



CONCERN:EAP

Healthy & Resilient You



Building Better Connections through thoughtful communication

Effective Communication

Although electronic communication does great things for productivity, underlying intent can often be lost when e-mailing, texting or video conferencing. Quick replies, video distance and assumption can lead to misunderstanding and cause tension. It is important to develop and maintain effective communication skills so your words and intent are not lost as result of electronic or real-world disconnection.



Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

Being an effective communicator is more than just hearing someone's voice and responding. It's letting the other person know, verbally and non-verbally, that we are listening to them. Be aware of your body language during meetings and one-on-ones. For example:

✓ **Where and how you're sitting or standing says as much as your words**

- Don't hide behind your computer or bury your face in your phone during presentations.
- Sit or stand up straight to inform the speaker that they're more important to you than relaxing.

✓ **Always be aware of your facial expressions**

- When facing conflict or pressure, maintain composure by keeping your face relaxed (avoid squinting or frowning).
- Silently encourage the speaker with eye contact, smiles, head nods, and other non-verbal messages.



Pro Tip: Automatic reflection/mirroring of any facial expressions used by the speaker can be a sign of attentive listening. Mirror their body language a bit to feel more connected.

Messaging Must: Check for Clarity


It's important in business, and when discussing a serious matter with family, that we re-read typed communications objectively before sending so that subtext is not lost. Also, remember that many people quickly skim e-mails. Be mindful of this and construct your e-mails to be better understood when read at a glance.

✓ Highlight calls to action

- Don't bury a "next step" or action point in a bulky paragraph.
- In an e-mail with multiple recipients, delegate tasks or actions to specific people.
- Include "ACTION REQUIRED" or even the actual task in the subject line.

✓ Stay on topic

- Jumping from subject to subject in one e-mail will confuse the reader and dilute the purpose of the e-mail.
- When there are many directives and subjects to communicate, try breaking them into multiple, more focused e-mails rather than sending one long communication.
- Use bullet points to quickly communicate multiple ideas and different fonts/colors to help highlight key elements.

 **Pro Tip:** Remember that many people read e-mails on their phones. When in doubt, especially with longer messages, consider sending a draft to your phone first to see how it looks.

Communication and Continuous Improvement

It's always important to stay mindfully aware of how you communicate, both inside and outside of the office. Practicing effective communication skills enriches friendships and personal relationships as well as your work relationships and your business success.

Stay Engaged

We've all caught ourselves or someone else struggling to stay present in a conversation. Practice mindfulness by consciously eliminating distractions. Here are some ways to show you are listening and hearing what's being said.

✓ Listen with an empathic heart, not a problem-solving mind


- Take 3 seconds to think about what was said and observe the other person's body language before replying.
- Don't let one statement or comment distract you from listening. Try to stay focused on the whole picture, not just one aspect of a discussion.

✓ Avoid distraction

- Slide your chair away from your computer or turn the monitor off.
- Refrain from fidgeting, checking your phone, doodling, or looking all over the room.

✓ Follow up

- Send an e-mail recapping and commenting on what was discussed using specifics from the conversation.
- Don't be afraid to offer constructive criticism. Many of us are always looking to grow and even managers will appreciate your candor.

 **Pro Tip:** Whether at the end of the conversation or in a follow up e-mail, summarizing the key points discussed shows that you were listening and also ensures that you're on the same page.

Sources

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