

Tell us what you think!



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TO SOLIDIFY CONNECTIONS

Check out the evidence!

Building good social connections and social support is critical for mental health and well-being. In current times, being able to communicate well is more critical than ever given that many of us have less patience and are less effective communicators. Here are some evidence-based tips to having more effective communication even in difficult circumstances.

WHAT IS EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION?

Our ability to interact with others in a way that accurately represents our feelings, thoughts, and needs, while also being respectful and considerate of others.



WHEN TO USE IT?

The following tips and strategies can be used to help build stronger relationships with:

- Friends
- Family
- Colleagues
- Others
- Peers

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION ^{1, 2, 3, 4, 7}

▶ USE "I" STATEMENTS

"I" statements can increase your awareness of internal thoughts and feelings. This helps you deal with your own emotions more effectively without overwhelming others. These statements can also help build positive communication and foster closer emotional relationships.

EXAMPLE

Instead of saying: "You make me really angry"

Try saying something like: "I feel really angry when..."



▶ TAKE SOME TIME TO REFLECT

Expressing your feelings when you are hurt or angry might make it difficult to effectively communicate how you feel or might make you say something that you will later regret.



Allow yourself some time to reflect on the situation so you can express yourself in a calmer way. Try writing it down or use the 48 hour rule to give yourself some time to take a step back to better understand and express what you are feeling.

▶ SANDWICH A NEGATIVE BETWEEN TWO POSITIVES

This is a helpful approach when delivering information which the other person may find difficult to hear.

Start with a positive statement, followed by the issue you want to address and end with some appreciative words.



EXAMPLE

"You usually bring some really good insights to our group discussions. However, I noticed you haven't been contributing as much this week, and this is a problem that we need to address. Since you're always willing to problem-solve, I know we'll be able to work something out."

▶ TURN VENTING INTO PROBLEM SOLVING

After a difficult encounter or situation, the first thing you might want to do is blow off steam by venting.



Adopt a problem-solving approach and explain the situation with clarity, then focus on what can be done to resolve the issue.



WHEN LISTENING TO OTHERS ^{3,5}

The following key elements and associated strategies will help you listen to others in an active and engaged manner.



BODY LANGUAGE

Non-verbal cues communicate you're listening and interested in what others are saying.

Try to maintain appropriate eye contact and nod your head as the other person is expressing themselves.

UNDERSTANDING

You might not agree with what the other person is saying; however, it's important not to take it personally and try to understand their perspective.

Take some time to reflect before reacting.

Rephrase and repeat what you have been told back to the speaker to ensure you understood correctly.

ATTENTION

Paying attention when others are talking lets them know that you value what they have to say.

Use active listening: don't be anticipating what you're going to say and avoid distractions (e.g., your phone).

EMPATHY

This refers to our ability to examine the situation from the others' perspective.

Be considerate and sensitive to what the other person is trying to communicate. Try putting yourself in the other person's shoes to help you better understand different perspectives.

INTERACTING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE ^{3,6}



Sometimes you will encounter people who are difficult to communicate with. People react in different ways when interacting with a difficult person; some avoid them, some argue with them, and some get angry. However, these are often ineffective in moving the situation forward.

Here are some additional tips you can use to be ready for such situations.

1 Listen actively, validate their experiences and the genuineness of their feelings.

2 Address the issues upfront in a calm manner to facilitate positive and constructive discussions.

3 Say "No" when necessary, it is okay to say no when you don't have the time or energy to complete certain tasks or if you are overwhelmed or stressed.

If you don't feel comfortable just saying "no", you can provide an alternative solution!



If a group member for a project tells you that you need to have your part done by a certain date, provide a reasonable alternative date and time.

FEEDBACK & CONTACT INFORMATION

