




# Good Communication

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It is inaccurate to say that someone or something makes us feel a certain way.

It ignores our essential freedom to behave or feel as we do

It is our current thinking process that determines how we feel and act



“People are disturbed not by things, but by the views they take of them...”

- *Epictetus, 1st Century AD*

“For there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so...”

- *Shakespeare (Hamlet)*



# Relationships: Good Communication

## Listening Skills

- ❑ Listening is first because it is the most important component of good communication

## Listening with Full Attention

- ❑ Stop what you are doing, make eye contact, and don't judge what is being said. Think about what you will say next; don't jump in right away with advice or solutions



# Good Communication...

## Active Listening

- ❑ Have empathy; try to see things from the speaker's point of view
- ❑ Employ enquiry; you invite, not demand, the speaker to tell you more about it. Don't drill with questions

## Fogging


- ❑ Acknowledge speaker's point of view by finding some thing with which you can agree
- ❑ Allowing others their feelings and viewpoints reduces their need to defend or justify and allows them to be more receptive to you



# Good Communication...

## Self Expression Skills


- ❑ *Be Open* - important things are not left unsaid and assumptions are not made
- ❑ *Be Discreet* - use honesty with compassion; some things do not need to be pointed out
- ❑ *Be Direct* - verbal and non-verbal messages are not in conflict; do not make hints
- ❑ *Use "I" Statements* - these non-judgmental statements are about how you feel and why. They allow you to take responsibility for your problems and feeling and do not blame or attack the other person (eg. "You are..." - attack vs. "I feel..." - giving information)



# Good VS. Bad Communication

## GOOD

- ❑ You express your feelings openly and directly (You use "I feel" statements such as "I'm feeling annoyed")
- ❑ You acknowledge the other person's feelings ("You seem frustrated with me - are you?")
- ❑ Your attitude is respectful and caring, even if you feel angry or upset (this is an "I - Thou" relationship)



# Good VS. Bad Communication

## **BAD**

- ❑ You fail to express your feelings; Instead, you pout or attack with "you" statements ("You're a jerk") or you argue about the truth
- ❑ You fail to acknowledge the other person's feelings; Instead, you blame them ("You're always badgering me") or defend yourself
- ❑ Your attitude is not respectful; Instead, you sound patronizing, defensive, hostile, or competitive (this is an "I - It" relationship)



# Setting Boundaries

Be aware of what your relationship boundaries are

- ❑ Pay attention to your feelings
- ❑ Anger, resentment, humiliation, and anxiety can be alarms to let you know that a boundary violation is occurring
- ❑ Boundaries vary from person to person and from one situation to another



# Setting Boundaries...

Make your boundaries clear to others

- ❑ Do not assume that others know what your boundaries are
- ❑ You have a responsibility to communicate your boundaries in a clear and respectful manner



# Setting Boundaries...

- "I" Statements - give a non-judgmental description of the situation, how you feel about it, and now it is a problem for you
- Fogging - allows you to set your boundary while honouring the other person's viewpoint
- Broken Record - useful when you are dealing with someone who will not hear you. Simply repeat what you want to say over and over, without getting defensive




# Problem Solving

- 1. Acceptance** - look at the person objectively. Accept what is and go into solution mode
- 2. Letting Go** - if you have destructive patterns of relating due to early life training, remember that learned behaviour can be un-learned or changed
- 3. Expressing Feelings** - let your feelings out in an appropriate manner



# Problem Solving...

- 4. Taking Responsibility** - take responsibility for yourself. Own your behaviour; allow others to be responsible for themselves
- 5. Forgiving** - you can't move forward if you don't forgive
- 6. Appreciating** - appreciate people for what they are, not what you think they should be



# Deciding When To Be Assertive

- Do you know what really happened?
- How much does it matter?
- Will you get what you want?
- Do you just want to express yourself?
- What are your options?
- Do you want a positive outcome?
- Are you prepared to be assertive?



# Deciding When To Be Assertive...

- Have you counted to 10?
- Would it be better to wait?
- Will you kick yourself if you do nothing?
- Have you done everything you can?
- What are the possible consequences and risks?
- Will assertion make any difference?



# Fighting Fair

- Determine what is the problem - if you are a moody type of person, perhaps the problem has nothing to do with others and more to do with yourself. Take care of yourself and maybe the problems will go away
- Be assertive rather than aggressive
- Discuss one thing at a time



# Fighting Fair...

- Have an appropriate sense of the other person's dignity as well as your own. No hitting below the self-worth. No need to stay in a place where you are being abused. Retreating for the time being may be the best alternative if the discussion isn't going well
- Focus on progress rather than perfection



# Fighting Fair...

- Avoid extraneous details (*eg.* "You're 10 minutes late." "No I'm not, I'm only 7".)
- Use active listening skills - you are a good listener only if the other person feels listened to
- Avoid blame - rather, exercise responsibility of self
- Hang in there even if you feel threatened about the noise level



# Fighting Fair...

- Use the style of conflict management comfortable to you. Resolving conflicts does not have to involve shouting
- Check your attitudes - maybe it's time for some attitude adjustment
- Focus on what you can do to resolve the conflict rather than trying to change the other person



# Fighting Fair...

- Admit your fears and inabilities if they are getting in the way of resolving the conflicts
- Ask for help if appropriate (eg. "It seems that we can't resolve this on our own. Is there anyone who might be able to help?")

# Steps To Success With Difficult People



## ***Choices***

1. Do Nothing:
  - Continue suffering; complain
2. Leave:
  - Not solvable; not worth it
3. Change Your Attitude:
  - focus on positives; take control
4. Change Your Behaviour:
  - Do something; be flexible

