

Assertiveness in the Workplace



Manufacturing Skills Training Participant Materials

Original Material by Linda Moore Browning
Adapted by Scott Sayles, Customized & Workplace Training
For PCC Washington County Workforce Development

Equal Opportunity Employer / Igual Oportunidad de Empleo

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Assertiveness in the Workplace

Pre-Test

Decide if the following statements are true or false, and mark T or F in the blanks.

_____ 1. Assertiveness and aggressiveness mean the same thing.

_____ 2. In the American workplace, you should never be assertive when talking to your supervisor or coworkers.

_____ 3. Acceptable levels of assertiveness are different in every culture.

_____ 4. Generally, assertiveness is more acceptable in men than women in the United States.

_____ 5. American companies have different ideas of what their employees can say and do to their supervisors and coworkers.

_____ 6. Telling your supervisor your idea about how to improve a work process is an example of assertive behavior.

_____ 7. Respecting other people's point of view is an important part of learning to be more assertive.

_____ 8. Telling someone to shut up is an example of assertive behavior.

_____ 9. Asking someone to turn down their radio is an example of aggressive behavior.

_____ 10. If you don't speak up at work, you can feel depressed, tired and resentful.

What is Assertiveness?

1. Is it hard for you to talk to someone who is higher in power or authority? (for example, a supervisor or manager, a parent, or a teacher)
2. Do you sometimes say yes when you want to say no?
3. Are you unable to tell someone you are unhappy or upset with them, even if you really want to?
4. Is it hard for you to accept a compliment (kind words about you)?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, it may be hard for you to speak up in your own behalf, even when you want or need to. In the U.S.A., we call this ability:

Assertiveness

Assertiveness is the ability to honestly tell others your feelings, opinions, beliefs, suggestions and needs, and to not do what you don't want to do.

We also sometimes call it the ability to “stand up for yourself.” Many people feel guilty when they try to do this, and so they keep quiet and then feel bad, hopeless or powerless. If you come from a culture that forbids you to speak up to others who have more power than you, it will be even harder to assert yourself.

Assertive people listen to and respect other people's opinions and feelings, even if they do not agree with them.

Aggressive people, on the other hand, do not respect other people's opinions and feelings, and they try to force their own ideas on others. Sometimes we call them “pushy” or “a bully.”

In the American culture, assertive behavior is generally more respected than aggressive behavior, although there are certain occupations and businesses in which aggressiveness is admired; for example, car salespeople, lawyers, and in politics. Can you think of any more?

Why is Assertiveness Important?

Many of us are taught as children that we should try to please others, that it is not nice or polite to consider our own needs more than others'. If someone says or does something that we don't like, we should just be quiet and try to stay away from that person. Your culture may teach this, or you may believe it because you are a woman, or because your parents told you this.

However, studies show that people who do not speak up or stand up for themselves can have health problems like depression, anger, anxiety, and poor relationships, or physical problems like headaches, ulcers and high blood pressure.

If you don't stand up for yourself, people may try to take advantage of you because you never say no. At work, coworkers may think of you as weak or passive, even if it isn't true. At home, you might have problems with your children not listening to you or respecting you. Your spouse may not take your ideas or wishes into consideration, and you may feel unhappy in your marriage without knowing why.

Of course, it is easier to be assertive in some situations than in others, and there are usually consequences to being more assertive. It's easier to express your feelings or opinions to a stranger on the bus than to someone you love who might get angry. It's hard to talk to a boss who is known to explode when people confront him.

If you wonder if you should be assertive in a particular situation, *talk to someone first and make sure you can live with the consequences*. If you can't, sometimes it is better not to confront, and to deal with the situation in another way.

Being assertive leads to more respect from others, and to higher self-esteem and confidence in yourself. You will be able to communicate more effectively in difficult situations, and be able to make good decisions for yourself.

Think about your own life.

How do you think others see you? Assertive? Aggressive? Passive? Invisible?

How do you see yourself?

Are You A Pushover?

1. Your teenage son wants to go to a party, but he's in trouble for his bad grades. When you say no, he continues to whine about how he's the only kid not going. You:
 - ☐ Tell him no again, and if he continues to whine, ground him.
 - ☐ Ask your spouse if it's OK - I'd feel bad if he was the only kid at school not going to be there.
 - ☐ Give in. I don't want to deal with his attitude anymore.

