

## Toolkit 1 - Learning Unit 2

### Post-Intervention

#### Activity 4 - Communication



Training

#### 4. Communication

Improve your communication skills within the context of critical thinking by engaging in difficult discussions, for example, in situations when you and another participant may disagree about the topic. Maintain good communication habits, such as active listening and respect, to understand other points of view and to be able to explain your ideas in a calm, rational manner. Doing so can help you evaluate solutions more effectively with your colleagues.

There are specific things to do that can improve your communication skills:

1. Listen, listen, and listen. People want to know that they are being heard. Really listen to what the other person is saying, instead of formulating your response. Ask for clarification to avoid misunderstandings. At that moment, the person speaking to you should be the most important person in your life. Another important point is to have one conversation at a time. This means that if you are speaking to someone on the phone, do not respond to an email, or send a text at the same time. The other person will know that she doesn't have your undivided attention.
2. Who you are talking to matters. It is okay to use acronyms and informal language when you are communicating with a buddy, but if you are emailing or texting your boss, "Hey," "TTYL" or any informal language, has no place in your message. You cannot assume that the other person knows what the acronym means. Some acronyms have different meanings to different people, do you want to be misunderstood? Effective communicators target their message



based on who they are speaking to, so try to keep the other person in mind, when you are trying to get your message across.

3. Body language matters. This is important for face-to-face meetings and video conferencing. Make sure that you appear accessible, so have open body language. This means that you should not cross your arms. And keep eye contact so that the other person knows that you are paying attention.

4. Check your message before you hit send. Spell and grammar checkers are lifesavers, but they are not foolproof. Double check what you have written, to make sure that your words are communicating the intended message.

5. Be brief, yet specific. For written and verbal communication, practice being brief yet specific enough that you provide enough information for the other person to understand what you are trying to say. And if you are responding to an email, make sure that you read the entire email before crafting your response. With enough practice, you will learn not to ramble, or give away too much information.

6. Write things down. Take notes while you are talking to another person or when you are in a meeting, and do not rely on your memory. Send a follow-up email to make sure that you understand what was being said during the conversation.

7. Sometimes it's better to pick up the phone. If you find that you have a lot to say, instead of sending an email, call the person instead. Email is great, but sometimes it is easier to communicate what you have to say verbally.

8. Think before you speak. Always pause before you speak, not saying the first thing that comes to mind. Take a moment and pay close attention to what you say and how you say it. This one habit will allow you to avoid embarrassments.

9. Treat everyone equally. Do not talk down to anyone, treating everyone with respect. Treat others as your equal.

10. Maintain a positive attitude and smile. Even when you are speaking on the phone, smile because your positive attitude will shine through and the other person will know it. When you smile often and exude a positive attitude, people will respond positively to you.





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