Improving Workplace Communication:
An Orientation to the NUDGE Model

Module 5 of

Team Awareness Training for Substance Abuse Prevention

The Workplace Project

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WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

PURPOSE OF SESSION

- **Identify norms and responsibilities in workplace communication**
- **Identify and reduce blocks to effective listening**
- **Understand role of informal communication (the grapevine) in the work setting**

WHY COMMUNICATION?

- We cannot <u>not</u> communicate
- Most of us spend about 70% of our time actively communicating

- Effective communication can help reduce safety and behavior risk problems
- Concerns about how to talk to coworkers with problems that need help

COMMUNICATION SETTINGS

Friend's House

Courtroom Trial

Movie Theater

- "Formal" or "Informal"
- Who is allowed to speak?
- What are "rules" for speaking?

- Are YOU allowed to speak ?
- When should you speak?
- What responsibilities?

COMMUNICATION RESPONSIBILITY

- Communication is the essential function of any workplace.
- Effective, team-based communication buffers stress and improves productivity.
- Policies often state that workers have communication responsibilities regarding safety, problem-solving, and substance abuse.
- Effective communication strategies can help workers act on their responsibilities.

Service

Stress

Team-work

Relevance

Risks

Strengths

Policy

Getting Help

Getting Caught

EAP

Tolerance

Stress & Problem Solving

COMMUNICATION

Seven Guidelines for Effective Communication

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY

MAKE YOUR MOVE

GET RIGHT TO THE POINT

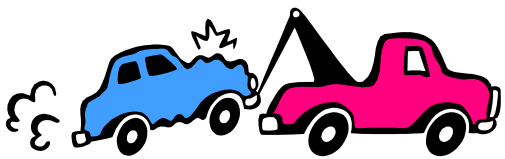
USE GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS

