Communication Skills for Collaboration and Working Effectively With Others
Gail Ostrishko

Gail Ostrishko, MS, LPC, is a creative catalyst committed to bringing out the best in individuals and organizations. Grounded in three decades of experience as a Counselor, Facilitator, Speaker, Author, and Coach, she has committed her career to helping people help themselves through a variety of venues including career and executive coaching, customized team building and professional development programs, conference keynotes, workshops, and creative customized celebrations.

A proud two-time graduate of East Carolina University, Gail is a Licensed Professional Counselor, a faculty member of the William Glasser Institute, and a Licensed Highlands Affiliate. She represents several national Employee Assistance Programs as a Counselor and Seminar Leader. Gail loves the beach and enjoys volunteering as a Wish Granter with the Make a Wish Foundation and as a Hospital Chaplain.
Main Topics

• Describe the four basic styles of communication

• Recognize the importance and impact of nonverbal cues on communication

• Discuss six styles of listening

• List ways to communicate more effectively and to facilitate mutual respect
Survey

Which communication skill are you most interested in learning about and improving in your life?

A. Understanding the different styles of communication

B. Accurately interpreting nonverbal cues

C. Applying techniques for better listening

D. Learning ways to demonstrate respect to others
Definition of Effective Communication

- Communication is the exchange of thoughts, information, and opinions

- Communication exists on three levels:
  1. What the speaker is saying
  2. What the speaker *thinks* he or she is saying
  3. What the listener *thinks* the speaker is saying
     (It’s not what the speaker says that counts, but what the listener hears.)
Four Basic Styles of Communication

1. Passive: The Martyr
2. Aggressive: The Persecutor
3. Passive-Aggressive: The Manipulator
4. Assertive: The Balancer
Passive Style of Communication

Their point of view is:
- I’m not OK
- I’ll let others make decisions for me
- I feel as if everything happens to me

Your response to them is:
- You don’t know what they want
- You now have the burden of having to make their decisions for them
- You feel responsible for their happiness
- At work, you feel you are doing their part as well as yours
Passive Style of Communication

What you should do:

• Ask open-ended questions

• Don’t rescue them in meetings or group discussions

• Give them feedback on how their behavior affects you; let them know you will not be angry with their comments
  – “I feel uncomfortable when you don’t speak up”
  – “I want to know your thoughts and opinions”
Aggressive Style of Communication

Their point of view is:

- You’re not OK
- They make decisions for you
- They make others feel hurt, defensive, and humiliated
- They build themselves up by putting others down
- Winning is the most important thing to them
- The issue is of little importance; the personal win is what matters

Your response to them is:

- You usually feel defensive and argumentative
- You try to avoid them at all costs
Aggressive Style of Communication

What you should do:

- Have your facts with you
- Be prepared
- Avoid confrontation
- Let them vent, but when they start verbally attacking you, stand up for yourself
Passive-Aggressive Style of Communication

Their point of view is:

- You’re not OK, but I’ll let you think you are
- They choose for you, and you don’t know it
- They believe it is better to be cunning than confrontational

Your response to them is:

- Confusion
- Frustration
- Feeling manipulated
- Feeling like you never know where you stand with them
Passive-Aggressive Style of Communication

What you should do:

- Ask for specifics
- Focus on the facts
- Try to hear the real message and move toward more direct communication
Assertive Style of Communication

Their point of view is:
- I’m OK and you’re OK
- You respect me, and I’ll respect you
- They build themselves up by complimenting others

Your response to them is:
- You always know where you stand with them
- You prefer to work with this kind of person
- You appreciate their honesty
Assertiveness

What assertiveness is **not**:
- Getting what you want
- A nice way to be angry
- Subtle or manipulative

What assertiveness **is**:
- Making your needs, interests, and feelings known in a way that helps to get needs met, interests acted upon, and feelings respected
Survey

It’s not what you say but how you say it that has the greatest impact.

A. Agree

B. Disagree
## Nonverbal Ways a Message Can Be Communicated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Assertive</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
<th>Passive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye Contact</strong></td>
<td>consistent eye contact with occasional breaks</td>
<td>staring, glaring, looking down at the recipient</td>
<td>looking away or down with no eye contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facial Expressions</strong></td>
<td>alert, thoughtful, responsive</td>
<td>frowning, sneering, snarling, snapping with teeth</td>
<td>sad, victim face, inappropriate smile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action, Posture, and Gestures</strong></td>
<td>in control, graceful, confident motions; relaxed, natural gestures</td>
<td>advancing, invading personal space, waving fists, jabbing fingers, pointing</td>
<td>in retreat: still, abject, enclosed, slumping, hanging head, wringing hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice</strong></td>
<td>in control, calm, straightforward without harsh tones</td>
<td>domineering, yelling, harsh, shrill, loud, impatient, “preachy”</td>
<td>apologetic, hurt, timid, whispering, whining</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sender/Receiver Disconnect

• Two leading causes of communication breakdowns and misunderstandings
  1. Listening barriers
  2. Contradictory messages

• Solutions
  1. Discard bad listening habits
  2. Build effective listening skills
  3. Learn to read body language
Importance of Effective Listening and Feedback

- Promote social **survival**, individual **well-being**, and organizational **success**

- Build better **relationships**, reduce **misunderstanding**, and increase **creativity**

- Facilitate **problem solving**, build **trust**, and improve **coordination** and **collaboration**
# Six Styles of Listening

**Ineffective Styles**

1. **Ignoring**  
   Not really listening

2. **Pretending**  
   Saying “yeah, uh-huh, right”

3. **Selective**  
   Hearing only certain parts of the conversation

**Effective Styles**

4. **Attentive**  
   Focusing energy on the words that are being said

5. **Empathetic**  
   Listening with the intent to understand

6. **Critical**  
   Evaluating what is being said
The Difficult Art of Listening

What helps?
• Eye contact
• Wanting to know
• Relevant questions

What stops you?
• Getting distracted
• Thinking too much about your response
• Butting in with bright ideas
• Having a fixed idea of the other person
Good Listening

- Make eye contact
- Take a listening position
- Suspend judgment
- Make comments and participate
- Ask questions for understanding
- Reflect the speaker’s message
“Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”
Stephen Covey
Respect: Promises to Each Other

1. Reliable – Be dependable and follow through on my responsibilities

2. Excellence – Go above and beyond to make a positive difference each day

3. Show Appreciation – Value and acknowledge your contributions

4. Positive Attitude – Be friendly, optimistic, and helpful

5. Embrace Differences – Honor and learn from your uniqueness and experiences

6. Communication – Listen, seek to understand, and share information

7. Teamwork – Support you, and together we will succeed

Source: Baso and Hill
Tips for Communicating Effectively

• Communicate clearly and maintain eye contact
• Be aware of your nonverbal language
• Listen to others
• Stop talking and suspend judgment
• Encourage speaker to elaborate and/or clarify
• Paraphrase what you are hearing to check the accuracy of your interpretation
• Commit to being open, honest, and assertive
Next Steps

• What is one new thing you learned today?

• What is one action you can take to more effectively communicate with others?
Contact your EAP
or
Work-Life Program
for
Assistance
Thank You!

Questions?