Effective Communication

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Aims

- Explore and examine communication styles
- Practice active listening
- Bystander training

What is communication?

- Imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.
- Means of sending or receiving information, such as phone lines or computers.
- A process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour
- Communication helps us build relationships by allowing us to share our experiences, and needs, and helps us connect to others
- Allows us to express feelings, pass on information and share thoughts

4 types of communication styles

- What do you think they might be?
- Passive
- Aggressive
- Passive-aggressive
- Assertive
- (Alvernia University)

Why does it matter?

- It’s important to understand each communication style, and why individuals use them. For example, the assertive communication style has been found to be most effective, because it incorporates the best aspects of all the other styles.
- When we break down these four styles, we understand the characteristics of each style, standard phrases and what makes them unique and how we might use them.
- learning to read people empowers you to better socialize, influence, and possibly, to also help people grow

Passive

- Often act indifferently, yielding to others.
- Usually fail to express their feelings or needs, allowing others to express themselves.
- Frequently, a passive communicator's lack of outward communication can lead to misunderstanding, anger build-up or resentment.
- Often display a lack of eye contact, poor body posture and an inability to say "no."
- Passive communicators also act in a way that states "people never consider my feelings."

- At the same time, these communicators can be safer to speak with when a conflict arises, because they most likely will avoid a confrontation or defer to others.
- Passive communicators are also easy to get along with as they follow others and “go with the flow.”

Passive communication style would say or may believe include:

- *“It really doesn’t matter that much.”*
- *“I just want to keep the peace”*

Aggressive

- It’s often apparent when someone communicates in an aggressive manner. You’ll hear it. You’ll see it. You may even feel it.
- The aggressive communication style is emphasized by speaking in a loud and demanding voice, maintaining intense eye contact and dominating or controlling others by blaming, intimidating, criticizing, threatening or attacking them.
- Aggressive communicators often issue commands, ask questions rudely and fail to listen to others.
- But they can also be considered leaders and command respect from those around them.

- Examples of phrases that an aggressive communicator would use include:
- *“I’m right and you’re wrong.”*
- *“I’ll get my way no matter what.”*
- *“It’s all your fault.”*

Passive-Aggressive

- Passive-aggressive communication style users appear passive on the surface, but within he or she may feel powerless or stuck, building up a resentment that leads to seething or acting out in subtle, indirect or secret ways.
- Most passive-aggressive communicators will mutter to themselves rather than confront a person or issue. They have difficulty acknowledging their anger, use facial expressions that don’t correlate with how they feel and even deny there is a problem.
- Passive-aggressive communicators are most likely to communicate with body language or a lack of open communication to another person, such as giving someone the silent treatment, spreading rumours behind people’s backs or sabotaging others’ efforts.

- Passive-aggressive communicators may also appear cooperative, but may silently be doing the opposite.
- Ultimately, passive-aggressive communicators are aware of their needs, but at times struggle to voice them.

Examples of phrases that a passive-aggressive communicator would use include:

- *"That's fine with me, but don't be surprised if someone else gets mad."*
- *"Sure, we can do things your way" (then mutters to self that "your way" is stupid).*

Assertive

- Thought to be the most effective form of communication,
- Assertive communication style features an open communication link while not being overbearing.
- Express their own needs, desires, ideas and feelings, while also considering the needs of others.
- One of the keys to assertive communication is using “I” statements, such as:
  - “I feel frustrated when you are late for a meeting,”
  - “I don’t like having to explain this over and over.”

- Aim for both sides to win in a situation, balancing one's rights with the rights of others.
- It indicates ownership of feelings and behaviours without blaming the other person.

Examples of phrases an assertive communicator would use include:

- *"We are equally entitled to express ourselves respectfully to one another."*
- *"I realize I have choices in my life, and I consider my options."*
- *"I respect the rights of others."*

Passive	Passive Aggressive	Aggressive	Assertive
Emotionally dishonest, indirect, inhibited, self-denying, blaming, apologetic.	*Emotionally dishonest, indirect. Self-denying at first. Self-enhancing at expense of others later.*	*Inappropriately honest, direct, expressive, attacking, blaming, controlling, self-enhancing at expense of others.*	*Appropriately honest, direct, self-enhancing, expressive, self-confident, empathic to emotions of all involved.*
"Others' rights and needs take prece-dence over mine"	*"I subtly make clear that my rights and needs prevail"*	*"I boldy insist that my rights and needs prevail"*	*I clearly express that we both have rights and needs"*

How to become more assertive

- How can you become more assertive?
- Understanding how others communicate can be key to getting your message across to them.
- In order to develop a more assertive communication style, here are a few tips to keep in mind:
- Take ownership (use “I” statements)

- Maintain eye contact
- Learn to say “no”
- Voice your needs and desires confidently
- Know what you want to achieve

Individual reflection

- What communication style do you think you are?
- What would others say you are?
- Do you need to change this communication style and why?
- Feedback to the group if you want

Active listening

- What is listening?
- What is active listening?
- Is there a difference?

- Active listening is a communication skill in which you focus closely on what the other person is saying, without interrupting them with questions or comments and provide verbal and non-verbal signals to show the speaker you're listening.
- The purpose of active listening is to be present in the conversation and hear and understand the speaker's whole message.
- This is different to passive listening, in which there is no feedback, or little feedback, from the listener, who may not be giving you their full attention, even if they look as if they're listening.

Why active listening?

- Insight that allows you to solve problems, improve learning, and be more influential in your organisation.
- Mastering this skill will help you to build trust with peers and students
- These benefits empower you, enabling you to lead strongly, confidently, and more successfully

Non-verbal cues – what do you think these could be?

- Yawning
- Looking around the room
- Leaning back in their chair
- A facial expression that suggests an emotion
- Look at their watch
- An animated or subdued gesture that suggests an emotion such as boredom, happiness, anxiety, confusion, anger, surprise, fear, disgust or other emotions
- Nodding

- Eye contact
- Concentrating on lecturer/ppt
- Taking notes
- Not taking notes
- Sitting forward in their chair
- A facial expression that suggests intense, serious or a light-hearted presence of mind

Lets practice active listening

Draw the image

- In pairs take a pen and paper –
- One person is the drawer, the other is the describer
- Describer - choose from a set of images but not let the drawer see the image chosen.
- Sit back-to-back
- Drawer - Take five minutes to ask as many questions as you wish about the image. Your partner can answer them. Describer is silent in this time
- Draw the image, based on what you've heard.
- What went right? What went wrong?

Talk the talk

- In pairs take a topic from the front
- One person talks about the topic for four minutes – the talker.
- The other person (the listener) listens to them, without interrupting or interjecting. NO QUESTIONS
- Think about the key takeaways, the main themes, what matters most to the speaker, and what interests you most.
- After four minutes, the speaker stops, the listener now shares what they think they heard the speaker say.
- Give them the opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings.
- Swap and try again with a new topic

I’m going to tell you a story…

- Listen
- Do not take notes
- Kahoot on what you heard

Draw us a picture

- In pairs, sit back-to-back
- Describer will have a picture to draw the other will have a blank sheet of paper and a pen.
- The describer must describe what the other person needs to draw.
- Drawer - no looking, no questions, just do as you are told.
- After 3 minutes have a look and compare your pictures – are they the same? What went well? What could you improve?
- Now swap roles with a new picture.

What have you learnt?

- Reflect on the activities –
- what were you like at communicating?
- What were you like at listening?
- Was it easy or hard?

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References

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