

# Improving Relationships: Communication Skills

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# Relationship Enhancing Attitudes

## What is it?

- Communicating in a way that helps you bond and understand each other better.
- Trying is often enough - as long as the effort is genuine.
- Works even when you are upset. Works even when you don't like the other person.

## How to do it?

- Three characteristics of high-quality communication:
  1. Respect
  2. Honesty
  3. Understanding
- How to build and practice these things? (View next 4 slides)

# Non-Verbal Communication

(within cultural context)

## What communicates Respect?

- Facing each other
- Complementary posture
- Ignoring distractions

## What communicates Honesty?

- Making eye contact
- Expression matching emotions

## What communicates Understanding?

- Nodding (when you agree)
- Responsive expression

# Expressive Speaking

## Subjective (Using “I” Statements)

- Stating your views only.
- Inarguable: You are the expert regarding your views.
- Recognizing that the other person might have a different views.

## Stating Feelings

- Stating Feelings: Honestly sharing your emotions.
- Convey why and issue is important.

# Expressive Speaking

## Being Specific

- Give concrete examples rather than generalizations.
- Don't characterize the person.
- Present facts and focus on behaviors.

## Positive Goal

- Express the positive values that you are pursuing.
- In particular, express the positive things you want in your relationship.

# Expressive Speaking

## Request

- Let the other person know what you think would help.
- Suggest what you want to try, not demand that they agree.
- Don't manipulating them into going along with you.

# Empathic Listening

## Put aside your own view

- Screen out your opinion, advice and questions when you are listening.
- This shows respect for the person speaking.
- When they feel respect, they will respect you as well.
- You will feel less anxious because their views won't threaten your views.

# Empathic Listening

## Be empathic

- Try to genuinely understand the other person's experience through their lens.
- Helps you focus on them rather than yourself, at that moment.
- Increases the chances of you both better understanding each other.



# Empathic Listening

## Check understanding

- Offer brief tentative feedback about what you understand the speaker is saying.
- Helps you focus on the speakers' experience.
- Allows you to be sure you are hearing them correctly.
- It shows the other person that you understand, which makes them feel heard.
- In return, they will be more likely to listen when they are done - Showing you understand does not mean you are agreeing.

# Empathic Listening

## Accept correction

- The people speaking are the experts on what they are saying - Follow their lead.
- If they correct your feedback statement, accept this and change your statement to fit the correction.
- This demonstrates respect for the speakers' right to present their views.
- It DOES NOT mean you are agreeing.

# Discourse

- Carefully switching from speaker to listener and listener to speaker.
- Ensures that everyone knows when you are speaking and when you are listening.
- Avoids situations where both people are speaking and no one is listening.

# Discourse

## Switching to the “LISTENER” role

When?

- You are finished presenting an idea.
- Feel the people listening understand.
- You are ready to switch to let other people speak.

Why?

- As speaker, it is good for you to finish and initiate a switch as soon as possible.
- Quick switching keeps the conversation flowing.

# Discourse

## Switching to the “SPEAKER” role

Why?

- To present your view point.

How?

- Demonstrate that you understood the person who is speaking, then explain that you want to switch.