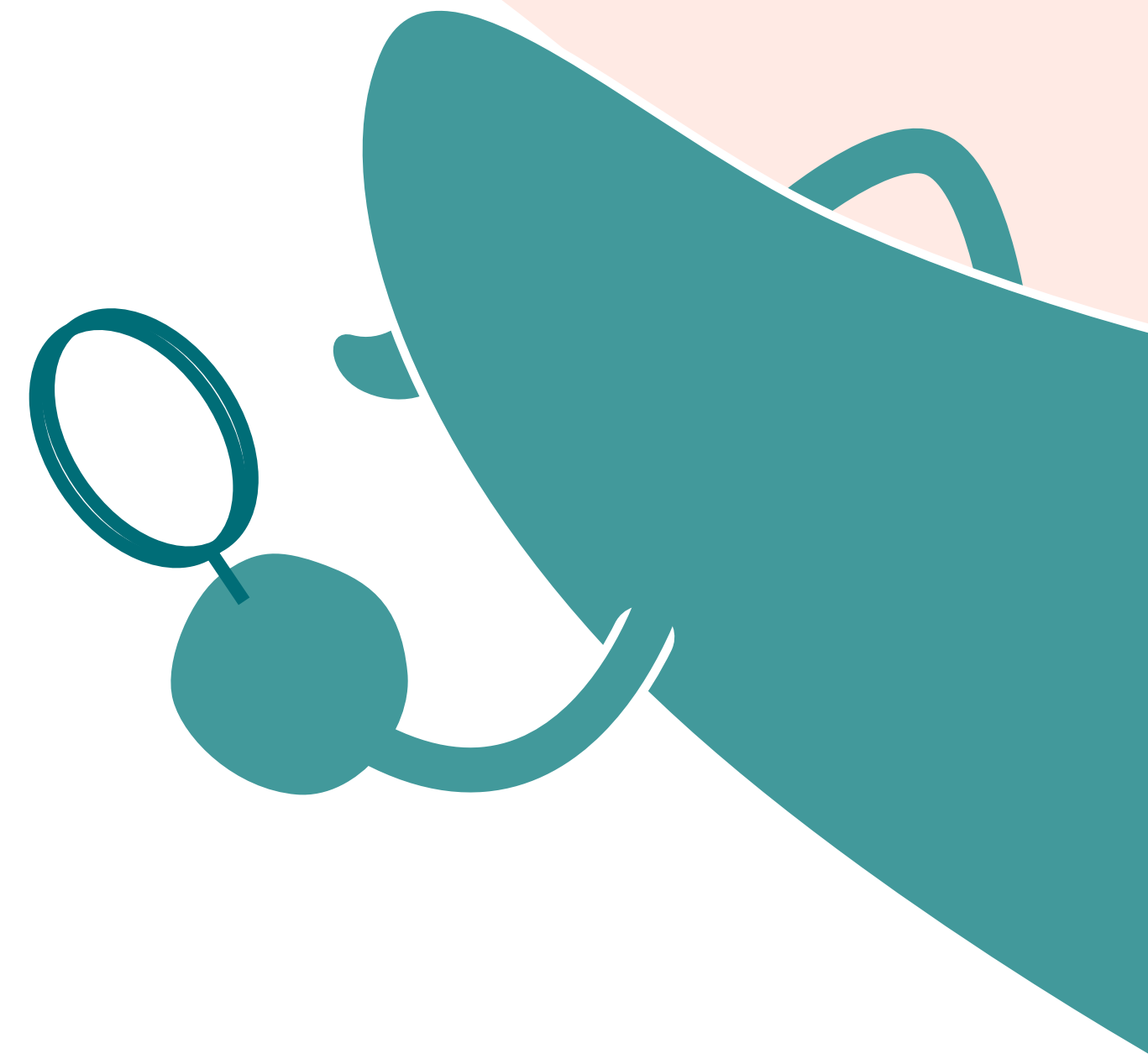
Lock in learnings and generate clear outcomes, rather than leaving the 1-1 with an overwhelming number of ideas or just as a conversation

What's one thing I can do to help you this week?

This makes your offer of help more effective by time-boxing it to this week, focusing your ask on a single thing, and making a request of your report, rather than an offer

How am I doing as a manager?

Keep the door open for feedback yourself, stay curious, and put yourself in your report's shoes when you receive it to disarm your own defensiveness



How to stick to the plan, prioritize, and navigate topics

3



Follow up

Start by checking in on agreed-upon action items from last time

Coach, don't tell

A manager's job isn't to do their reports' jobs. Lead with curiosity and empathy by asking questions and reflecting what you're hearing out loud, to coach and empower your report to do their work better

Go from impossible to solvable

Increase effectiveness by reframing a topic that is impossible (e.g. how to change a tough client's personality) to one that is solvable (e.g. how to change a communication style with a tough client)

Value your time and hold a bigger-picture agenda

Be aware when topics arise that can be figured out outside the meeting or don't require your combined focus. Re-route conversations to the bigger need or priority and let your report use their other resources to solve lower priority topics

Avoid the trap of status updates

These can be provided via email/Slack – unless there is a deeper reason to explore a status update, focus on other topics that need discussion

End with action

End each meeting by agreeing who will do what and by when



3

Ask questions to react situationally to key topics

When stuck

- What's the third option here?
- Talk me through the pros and cons of each option
- If you could try something now and press reset if it didn't go well, what would you do?

When overwhelmed

- Let's take a step back. Take a deep breath and reiterate the issue and your desired outcome

When resolving blockers:

- What else do you need to get this done?
- Where do you need to ask for help?
- What does this look like as a success? What's between here and there?

When managing mental sabotage

- What do you really want to happen?
- How do you really want to show up here?



4

10 indicators that your 1-1s are running smoothly



1

Each 1-1 is not canceled, and lasts for the full allotted time frame

2

Your report brings agenda items and drives discussion

3

You both walk away feeling energized and clear after the meeting

5

You are speaking and advising less, and listening and asking open-ended/probing questions more

4

The discussion involves more than 1) a confirmation that "everything is good," 2) status updates or 3) fighting fires

6

You each walk away with concrete and valuable action items to implement following the meeting

7

You have more insight into your report's key blockers, working style, and professional development goals

8

Your report has an "aha" moment, where they make a realization or connect the dots in a novel and powerful way (but be advised that this will not always happen)

9

Your report uses key, expressive phrases that confirm the value they get from the meeting, such as "thank you," "that was helpful," "I'm feeling more confident," or "now I feel less anxious"

10

You gain specific feedback from your report about your own performance as a manager and how you are guiding both that individual and the team overall



If these signs are not present in your 1-1s, conduct a retrospective to explore how to improve your 1-1s, and review the tips in this guide again.