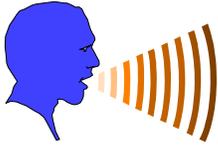


Communicating Effectively



What is Communication?

Failures in Communication

Nonverbal Communication

Practicing Communication Skills

Watch These!

Email

BASIC Conflict Resolution

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What is communication?

Communication is the exchange of thoughts, ideas, information, or feelings between individuals using speech, writing, gestures, and artistic expression.

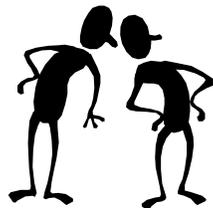
Get the message!

The message that is sent is not always the message that is received. Effective communication exists between two persons when the person to whom a message is sent interprets the message in the same way that the person who sent the message intended it.

What's the big deal?

The process of verbal interaction is important to maintaining our health and emotional well being. Communicating effectively with others is an important characteristic of leadership, and it shapes our successfulness.

When we share our experiences and feelings sincerely, we come to realize that all of us experience emotions, but that each of us experiences them in our own way. We can recognize the similarities among us as well as our individual differences.



What's the problem?

Failures in communication happen when the message received is different from the message intended.

It's easier to say that the other person doesn't understand than to work to understand the other person.

Each person shares equal responsibility or blame when communication is difficult or isn't working. Try looking at the world from the other person's perspective. Walk a mile in her shoes.

Show interest in feelings and opinions even when you disagree. This helps build trust and mutual respect.



People communicate verbally and nonverbally:

Communication involves so much more than just words. Body language has a significant impact on communication. What is said and how it is said is equally important. The sound of the voice, the facial expression, and the body posture carry strong messages.

Sometimes people try to hide feelings, which are obvious in their nonverbal expressions, in their verbal expressions. For real communication to occur, the verbal and nonverbal expressions must agree. What is said must be consistent with facial expressions, posture, and tone of voice to communicate effectively.

Try to appreciate the emotion behind the words (vocal and visual messages) more than the literal meaning of the words.



Practicing Communication Skills

No, it doesn't come naturally! Speaking skills and listening skills must be learned and practiced. Good communication builds relationships, and the goal of communication training is to increase positive relationships.

- ◆ As a receiver (listener), you can learn to listen accurately and to reflect back to the sender (talker) what has been heard. Ask questions to stay involved in the conversation. Ask them to repeat something that you didn't understand or didn't hear.
- ◆ As a sender (talker), you can improve skills in sending clear, accurate and specific messages, and in seeking clarification. Be honest and sincere. Avoid emotional outbursts.
- ◆ Sometimes, without intending to be rude, your enthusiasm for a subject may cause you to forget courtesy. At other times, you may be so involved with your own point of view that you forget to listen to others.
- ◆ Good listening skills are essential in helping others know that you are interested in their concerns and ideas.
- ◆ Listening to others requires your full attention. Fight off distractions. Focus your attention on the words, ideas, and feelings.
- ◆ If you are involved in an activity, negotiate a time that you could talk with that person giving them your full attention.

- ◆ **FACIAL EXPRESSIONS:** Let the sender (talker) know you are responding to what is being said. Your face will reflect a smile if it is a humorous comment or frowning at comments that present problems.
- ◆ **BODY POSTURES:** Good active listening requires that you sit up straight, lean forward slightly and indicate by your body position that you are prepared to stay with the person who is talking until the conversation is completed.
- ◆ **BODY POSTURES** such as slumping, crossing the arms over the chest, and leaning away from the speaker will usually be interpreted as showing boredom, disinterest, or disrespect.
- ◆ **EYE CONTACT:** Appropriate eye contact will help you concentrate on what the speaker is saying and will assure the speaker that you are listening. Avoid looking around the room or seeming to be more interested in what is happening around you than the person who is talking.
- ◆ A group of people multiplies the number of senders and receivers and the likelihood that more than one person will be talking at the same time. When this happens, we have "interference" between the senders and receivers in the form of noise.
- ◆ In order to have good communication in groups of people, only one person can talk at a time. Sometimes it is easy to forget to wait for a turn in group discussions.
- ◆ Be quick to listen and slow to speak. Avoid any tendency to blurt out whatever comes to your mind.
- ◆ It's impossible to listen and talk at the same time.

