

How to Strengthen Your Communication Skills

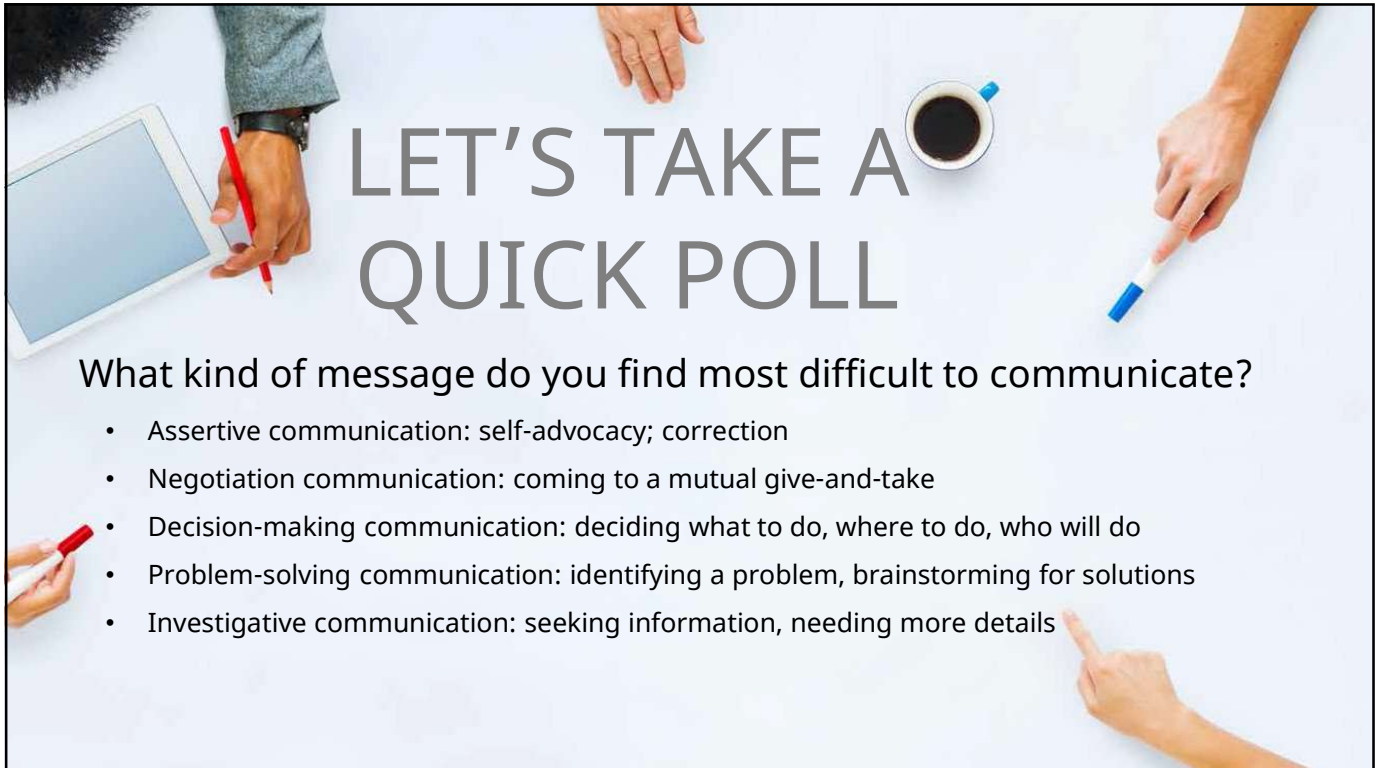


1

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Review the SKILLS needed for effective communication
- Evaluate the differences in various forms of communication in the workplace
- Identify strategies that strengthen communication for different messages
- Explore ways to build a “trust account” in your workplace

2



LET'S TAKE A QUICK POLL

What kind of message do you find most difficult to communicate?

- Assertive communication: self-advocacy; correction
- Negotiation communication: coming to a mutual give-and-take
- Decision-making communication: deciding what to do, where to do, who will do
- Problem-solving communication: identifying a problem, brainstorming for solutions
- Investigative communication: seeking information, needing more details

