

Remember...

The goal of a dialogue is better understanding of yourself and the other person *NOT* winning or losing.

Greater awareness and understanding *STRENGTHENS* your position in relation to the other person!

Listening supports the relationship and sends a message of value and respect.

Avoid These Pitfalls...

Monitor your tone of voice for:
sarcasm, condescension, criticism, blame, anger, contempt, righteous indignation

Blaming the other

Assuming you know the other person's intent, motives, feelings

Use words like "always", "never", "should", "but", "wrong"

Information in this brochure is not a substitute for professional consultations. If you need or believe you could benefit from more assistance you may want to contact a mental health professional, health professional, , and/or other professional.

Difficulties Effectively Using These Strategies? Want more information?

Consider other services and resources from....

www.gabardi.com

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Communication Skills

How to Listen Well

And Engage in

Productive Dialogue

Be Open to Understanding the Other Person...

1. Non-verbal ways to show you are interested

- Make Eye Contact
- Eliminate other distractions to your attention
- Nod
- Minimal verbal encouragers such as “uh-huh”

2. Listening Well

- Ask Questions (who, what, where, when)
- Avoid Questions that can be answered “yes” or “no”
- Encourage further detail “tell me more”, “then what happened”
- Paraphrase what you’ve heard
- Summarize main points

3. Reflect Feelings

- Summarize the feeling(s) behind what is being said (shows you can imagine what it might be like in their shoes)

Be Aware of Your Own Feelings and Contribution to the Interaction...

1. Check yourself first

- What are my sensitivities, biases, repetitive patterns?
- What assumptions might I be making about the other person?
- Am I reacting as if my perceptions are the “Truth” or only reality?
- How strong are my feelings? Are these strong feelings distorting my perception of events/other person?
- Am I assigning blame?

2. What you need to Communicate

- What are my key feelings? (underneath anger is often a softer feeling of sadness, fear or hurt)
- What do I hope to accomplish by talking

Once the Other Person Feels Understood...

1. Begin with Common Ground

- Any points of intersection where you both agree or desire the same outcome
- Hear and summarize other person’s point of view **AND** then add your point of view
Ex: “You wanted to be included and I was focused on getting the job done.”

2. Expressing Yourself

- Stay brief, focused on the present issue, and specific
- Talk about yourself (“I” statements to reflect your feelings, point of view, perceptions, intent) Ex: “I felt frustrated when you were late again.” Rather than “You’re never on time”
- Share your purpose and goals for outcomes