Communication & Assertiveness Training
Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors

Objectives

» Components of communication
» Verbal and nonverbal communication
» Communication guidelines
» Being an active listener
» Communicating long distance
» Roadblocks to communication
» Assertiveness and it’s importance in communication

Components of Communication

» Verbal communication
» Nonverbal communication
» Listening skills
» Being assertive

Verbal Communication

» Chosen words
» Listening Skills
» Voice quality
» Clarity of the words
» Pace and rhythm of the words

Nonverbal Communication

» 90% of communication is nonverbal
» If nonverbal communication does not match verbal language, miscommunication can happen
» People make assumptions based on nonverbal communication

Nonverbal Communication

» Tone of Voice- urgency, hesitancy, belligerence
» Body Language- arms folded, fidgeting, leaning forward
» Facial Expressions: looking uninterested, apprehensive
Communication Guidelines

» Own your feelings by using “I” statements.
» Avoid generalizations like always, never, everyone.
» Take responsibility for how you feel.
» Describe a behavior or situation rather than being judgmental.
» Be specific rather than general.

» Be tentative rather than absolute.
» Inform instead of order.
» Don’t assume that people can read your mind or know how you feel.
» Listen with your full attention or set up another time to talk.
» Practice communication of your thoughts and feelings. It will come easier with practice.

What Makes a Good Listener

A good listener:
» Pays attention
» Thinks about how the speaker feels
» Is patient
» Responds without judgment
People are more likely to turn to someone who is a good listener.

Active & Reflective Listening

» Ask for clarification
» Ask open-ended questions
» Search for specifics
» Restate key concepts
» Minimize distractions
» Make the decision to want to listen

Careful Listening Checklist

✓ Eliminate distractions
✓ Look at the speaker
✓ Don’t interrupt
✓ Nod or give nonverbal signal that you are paying attention
✓ Repeat what you think is being said

Communicating Long Distance

» Share daily happenings
» Be honest about your feelings
» Keep emails and letters positive
» Be realistic about the communication
### Roadblocks to Good Communication

- Blaming
- Lecturing
- Name-calling
- Analyzing
- Sarcasm

### Communication and Assertiveness

Why is learning to be assertive important in communication?

Being assertive increases the ability to express positive and negative ideas and feelings in an open, honest and direct way.

### Assertiveness

- Assertiveness is not being selfish, destructive or aggressive.
- Being assertive will not always get you what you want. However, not being assertive, will almost always cause additional problems in communication with others.
- Being assertive means standing up for your rights without violating the rights of others.

### Different Types of Interpersonal Styles

#### Aggressive style

- Fighting, accusing, threatening, no regard for others feelings.

The advantage: people don’t push aggressive people around.

The disadvantage: people don’t want to be around aggressive people.

#### Passive style

- Lets others push him/her around. Does not stand up for his/her beliefs.

The advantage: rarely experience direct rejection.

The disadvantage: store up resentment and anger.

#### Assertive style

- Stands up for him/herself, expresses true feelings and is considerate of other’s feelings.

The advantage: get what you want without making others mad. You can act in your best interest without feeling guilty about it.
Discussion:

» Someone is waiting for a parking spot and someone pulls in front of him/her and takes his/her spot.

» What are the different types of interpersonal style responses?

**Interpersonal Styles**

**Aggressive response:** Get out of his/her car and start pounding on the hood of the car.

**Passive response:** Say or do nothing and let it bother you all day.

**Passive/Aggressive response:** Wait until the person goes into the store and let the air out of their tires.

**Assertive response:** Get out of your car and explain to the person that you were there first and had been waiting for that parking spot.

**You Have Rights**

Before you can be comfortable expressing your needs, you must feel that you have certain rights.
These Rights Are...

» The right to decide how to live your life.
» The right to your own values, opinions and beliefs.
» The right to not justify or explain your action to others.
» The right to express yourself and say “No” or “I don’t know” or even “I don’t care”.
» The right to tell others how you wish to be treated.

Tips for Being Assertive...

» Be specific and clear about how you feel, think and what you want.
» Be direct.
» Own your message. Personalize it with “I” statement.
» Ask for feedback.

To Be A Good Communicator

» Acknowledge others communicating with you both verbally and nonverbally.
» Rephrase what’s being said to clarify your understanding.
» Maintain a positive attitude when you speak.
» Listen actively to those that are speaking.

Questions

Resources

» Family Services Center
» Chaplains and Local Clergy
» Military One Source (800) 342-9647
» TRICARE: www.tricare.osd.mil
» Behavioral Health Services
» Troop and Family Counseling Services: 888-755-9355

References

» www.uvm.edu
» http://www.csusm.edu/caps/Assertiveness
» Walter Reed Army Institute of Research
» www.militaryonesource.com
» www.slincs.coe.utk.edu