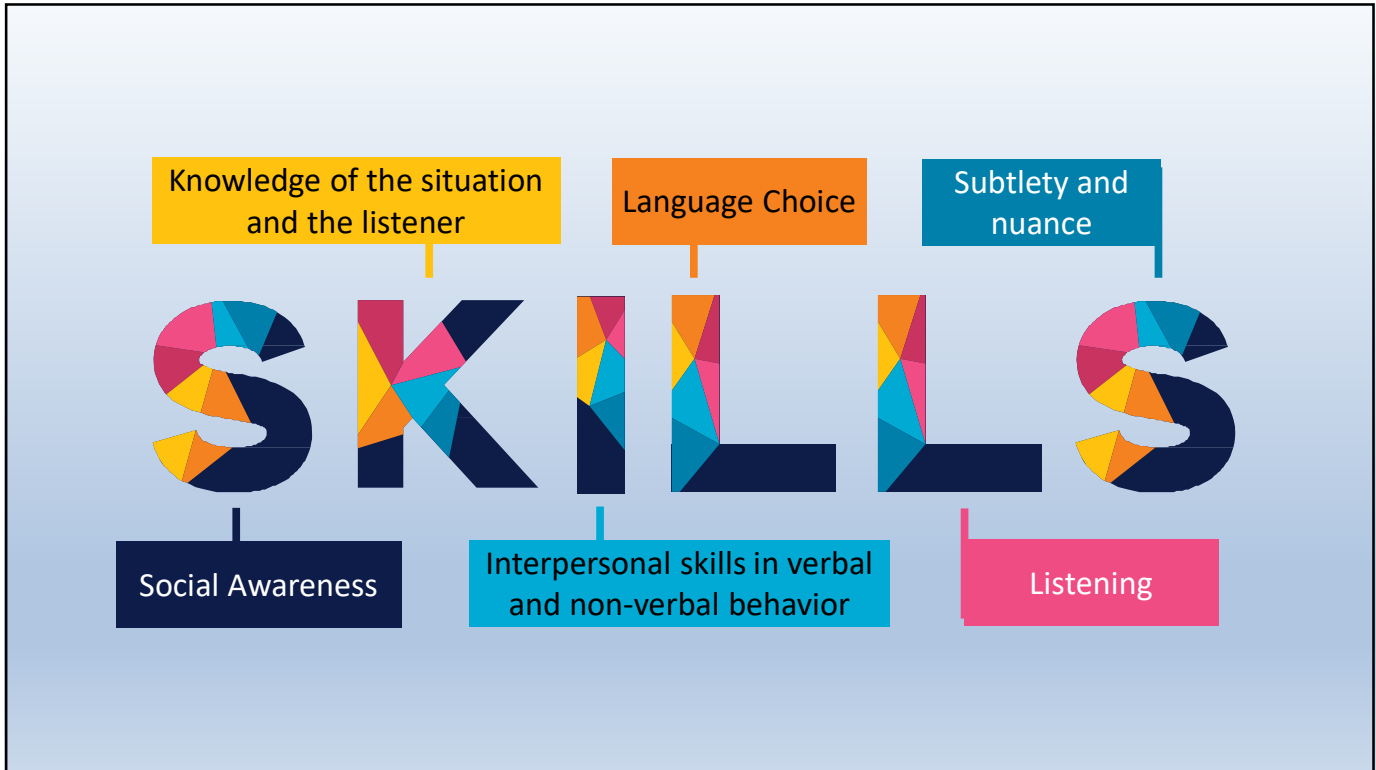
3



SKILLS

are needed to strengthen communication

4



5



6



BREAKOUT EXERCISE #1

Join with colleagues to discuss what is difficult for these different types of communication. Choose the room with the topic you identified as a challenge area in the poll.

A volunteer willing to be the group scribe will share some of the comments from the breakout session.

To the extent you feel comfortable, please share what is difficult for you in the type of communication you find challenging.

7



Chatbox Share-out

Group scribes: share some general perceptions from the breakout session

8

Food for Thought...

In our current social era, people have strong desires for our communication to achieve certain **OUTCOMES** that we have pre-determined as valuable, important.

The question is, can we live with outcomes that we don't like?

Strong communication skills do not guarantee a desired outcome.



Applying **SKILLS** to Different Types of Communication

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

ASSESS THE INSTRUCTIONS AND THE EMPLOYEE SKILL SET

Giving instructions take TIME!

Best delivery of instructions is face to face with undivided attention, or a phone call with reciprocity and mirroring.



Be aware of these nuances:

Is the task familiar? Is there a slight change from previous instructions? Has the employee shown independence in this task before? Is there a quality control rubric, or evaluation of outcome to guide the employee?

TIP - Try a step-by-step approach. Sometimes a numbered list or checklist can be helpful for employees to follow.

11

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION SELF-ADVOCACY

BOUNDARIES ARE HEALTHY AND OK WHEN RELATED TO YOUR BEHAVIOR

What to do?

XYZ Statements: "I feel X when you do Y;
it would be helpful if you did Z instead."



What if others lack the motivation to change to Z?

TIP - What part of OTHERS' behavior can you control? How much energy do you actually have to control OTHERS' behavior?

12

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

CORRECTING OTHERS

REMINDERS, INSTRUCTIONS,
RULES, POLICIES

State them with an affirmation of the other
person's wants and needs, too.