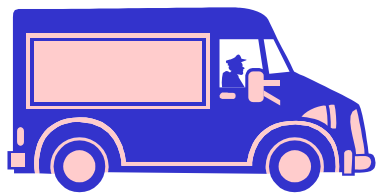
MAKE A CLEAR REQUEST

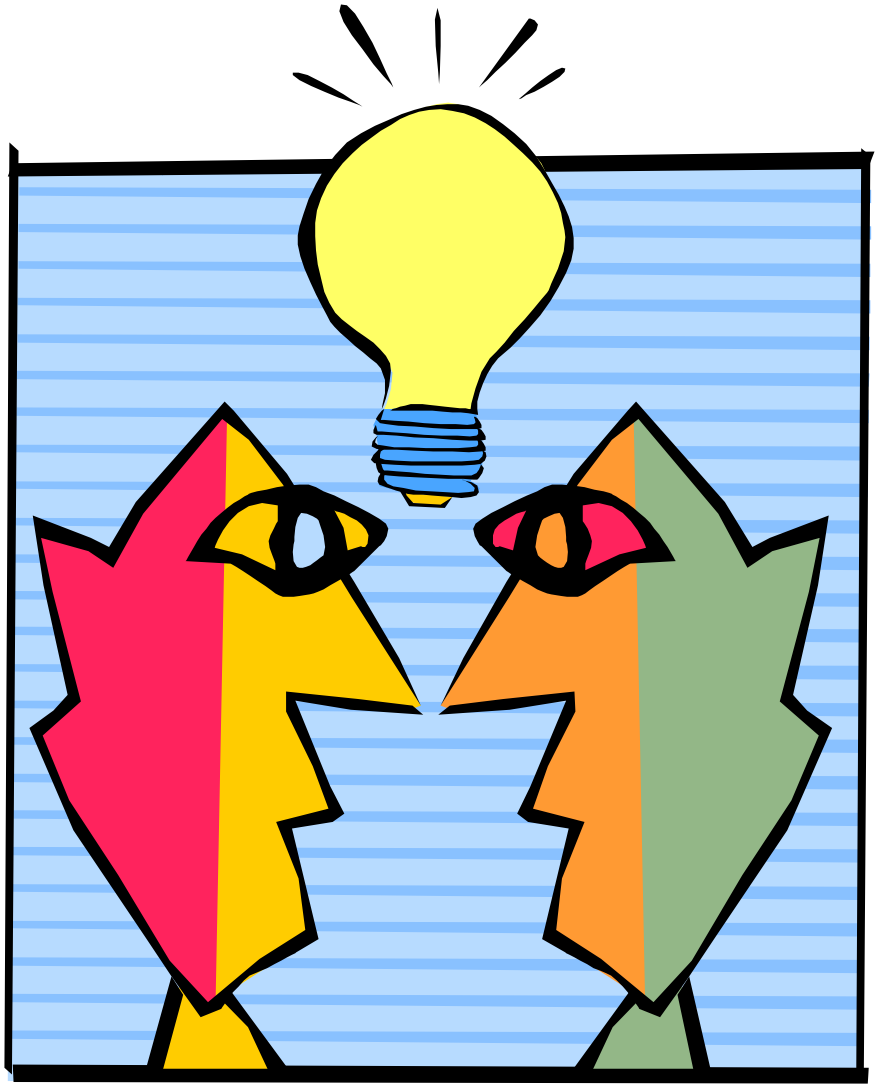
ROLL WITH RESISTANCE

END ON A POSITIVE NOTE

I cannot wait to report this accident to the police. I must get to the hospital as soon as possible. The delivery truck was heading south and turned right at the intersection just when the sports car that was heading north attempted to turn left. When they saw that they were turning into the same lane, they both honked their horns, but continued to turn without slowing down. In fact, I think the sports car actually sped up just before the crash.







Let's not complicate our relationship by trying to communicate with each other.

-- Ashleigh Brilliant

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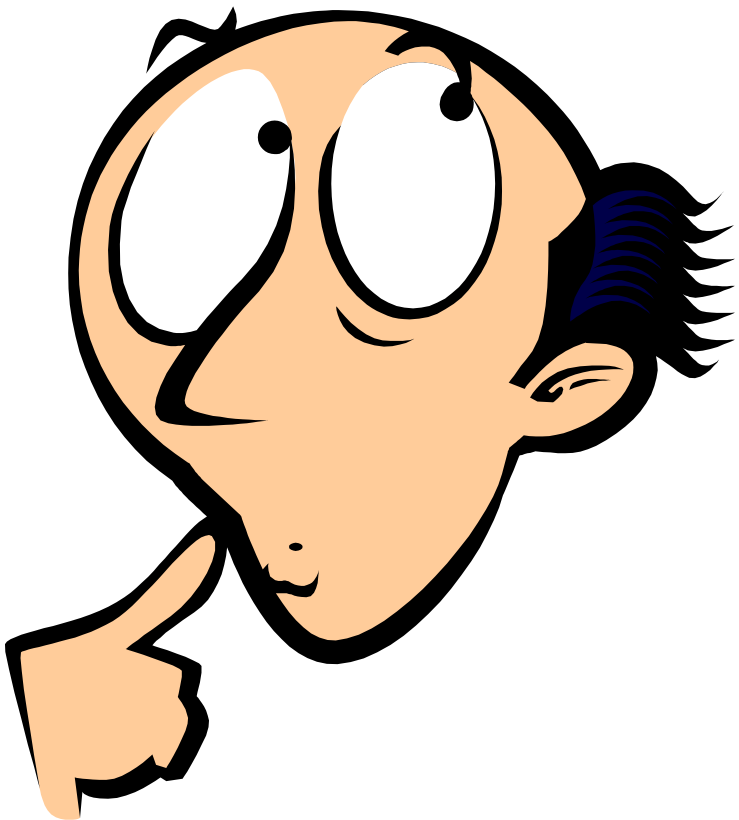


I know you believe that you understand what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant.

