

## **Improving Your Communication Skills**

### **Effective Communication Skills**

#### **WHAT**

- **Honest:** Say what you mean and mean what you say.
- **Immediate:** Communicate your feelings and needs in the moment—don't bottle feelings up over time.
- **Clear:** Be direct about what you are saying. Don't beat around the bush or expect the other person to read your mind.
- **Supportive:** Make comments that are constructive rather than vindictive.
- **Focus:** Stay on topic and avoid tangents. Stick with difficult topics, even if it makes you uncomfortable.

#### **HOW**

- **Actively listen:** Listen without distraction. Use minimal verbals and non-verbals to communicate to the speaker that you are trying hard to hear their message.
- **Paraphrase:** Repeat what the speaker has said in your own words. Paraphrasing helps you to know you understand and helps the speaker feel understood as well.
- **Empathy:** Try to understand how the other person is feeling. Appreciate the speaker's point of view.
- **Clarify:** Ask questions to understand details more clearly. This shows the speaker you are interested and also helps you to understand better.
- **Non-judgemental:** Attempt to see the other person's point of view without inserting your own beliefs.
- **Maintain eye contact:** looking directly at another person when you are speaking lets them know you are interested and paying attention.
- **Body posture:** face the person and direct your body toward them to communicate that they have your undivided attention.

### **Assertiveness Skills**

Assertiveness is standing up for your personal rights and making your own choices without violating the rights of others. It is being honest about your thoughts and feelings while expressing them in respectful ways. Assertiveness does not mean that you always get what you want. It does, however, increase your chances of success and it also allows you to communicate your needs and wants in a way that maintains your dignity as a person. Part of being assertive is being able to compromise and recognize that other people have rights too. Another part of being assertive means being responsible for your own feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. It means taking control of yourself instead of others.

Measuring my assertiveness & communication skills:

<u>Skill</u>	<u>Doing o.k.</u>	<u>Need to work on this</u>
1. Telling others what I think	_____	_____
2. Saying “no” when I want to	_____	_____
3. Listening to what other people are saying	_____	_____
4. Giving a compliment to another person	_____	_____
5. Showing interest in getting to know others	_____	_____
6. Asking questions to get more information	_____	_____
7. Avoiding putting others down	_____	_____
8. Keeping the conversation going	_____	_____
9. Taking turns talking	_____	_____
10. Asking for a favor in a respectful way	_____	_____
11. Telling another person how I feel	_____	_____
12. Being able to apologize when I was wrong	_____	_____
13. Following a conversation without losing interest	_____	_____
14. Being able to empathize	_____	_____