Effective Communication in the Workplace
Agenda

• Learning Objectives
• Introduction
• Awareness of Your Personal Style
• Skillful Listening
• Expressing Yourself
• Impact of Emotions
After completing this workshop presentation, you will be able to:

1. Develop an awareness of your personality and communication tendencies
2. Learn how to listen more effectively to others
3. Express yourself in a more clear and specific way
4. Appreciate the power of emotions
Introduction

• The ability to effectively communicate with others is one of the most powerful tools for personal and/or professional success.

• Most people are challenged by the many day-to-day interactions with co-workers, family, and friends.

• Emotion, communication and conflict are present in all human interactions and affects each of us in different ways.

• Everyone manages emotion, communication and conflict from habit – patterns and styles developed early in life and over time.

• 80% of problems in the workplace are communication related
• One of the quickest ways to alienate yourself from other people is to communicate unsuccessfully.

• Effective communication empowers you to influence others.

• Your capacity to communicate is often seen as an indicator of your ability and intelligence.
Awareness of Your Personal Style
Past Experiences Shape Communication Style

Communication doesn’t just happen; your style is based on your experiences that over time have developed into a pattern of attitudes and actions.

It is a continuous cycle. Your experiences influence your thoughts. Your thoughts, over time, become your attitudes. These attitudes become the blueprint for new experiences, which develop into patterns of behavior.

An awareness of your personal style is critical to begin to transform negative attitudes and behaviors into positive ones.

It is key to empowering you to establish personal responsibility and accountability in the midst of changing your behavior.
Activity: What have you learned about yourself? Based on what you know about yourself and how you have handled similar situations in the past, how do you think you would handle the following scenario:

You have been asked to supervise a project. The success of the project is also dependent upon the contributions and feedback of other department groups. The deadline is approaching. The other managers/department groups have largely ignored requests for information, but complained in group meetings that the project is in danger of non-completion. During manager meetings, this non-response has been raised as an issue, but your manager has not addressed it, stating that all of the managers are busy and that they will respond as soon as they can. However when the documentation is not provided to you, it is identified as your deficiency and has been designated as a risk to project completion. The end result is that you (your project) has been identified by senior management as being at risk for completion and as your deficiency. At one meeting, a manager who had ignored requests for information for several weeks, complained that you were harassing him. You felt frustrated and close to tears.
Nine Steps to Effective Listening

1. Face the speaker and maintain eye contact.
2. Be attentive, yet relaxed.
3. Keep an open mind to the speaker’s message – try to feel what the speaker is feeling.
4. Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.
5. Do not interrupt and do not impose your "solutions."
6. Wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions - ask questions only to ensure understanding of something that has been said (avoiding questions that disrupt the speaker’s train of thought).
7. Give the speaker regular feedback, e.g., summarize, reflect feelings, or simply say "uh huh."
8. Pay attention to nonverbal cues -- to feelings, tone of voice, inflection, facial expressions, gestures, posture.
9. Be aware of potential barriers that impact your ability to listen effectively.
Sometimes people have a barrier that impedes their listening skills. Awareness of a barrier is the first step in being able to overcome it.

Barriers to listening include:
- past experiences that influence our reaction to the speaker or the message
- worry, fear, anger, grief and depression
- individual bias and prejudice
- semantics and language differences
- noise and verbal "clutter"
- preoccupation, boredom and shrinking attention spans
Active Listening

Stay active by asking mental questions. Some questions you can ask yourself as you listen are:

1. What key point is the speaker making?
2. How does this fit with what I know from experience?
3. How can this information benefit me?
Looking and Acting Like a Good Listener
Non-Verbal Communication

- Turn your body and tilt your face toward the speaker.

- Use other parts of your body besides your ears to receive the message:
  1. Look at the speaker to pick up nonverbal signals or cues
  2. Your eyes will also send signals to the speaker
  3. When the speaker sees a receptive audience they are motivated to work harder to communicate their message

- React to the speaker by nodding your head.
Effective Communication in the Workplace

**Skillful Listening**

**Acknowledgement**

• Listen and acknowledge what you hear the speaker saying, even if you don't agree with it. At this point do not express your point of view.

• Acknowledging the speaker's thoughts and feelings does not mean that you approve of or agree with the speaker’s opinions or actions.