Listening Do's and Don'ts

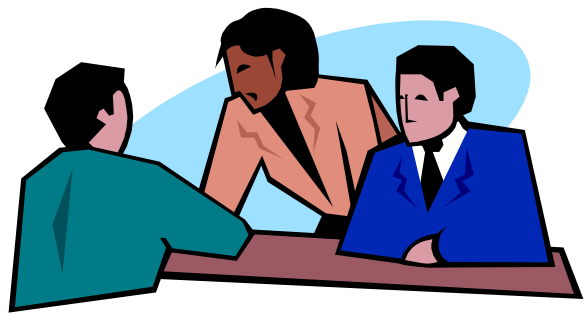
DO

- Let the speaker have his/her say.
- Show that you are paying attention and interested.
- Use your own words to restate what the speaker said.
- Ask the speaker to say it again, if needed.

DON'T

- Tune out or plan what you will say next.
- Interrupt to object, explain, or correct.
- Give off signals that you are bored or in a hurry to say something.
- Add sarcasm or put-downs when you restate the speaker's ideas.

Each person can speak only after restating the ideas and opinions of the previous speaker accurately and to that person's satisfaction.



Handouts Follow

1. Seven Ideas of Effective Communication
2. Really Listening Group Exercise

SEVEN IDEAS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

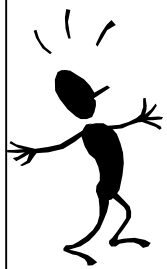
Think about what you want to say. Give some thought to what you know, what you suspect, what you are concerned about, and what you'd like to see change. Think about what you want to say and mentally rehearse how you will say it. Give yourself time to become comfortable with your ideas.

Make your move. Request a meeting to discuss the issue with the employee. If you believe an EAP representative should be called in to help you, make the necessary arrangements.

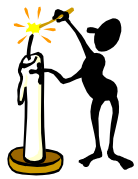
Get right to the point. Once the meeting begins, don't pad it with small talk. This dilutes our effectiveness. Keep the discussion focused on behavior and performance, not personality.

Practice good communication. Use I-Statements and listening skills. I-statements are non blaming and non aggressive ways of presenting ideas, feelings, and concerns. Listening creates a supportive atmosphere.

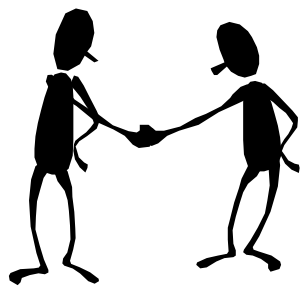
Make a clear request. Avoid being vague. Instead make a clear statement about what you want to see changed and your expectations for future performance. This might involve a request for action or a suggestion that help be sought.



Roll with resistance. Denial is a normal response to "bad news." Most people with problems are aware of the impact of their behavior at some level, but may be ambivalent about change. They may become angry or deny the problem. Listening respectfully and calmly repeating your request for action will help make sure that your message is taken seriously.



End on a positive note. Thank the person for their willingness to hear you out. State your belief that your supervisor or co-worker can and will handle the problem.



Handout for REALLY LISTENING EXERCISE

REALLY LISTENING

- In a group of three or four, select one of the following issues (or pick your own "controversial" topic). This will be the topic you will talk about with each other during this activity. You will discuss your topic by following the guideline below.

Possible Topics

Capital punishment
Euthanasia
Liberal politics
Conservative politics
Gun Control
Censorship
Frozen human embryos

Salaries of football players
Sports team rivals
(*for example, Cowboys fans vs.Bronco fans, etc.)*
Cloning
The US Space program
The United Nations
Schools/Education

- Before beginning, read over the following guideline. Make sure all group members understand.

→ **Each person can speak only after restating the ideas and opinions of the previous speaker, accurately and to that speaker's satisfaction.**

- Someone should volunteer to begin the discussion by talking briefly about his/her thoughts and opinions about the chosen issue.

- When you want to give your ideas on the issue, you must first show the previous speaker that you got his/her meaning. You can say things like "You believe that..." or "You think that...", or "Your opinion is that..." to get started. Then use your own words to restate what you heard the previous speaker say. If the previous speaker is satisfied that you "got his/her meaning," then you can give your opinion.

- Give it a try!