

LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

1

Cliché : Idle talk, trite and shallow. For example, it's a nice day, very superficial.

2

Facts and information: Very safe, as it is talking about something else other than oneself, factual.

3

Opinions and ideas: Goes a little deeper but communicates thoughts not feelings.

THESE THREE ARE ALL COGNITIVE: THE AIM IS TO GET BELOW THE LINE!

4

Feelings: This is where intimacy and meaningful communication really begins, starting to gain insight into how a person thinks and feels.

5

Peak experience: This is sharing the real me in openness and transparency, deep personal revelation. There is no holding back whatever the risk. While it is impossible to be on this level constantly, the more one gets to it the richer the relationship will be.

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HARSH START UPS VS SOFT START UPS

Blaming

You are so irresponsible!

"You" Statements

You don't seem to care about doing things for me!

Judging

You never help with things around the house!

General

The house is a mess!

Aggressive

What's your problem?

Entitled

Why don't you ever.....

Complaining

I'm really bothered that you didn't take the bin out like you said you would on several occasions.

"I" Statements

I'd really love to set some time aside to discuss what's important to each of us regarding household chores. I've been feeling overwhelmed.

Describing

I feel like I've been doing the chores alone all week.

Specific

Could you let me know if you can no longer do a task that you said you would?

Polite

You seem like you have a lot on your mind. I would love to hear what's going on.

Appreciative

I loved the way we used to do the chores together. Do you think we can go back to that?

COMMUNICATION WHEEL



ASSERTIVENESS

FOUR BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS

1. Passive—a doormat, letting others ride over your feelings
2. Aggressive—lashing out verbally or physically
3. Passive-aggressive—outwardly passive but inwardly aggressive, getting back at the other person by indirect devious means such as being difficult, or procrastinating.
4. Assertive—the right and honest behaviour pattern.

BECOMING ASSERTIVE

Being honest about your feelings

Stating opinions firmly and expressing feelings appropriately, particularly when not previously heard

Getting free of people-pleasing

Setting boundaries, and not letting others invade them

Saying no and yes when necessary

Setting time limits on events that are not mutually enjoyed

Requesting legitimate favours

Addressing problems in the open

Asking questions when confused

N. B. LITCHFIELD.

Empathy RESPONSE LEADS



You appear to be feeling...



What I hear you saying is...



Listening to you, it seems as if...



I wonder if you're saying...



As I get it, you felt that...



So, you feel...



I gather...



I'm picking up that you...

LISTENING ACCURATELY

#1: STEP IN THEIR SHOES

When you talk, try your best to take their point of view. For instance, try picturing that you are them, going about their day.

Does your capacity to feel empathy change by taking their perspective?

#2: FACT-CHECK YOUR INTERPRETATIONS

Reflect on the dialogues you and that person have had. Make a conscious effort to fact-check your interpretations and assumptions regarding what they said.

For example, what did you mean when you said...

#3: GIVE YOUR FULL ATTENTION

During a conversation, start by giving your full attention to the other person (put your phone away). Before you move on to other things, consider what might occur if you asked: "I would like to clarify that I've understood you correctly. May I?"

#4: CLARIFY WHAT THEY'VE SAID

Make an effort to clarify what you think you have heard – identify and reflect their emotions.

For example: What I am hearing you say is...? & It sounds like you are feeling exhausted.

#5: CLARIFY WHAT YOU'VE SAID

During conversations, you might ask the speaker if they could share what they've heard from you.

For example: Just to ensure we are on the same page, what did you hear me say? How would you clear up any misunderstandings if they arose?

Retrieved 10 April 2025 from: <https://positive.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/Listening-Accurately-Worksheet.pdf>

COMMUNICATION TIPS

1. Right timing – think beyond self, are others tired, unwell? Select a time free from distractions.
2. Acknowledge feelings from the facts
Facts are objective, verifiable truths supported by evidence, while feelings are subjective, personal emotional responses.
3. Share on a deep feeling level (assertiveness) – be willing to be vulnerable if safe to do so.
4. Equal time to each for sharing – being patient and honouring each other's time.
5. Avoid stomping out in anger – If you need time for your anger to subside, say so and communicate how much time is needed. Pick up the discussion later.
6. Use I statements, not you or we statements – 'you' is condemning and offensive, we is triangulating someone else in as reinforcement. Good communicators speak for themselves – 'I'.
7. Avoid withdrawing in silence – learning to overcome this defence mechanism can help you stay in the conversation.
8. Avoid global statements (always, never) – these are irrational.
9. Avoid jumping to conclusions – listen and ask questions to gain a deeper understanding
10. Keep in the here and now – avoid past hurts and experiences, keep in the present.
11. Avoid quick advice – listen and validate the other person, don't try and fix.
12. Avoid quick judgments – lean in and remain curious.
13. Avoid: "You always...", "Calm down!", "You never...", "You should...", "You must..."
& Name-calling
14. Questions to ask yourself...
Is this conversation bringing us closer to a desired outcome or further away?
Am I maintaining my values/morals during this conversation?
Am I treating the other person the way I would like to be treated?

THE FIVE CONFLICT BEHAVIOUR RESPONSES:

Competitive

“Must win at all cost,” these are people that take a firm stand and know what they want, usually from a place of power, ‘I’m right, you’re wrong’ mentality, someone must lose.

Compromising

Trying to find a solution that will at least partially satisfy everyone and all give up some ground.

Accommodating

Willing to meet the needs of others at the expense of own needs, accommodating their views, weak, passive and self-sacrificing.

Avoiding

Withdrawal, evading conflict altogether, avoiding hurt and pain but often the feelings are repressed leading to a more serious problem.

Collaborative

An effective resolution focused style that tries to respect and hear all people, usually highly assertive and acknowledging everyone is important.

EXTRACT FROM LITCHFIELD FAMILY SERVICES – GROUND RULES OF COMMUNICATION (2011)

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. Recognise the conflict
2. Define the issue
3. Find a right time and place to discuss it (not while angry)
4. Allow each party to identify their own contribution to the problem
5. List things that have been done in the past, but which have not been helpful
6. Brainstorm, list and discuss all possible solutions
7. Agree on one solution to try
8. Follow the 'Communication Tip'
9. Stay on target
10. Agree on how each person will work towards the solution
11. Be intentional in working through the conflict
12. Set a time for another meeting to review progress
13. Affirm each other as each contributes towards the solution
14. Be willing to accept an alternate solution

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