• Your ability to listen and then acknowledge what the speaker said allows the speaker to feel a sense of satisfaction of being understood.
Reflecting back

• When making a statement, paraphrase and reflect back what you've heard the speaker say.

• Reflecting is affirming to the speaker and encourages the speaker to elaborate further or delve more deeply into the topic.

• Meaningful exchanges between you and the speaker are built on feedback.

• In order to accurately feedback a person's thoughts and feelings, you have to be consciously, actively engaged in the process of listening.

• Try to experience what the speaker is describing, feeling the speaker’s feelings through the lens of your own experience.
Expressing Yourself

Effective Communication in the Workplace
Communicating Long or Emotional Messages

• Briefly explain the intention of your conversation.

• The other person(s) will attend better if they have a basic understanding of the time and effort they will be bringing to the conversation.

• Use “I” statements to communicate your feelings, and what you have personally seen, heard, need, or expect.

• Do not engage in verbal attacks on the other person. If you need to criticize, describe the behavior or actions of the other person that bother you.

• State what you need or expect in positive terms.
Utilizing “I” Statements

• Accept responsibility for your emotions
• Use “I” statements. Say “I feel angry when…” rather than “You make me mad…”

Activity:
Consider the following statements you might make. How would you change them into “I” statements?

1. You make me so mad when you don’t complete your work on time.
2. My supervisor frustrates me when she doesn’t communicate her expectations.
3. My employee aggravates me when she comes in late.
4. My boss made me happy when he complimented my financial report.
5. Those students make me sad when they don’t study and fail their tests.
Five Components of Your Message

Your communication should include these five important components:

1. What you are seeing – have seen
2. What you are hearing – have heard
3. What you are feeling – have felt about the issue
4. What you need or want
5. What the positive result will be from receiving/acting on your request
For the three situations listed below, think how you would communicate:

- What you are seeing – have seen
- What you are hearing – have heard
- What you are feeling – have felt about the issue
- What you need or want
- What the positive result will be from receiving/acting on your request

1. Your boss marked you low on your performance review. This was the first indication you had of how you were performing in your job.

2. An employee you supervise has been frequently absent causing lost production and a hardship for the rest of the employees in your unit.

3. Your coworker has been opening your mail and going through your desk drawers, as well as saying negative things to others behind your back.
Impact of Emotions

Click to advance to next slide
Impact of Emotions

Emotional Obstacles

Emotional obstacles to effective communication include:

**Vulnerability** – people may not express their true feelings because they do not want to expose themselves to others

**Protecting** – people may not want to express their true thoughts because they don’t want to hurt or upset the other person

**Expectations** - social, professional, or cultural “rules” may inhibit expression of some feelings

**Fear** – people seek approval and acceptance so they are often reluctant to say what they really mean for fear of rejection
Manage your emotions

• Recognize what you are feeling. Are you angry, embarrassed, or hurt?

• Simplify your feelings. Select one or two words to describe how you feel. Be specific.

• Do not act on your feelings right away. Don’t make a decision, enter into a discussion, or send an email in anger or frustration.

• Choose an appropriate time and place to communicate.

• Accept that you are responsible for your emotions; Use “I” statements. Say “I feel angry when…” rather than “You make me mad…”
Managing a conflict

• Keep yourself calm by breathing slowly and deeply. Remember that this is only one temporary moment in your life.

• Concentrate on what you need to move forward rather than dwell on the other person’s mistakes.

• Summarize the other person’s feelings to make sure that you understand what they are communicating.

• Give affirmation to the other person about what they may be feeling.

• Acknowledge and apologize for any mistakes you may have made.

• Focus on positive results and make specific requests that will enable the achievement of those goals.
Activity:
Reflect on the following situations.
1. Your boss reprimanded you at a department meeting for emailing a joke to others in the workplace. Personal emails and jokes are routine at the office.

2. Recently you shared your idea with a coworker on how to improve departmental operating procedure that could result in greater efficiency and increased revenue for the college. You scheduled a meeting with your supervisor to introduce the concept, but your coworker beat you to it, and has claimed your idea for their own.

3. You have learned that one of the employees you supervise frequently criticizes you harshly to others in and outside of your department.