Watch These!

Gossiping

Don't give your friends a chance to say that your mouth is as big as all outdoors.

Exaggerating and Half-Truths

People won't trust you.

Being "Catty" (subtly cruel; spiteful)

People fear a petty person.

Being a Snob

This is *so* yesterday!

Swearing

Sometimes you get mad enough to swear, and you do. Swearing lets off steam, but what does it do to you? It's cheap and tiresome.

Teasing

It can punch holes in a person's pride.

Criticizing

If you want to be treated like so much poison ivy, model yourself after the pesky mosquito - buzz and then bite.

Wearing Your Feelings

If you're too touchy, you're looking for trouble... you'll need to accept criticism with a calm manner.

How to Send an Effective Email



Electronic mail is the popular, preferred method of communication these days because it's fast, efficient, and inexpensive. However, just because it is cheap to send, doesn't mean it should be cheap in quality - in terms of presentation and content.

Realize that sending email is not the same as talking to a person face to face. A sentence that might be clear to someone talking to you face to face might come across quite differently without the tone of your voice or the look on your face. Trust and respect are just as important in an email message as in a face to face meeting. Be mindful of your manners - you're not just sending and receiving typed messages on a computer screen. Think how others will likely receive your message before you launch it into cyberspace.

Do:

- ◆ Include an informative subject line.
- ◆ Plan what you intend to write.
- ◆ Get straight to the point of your email. Be concise, but be aware - rushed messages can lead to miscommunication.
- ◆ Focus on the message. What do they need to know?
- ◆ Provide details. Can they act on your information?
- ◆ Use eye-catching headlines to organize information.
- ◆ Use action words if you are sending instructions.
- ◆ Provide them a method of reaching you.
- ◆ Double check what you have written. Sometimes this double checking can save you some real embarrassment.

- ◆ Do consider when your email recipient will read your email. Many people send and receive email at regularly scheduled times of the day only.

Don't:

- ◆ Don't get carried away with special effects.
- ◆ If you don't want it shared, don't write it. Don't put something in an email message that you would not want read by everybody. Email can be misdirected or forwarded to others.
- ◆ Don't type in all capitals. This is the electronic equivalent of SHOUTING! Conversely, don't use all lower case because it's hard to read.
- ◆ Don't create or forward "chain-letter" email.
- ◆ Avoid flames. A "flame" is an inflammatory or critical message. Be careful what you write. Sarcasm is not always clear in a mail message, and something that you meant to be funny can be taken very seriously.
- ◆ Avoid sending junk emails, emails with insufficient information, or any other email that might trigger an upsetting response from the recipient.
- ◆ Don't immediately respond to messages that make you angry. Remember - once it's sent, you can't get it back. Take time to reflect on your response and review it. It might be necessary to soften the tone, remove emotion or make sure your message won't be misconstrued.
- ◆ Don't send threatening mail. There are many public personalities and government officials with electronic mail addresses. Jokes and threats sent to these people are taken seriously. Depending on the person you send mail, you could find yourself behind bars.

This handout offers tips for conflict resolution.

BASICS

B - Back down. Usually the other person is just as interested in saving face as you are, so give them a way out. Provide a graceful way out.

A - Apologize. Say you are sorry or "excuse me" - it doesn't mean that you are wrong or weak to use courtesy.

S - Stay centered. Stay in control. Don't let someone else lure you into a fight.

I - It isn't worth it. Point out that it's not worth fighting about. Lighten things up a bit. Make a joke - but not at the other person's expense.

C - Keep it cool. Keep your voice low and steady and calm. Again, stay in control.

S - Stand in the other person's shoes. Try to relate to the other person. Try to understand what they want or need.

Tips for de-escalating a potential conflict:

- ◆ Speak softly. Speak slowly. Look at the person - but don't stare.
- ◆ Be aware of your body language.
- ◆ Try to relax.
- ◆ Remember to breathe.
- ◆ Repeat sentences for clarity. "I think I heard you say..."
- ◆ Watch your language. Words such as "maybe" "what if" "I feel" "perhaps" tend to de-escalate.
- ◆ Affirm and acknowledge the other person's point of view.