

# Communication

**Developing good listening skills involve attitudes and actions.**

**Consider...**

## **Attitudes**

- Do I like to listen to others?
- Do I encourage others to talk?
- Do I listen even if I do not like the person who is talking?
- Do I listen equally well whether the person is a man or woman, young or old?
- Do I listen equally well to a friend, acquaintance or stranger?

## **Actions**

- Do I put what I have been doing out of sight and mind?
- Do I look at the speaker?
- Do I ignore distractions?
- Do I smile, nod my head and otherwise encourage the person to talk?
- Do I think about what the person is saying?
- Do I try to figure out what the person means?
- Do I try to figure out what people are really saying?
- Do I let others finish what they are trying to say?
- Do I encourage the person to go on if there is hesitation?
- Do I restate what the person has said and ask if I got it right?
- Do I withhold judgment about the ideas until the person has finished?
- Do I listen regardless of the manner of speaking and the choice of words?
- Do I listen even though I anticipate what the person is going to say?
- Do I ask questions in order to get the person to explain the idea more fully?
- Do I ask what the words mean as the person uses them?

## **Guidelines for effective communication**

I will be sure I understand what I want to say.

- What is the real purpose of my message?
- What do I expect the receiver to do?

I will clarify my ideas before I attempt to communicate them.

- Can I accurately say what I want to say?
- Is what I say interesting? Meaningful?
- How many ideas should I include?
- What is the minimum number of ideas that I need to get across?



I will be sure my actions support my communication.

- Do I do as I say?
- Does my body language support my message?

I will state my message as simply as possible.

- Is technical language needed or would simpler language be better?
- Will the words I use mean the same to the receiver as they do to me?
- Will a picture or a graphic help convey the message?
- Have I been as brief as possible?

I will consider the entire environment affecting my communication.

- What impression does my form of the message convey?
- When and where will the message be received?
- How will the time and location affect the interpretation?
- Is it necessary to use several methods to get the message across?

I will be aware of the receiver.

- Can I capitalize upon his/her known needs or interests to improve understanding?
- Can I get the message from his/her viewpoint and understand it?
- Am I telling the receiver all he/she needs to know?

I will consider the overtones of my message as well as the intended message.

- Does the "tone" of my message say more than the basic content?
- Can various interpretations of meaning cause my message to be misunderstood?

I will encourage feedback.

- Can the receiver easily tell me what was understood?
- Can he/she ask for more information?
- How can someone report personal feelings/actions resulting from my message?

I will follow-up my communication.

- Was my message complete?
- What further steps do I need to take to successfully communicate my idea?

I will seek not only to be understood, but also to understand. I will be a good listener.

- Do I concentrate when I listen?
- Do I understand what the other person is really saying?
- Am I listening or just hearing?
- What feedback should I give the message I hear?