What pointers from Managing Conflict and Managing Your Emotions would be helpful to you in the above situations?
Check Your Knowledge

Following are a series of questions for you to complete. These questions are designed to check your understanding of the information you just reviewed.
1. Past experiences

A. have little or no effect on your communication
B. influence your thoughts which in turn become your attitudes over time
C. are key to empowering you to establish personal responsibility
D. All of the above

(Click the answer you think is correct.)
You have answered

B. “Influence your thoughts which in turn become your attitudes over time”

This answer is correct.

Communication doesn’t just happen; your style is based on your experiences that, over time, develop into a pattern of attitudes and actions.

It is a continuous cycle. Your experiences influence your thoughts. Your thoughts, over time, become your attitudes. These attitudes become the blueprint for new experiences, which develop into patterns of behavior.

An awareness of your personal style is critical to begin to transform negative attitudes and behaviors into positive ones.

It is key to empowering you to establish personal responsibility and accountability in the midst of changing your behavior. Remember, the only person you can ever really control or change is yourself.
2. Acknowledging what the speaker is saying is valuable because

A. **It does not mean that you approve or agree with the speaker**
B. **It allows the speaker to feel understood**
C. **It is a defensive posture**
D. **All of the above**
E. **Only A and B**

(Click the answer you think is correct.)
You have answered

B. “It allows the speaker to feel understood“

This answer is incorrect.

Back to Question 2
Click Back to Question 2 (above) to review the question, then click “E” for further explanation.
You have answered

E. “Only A and B”

This answer is correct.

Briefly explain the intention of your conversation.

The other person(s) will attend better if they have a basic understanding of the time and effort they will be bringing to the conversation.

Use “I” statements to communicate your feelings, and what you have personally seen, heard, need, or expect.

Do not engage in verbal attacks on the other person; if you need to criticize, describe the behavior or actions of the other person that bother you.

State what you need or expect in positive terms
3. Consider the following scenario

You and your office coworkers have worked well together for approximately one year. Another person has joined the work team and trouble has started. This person appears very sensitive and frequently complains about being ignored. You and the staff have tried to include this person in conversation and activities, but the employee went to the supervisor after two weeks on the job and reported on a long list of office infractions. Several of the complaints were exaggerated or totally false. The supervisor held a meeting and firmly stated that department rules must be followed, that the office was too busy for pettiness, and that future complaints or issues should be settled between the staff. A preferred way to handle the situation would be which of the following?

A. Tell the coworker how mad they make you.
B. Demand to “have it out” with the coworker while it’s all fresh in your mind
C. Listen not as a critic, and desire to understand your coworker rather than to achieve either agreement from or change in them
D. Concentrate on what you need to move forward rather than dwell on the other person’s mistakes.
E. B and C
F. C and D

(Click the answer you think is correct.)
In managing a conflict you should:
1. Concentrate on what you need to move forward rather than dwell on the other person’s mistakes. Focus on positive results.
2. Summarize the other person’s feelings to make sure that you understand what they are communicating. Give affirmation to the other person about what they may be feeling.
3. Acknowledge and apologize for any mistakes you may have made.
4. Focus on positive results and make specific requests that will enable the achievement of those goals.

To manage your emotions:
1. Recognize what you are feeling. Are you angry, embarrassed, or hurt?
2. Do not act on your feelings right away. Don’t make a decision, enter into a discussion, or send an email in anger or frustration.
3. Choose an appropriate time and place to communicate.
4. Accept that you are responsible for your emotions; Use “I” statements. Say “I feel angry when…” rather than “You make me mad…”
Question 4

4. When you want to communicate a long or complex message, you should

A. Let the other person know this may be a long conversation
B. Briefly explain the intent of the conversation
C. Use “I” statements to specifically state your feelings
D. Not engage in blame or verbal attacks
E. All of the above

(Click the answer you think is correct.)
You have answered

E. “All of the above”

This answer is correct.

When communicating long or emotional messages, you should

Briefly explain the intention of your conversation.

The other person(s) will attend better if they have a basic understanding of the
time and effort they will be bringing to the conversation
Use “I” statements to communicate your feelings, and what you have
personally seen, heard, need, or expect.

Do not engage in verbal attacks on the other person; if you need to criticize,
describe the behavior or actions of the other person that bother you.

State what you need or expect in positive terms
Questions ?