The “*I get it*” message.



*I realize it would be nice to have _____
but we are _____ so it is helpful
to _____.*

13

GIVING FEEDBACK THAT IS NOT ALWAYS POSITIVE



Be observant: What do you see?

(NOT what do you hear other people say).
Your own observation needs to be the
foundation of the conversation:

“I notice” not “You do.”

Be confident: Know when it is
your place to give this feedback

Be kind: Word choice, setting, non-verbals

Be truthful: This is what I see, this is what
happens, this creates a conflict with...

14

EXPRESSING OPINIONS

*Remember that an opinion
is “a view or judgment
formed about something,
not necessarily based on
fact or knowledge.”*

15

EXPRESSING OPINIONS

The fewer opinions you express between clients, the better the relational outcome.

Opinions, by definition, are judgments: those seeking our help probably have an undue burden of judgments and don't need more.

***“You don't have to say
everything you are thinking.”***

HELPFUL TIP

Unless requested,
your opinion is
not a **necessary**
communication
with clients.

16



“To say nothing is saying something. You must denounce things you are against or one might believe that you support things you really do not.”

*-Germany Kent, author,
“You Are What You Tweet”*

17

EXPRESSING OPINION, ON THE OTHER HAND



In our current social climate, there is a tension between status quo (reigning opinions) and social injustice. Where one stands on such issues might be a necessary conversation.

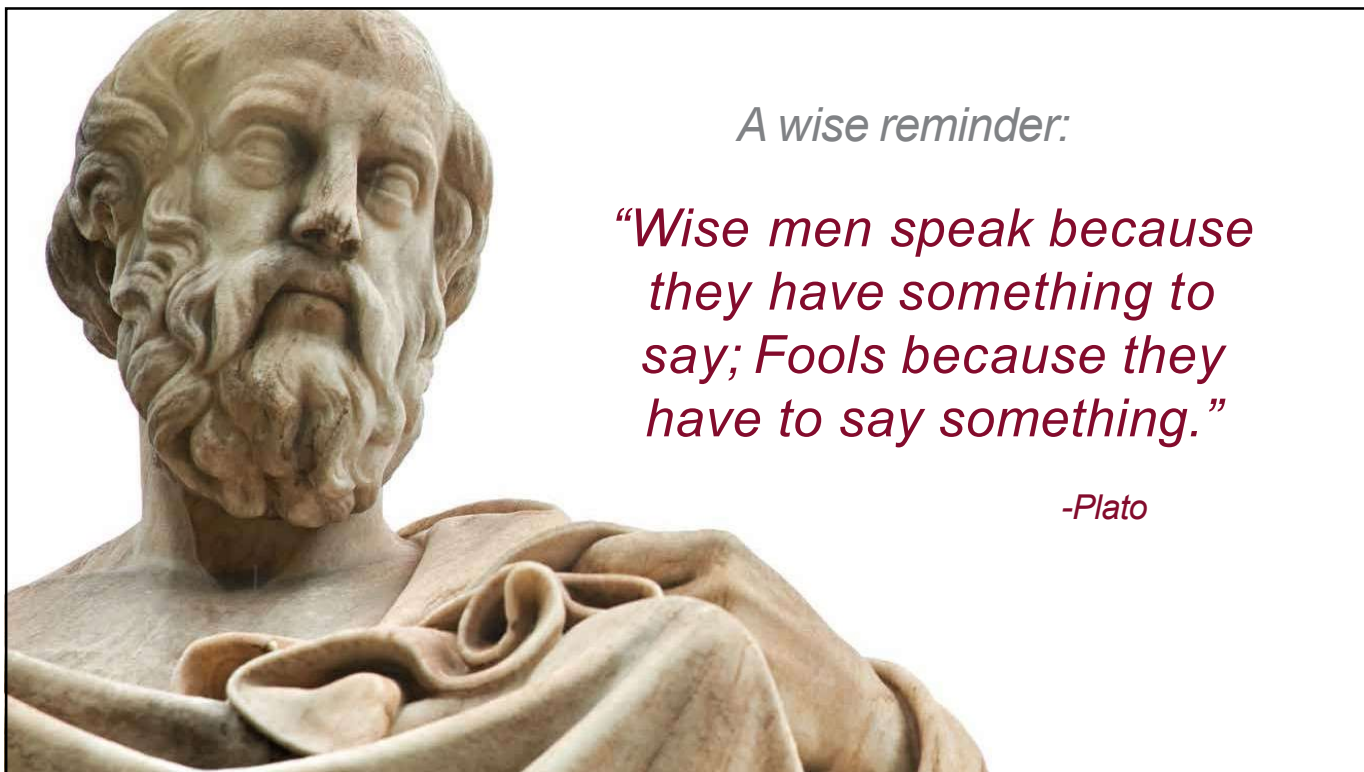
Consider the use of DISCRETION:

Who is it important to tell?

