



Interpersonal Communication Skills



What are interpersonal communication skills?

- Verbal & non-verbal interactions in one-on-one & small-group settings.
- Also known as “people skills” or “soft skills”.
- Ranked in a survey as the **most important** requirement for successful job performance.



Types of Interpersonal Skills



- Assertion skills
- Listening skills
- Conflict-resolution skills (read the course notes for more explanation)

1. Assertion skills: The “I” language

Submissive Behaviours	Assertive Behaviours	Aggressive Behaviours
<p>Does not express honest feelings, needs, values and concerns</p> <p>May speak softly or hesitatingly</p> <p>Communicates “I don’t matter”</p>	<p>Stands up for own rights, provides constructive feedback, gives directives to others appropriately</p>	<p>Expresses feelings, needs and concerns at others’ expense</p> <p>May speak loudly, may be rude and sarcastic</p> <p>Always concerned with “what I want”</p>

Three-part assertion message

Use of “I” language in assertion.

Behaviour: When you do not let me know you will be late

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Feelings: I feel annoyed

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Effects: because I am unable to reschedule my timetable.

Non-judgmental Description of Behaviour

Be specific	<i>When you ignore company policies ...</i>	<i>When you arrive late for work three times this week ...</i>
Do not draw inferences	<i>When you left the meeting early just because Frank criticised you ...</i>	<i>When you left the meeting 20 minutes before your report was to be given ...</i>
Be objective	<i>When you demonstrated your sexist bias...</i>	<i>When you say women are incapable of being effective managers ...</i>
	<i>When you are never on time ...</i>	<i>When you are frequently late ...</i>

Clarification of Tangible Effect

	Behaviour description	Disclosure of feelings	Tangible effect on asserter
Costs money	When you use my car and don't refill the petrol tank ...	I feel unfairly treated ... ?	because I have to pay more money for petrol
Harms possessions	When you borrow my tools and leave them out in the rain ...	I feel annoyed ... ?	because they become rusty and don't work well
Consumes time	When you are late frequently to pick me up after work ...	I feel frustrated ... ?	because my time is wasted while I wait for you
Interferes with effectiveness at work	When you call me at work and talk at length	I feel tense ...	because I can't get all my work done on schedule
Causes extra work	When you do not put your dirty clothes in the basket ...	I feel irritated ... ?	because I have to do the extra work of collecting them

Disclosure of Feelings

- Avoid using value-laden words

When you smoke in our small office, I feel **abused** ...

- Consider culture

I feel annoyed

I feel worried

I feel upset

I feel disappointed

I feel unfairly treated

I feel irritated

I feel embarrassed

I feel hurt

I feel anxious

I feel uncomfortable

Which of these are you comfortable with?

Your report is too sloppy.
You'll have to retype it.

I'm afraid the boss will be disappointed with us if we turn in a report with these many errors. We'll get a better reaction if it's retyped.

That was an empty promise you made. We can never have the job done by the end of the month.

I'm worried about the promise you made. I don't see how we can get the job done by the end of the month.

Something to think about

Is assertiveness a cultural behaviour?

Is there such a thing as a culturally appropriate assertive behaviour?

Can everyone say:

“Can you please stop talking? It is distracting me from my enjoyment of the movie.”?



Important!

- The “I” language is an individualist view of assertion – it respects the listener or reader’s ability to receive criticism based on facts, logic and/rational thinking
- What happens if the “I” language is used in the context of a collectivist culture?
- Assertiveness can be successful if conveyed through an appropriate tone – HOW you articulate your views.

2.0 LISTENING: Paraphrasing

A paraphrase is a concise response to the speaker which states the essence of the other's content in the listener's own words.

Jamie: I don't know whether to have a baby or not. George isn't sure either. I love my work ... it's stimulating and challenging and I'm well-paid. But sometimes I yearn to have a child and be a full-time mother.

Kim: I understand what you're saying. You enjoy your work so much, but sometimes you feel a strong pull toward motherhood.

Paraphrasing



- Paraphrasing is active listening – crucial in resolving conflict
- A mediator who paraphrases may be able to separate what happened from what one feels about what happened

Paraphrasing

- Re-state sender's message in your own words (1) to show your desire to understand the sender or (2) set the facts straight
 - So, you're saying that ...
 - Let me just see if I've understood you correctly ...
 - So it was you, not George, who first contacted *GM Tires* about their faulty equipment...?

LISTENING: Seeking more information

- If someone gives you constructive feedback, listen carefully:

1. What is the main complaint?

2. Seek more information, if necessary:

“You’ve said I’m not presenting a good attitude to customers. Can you describe exactly what I’m doing?” (Of course, beware of your tone)

CONCLUSION

- If you have effective interpersonal communication skills, you have
 1. appropriate assertion skills
 2. active listening skills
 3. the ability to accept criticism
 4. respect for the face and dignity of the other person