When is it important to tell?

Why is it important to tell?

18



19

NEGOTIATING FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT



Influence others; persuade through data

Friendly approach shows emotional intelligence and trust; able to give and take

Hostile approach shows an imbalanced concern for self interests at the expense of concern for others.

"Mutual benefit" is a concern for both.

TIPS

Approach through data and discourse!

Allow for conversations, take time, reflect on what is said from the others.

Put yourself in their place and explore what that would feel like for you.

Allow time for thinking about the data.

20

PROBLEM-SOLVING WITH OTHERS

APPLY BRAINSTORMING TECHNIQUES

Everyone has an idea that is valuable

Record them all

Discuss the merits of each

Facilitate consensus
through questions and discourse

*Identify problems through
“us/we” statements.
Community concern is
more effective than “I
want you to” which is
one-dimensional and not
generally empathetic.*

What would this solution look like?

Is it feasible?

What unintentional consequences might occur?

21

SEEKING INFORMATION

Thoughtful Questions are your friend. Avoid questions with “tone”
or confrontation or sarcasm.

WHAT HAPPENED?

WOULD YOU
SHARE WITH ME
ABOUT...?



I'd like to be a part of your
team. How can I help You?

**USE LISTENING AS A
COMPANION SKILL**

22

WHAT ABOUT DIGITAL COMMUNICATION?

Remember that each has different purposes and formalities.
Consider the “nuance” in each



TEXTING - Simplest, most convenient, but remember it is informal and should probably be used for informal things: Reminders, quick “need to do.” Or make them aware an email has been sent.

EMAIL - More formal, leaves a paper trail. Allows more thought to be put into the message. Can be impersonal, however. Be cautious about “copying in” another person.

INSTAGRAM/TWITTER/FACEBOOK/LINKEDIN - Think “fleeting.” “Here and gone.” Sometimes, not authentic, can be “best face with lots of makeup.” But with power to evoke strong emotions. Is this what you’re after?

23

HOW DOES SOCIAL MEDIA HELP YOU IN YOUR DAILY LIFE? HOW DOES SOCIAL MEDIA CREATE STRESS OR BARRIERS?

It is important to balance the use of social media as part of your “self-care package.”
If life is a garden, we want to be wise in what we allow to grow, or to take up space.



24



BREAKOUT EXERCISE #2

Join with colleagues to share a goal or a strategy you have for managing social media.

A volunteer willing to be the group scribe will share some of the comments from the breakout session.

25



Chatbox Share-out

Group scribes: share some general perceptions from the breakout session

26

Build a Trust Account

When you practice the SKILLS of communication, you are likely to build a trust account with your colleagues and managers.

What is a trust account?

Simply put, it is a set of behaviors that signal to others that you are worthy of trust.



Build a Trust Account

The top 5 characteristics of a trust account are:

Competence: good at your job, able to deliver company objectives

Consistency: words and actions match each other

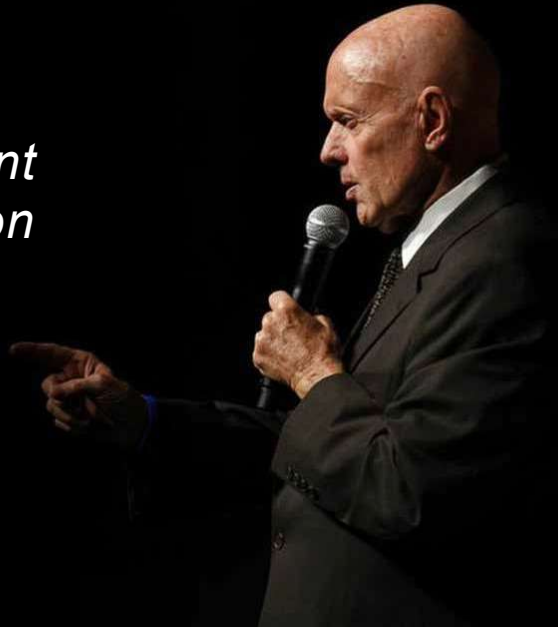
Cooperation: teamwork and common goals are valuable to you

Transparency: honest, approachable, open

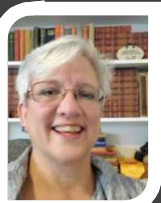
Communication: respectful, receptive, effective

*When the trust account
is high, communication
is easy, instant, and
effective.”*

-Stephen R. Covey



29



SHARON M. NOBLE, MA, BCBA
UMass Global School of Education Faculty

Q&A

30