 2. You're waiting in a long line to purchase some holiday gifts when a lady with a full shopping cart pretends not to notice you and cuts right in front of you. What do you do?
 - ☐ Let it go. I'm totally irritated, but I don't want to make a scene.
 - ☐ Say: "Excuse me miss, but you just cut in front of me, and I've been waiting here for a half an hour."
 - ☐ Huff and puff loudly, hoping she'll get the hint to move to the back of the line.
-
3. It's Friday night, and your sister's babysitter cancelled - she needs you to watch her kids. But you and your spouse have had a romantic date planned for months. What do you tell her?
 - ☐ "Let me try to reschedule our date night for next week."
 - ☐ "Sorry. We have been looking forward to this for too long. But I'll give you the number to my babysitter."
 - ☐ "Fine, but you owe me big time," then give her a guilt trip two weeks after the fact.

 4. Your boss asks you to stay late again to help out on a very important project, but you promised your daughter you'd be at her tennis championship. You:
 - ☐ Tell the boss how sorry I am, but I can't let my kid down. You then suggest a coworker who's looking for extra work stay instead of you.
 - ☐ Can't say no to work, so I'll make it up to my kid with the new shoes she's been wanting.
 - ☐ OK, but only for a little while. My kid won't mind if I miss the first 30 minutes of her match.

5. In high school, your friends would have most likely voted you as:

- ☐ Most opinionated.
- ☐ Sweetest.
- ☐ Most likely to follow the crowd

6. Your spouse is upset that the house looks like a mess, and then starts nitpicking at you about anything else they can think of. You've had zero time to clean up your last project. So, you:

- ☐ Apologize, even though I know they're out of line, just to avoid further confrontation.
- ☐ Tell them between work and the kids, I've had no time to clean this up, but will happy to do a top-to-bottom cleaning this weekend.
- ☐ Attempt at explaining my case, but end up staying up late to get the chores done.

7. You think you have the perfect hairstyle or haircut in mind when you visit your hair care/barber people. When you show them the picture, they laugh, and say no way will that look good on you. You:

- ☐ Make them do it anyway, or find another hair care shop - it's what I really want. Besides, if they do happen to be right, so what! It'll grow back, it's only hair.
- ☐ Are bummed out, and have them do the usual - an inch off the bottom and some highlights.
- ☐ Have them cut it the way they want, and then go find a new hair care shop to cut your dream 'do next time.

8. At lunchtime, you and your friends from work are chatting about politics, and you don't agree with any of their viewpoints. When they notice you've been very quiet, they ask what you think about the subject. You:

- ☐ Tell them how much I agree with them. I don't want to be ridiculed for my minority opinion.
- ☐ Tell them I think slightly different, but could easily be persuaded.
- ☐ Tell them while I see their point, I actually don't agree, and explain why.

9 Your roommate is having friends over again on a Monday night, and you have a huge presentation to give the next morning at work. You know the shindig will be an all-night, rowdy event, so you:

- ☐ Slam the cabinets and my bedroom door so that my roommate knows I'm furious, but don't say anything directly.
- ☐ Put on my headphones, cry out of frustration and do my best to practice my presentation.
- ☐ Ask my roommate politely to have the guests out by 10 p.m., which I think is a fair compromise.

10. Your mother-in-law unexpectedly calls to tell you she's coming for a 2-week visit, but between work, your kid's projects and a weekend with the girls, it's just not the best time. You:

Tell her she's welcome to come any other time, but explain that I can't rearrange my schedule on such short notice.

Rearrange my commitments so I can accommodate her. After all, she is my mother-in-law and I know how she gets when I tell her no.

Ask her if she can pick another time, and if she can't, make the necessary arrangements to spend time with her.

Cultural Differences and Assertiveness

“It’s not **what** you said; it’s **how** you said it.” Sometimes how we say things has more impact than what we say, and this is especially true when people from different cultures and languages are trying to communicate. It is easy to misunderstand someone from another culture if we listen only to their words, because there are many important differences in communication “styles.”

For example, every culture has its own ways of greeting people. People from the United States often say “how are you?” when they see someone, but they usually don’t wait for an answer. People from other countries may think this is rude, but for Americans, it is just like saying “hello.”

In some Asian countries older people are greeted differently than younger ones; often there are special titles or greetings that are used to show respect. In the United States this may or may not be, depending on the area of the country, the person’s family background, and their personal point of view.

In terms of assertiveness, there are many opportunities to misunderstand someone’s intentions if they are from a different culture. For example, tone of voice means different things to different people. In some countries people speak very loudly in their everyday conversations; in the United States this is considered to be aggressive or even offensive. Likewise, in other cultures people tend to speak more softly; Americans may see this as passive or afraid.

There is no “one right way” to communicate. What is considered assertive in one culture can be aggressive in another. Be willing to be flexible, to try to understand the other person’s point of view, and respect rather than judge the differences.

Following are some other ways in which people communicate differently. Can you recognize any of them?

1. In some cultures, talking about feelings is important and respected. In others, people do not ever speak about their feelings, and doing so is considered impolite.
2. In some cultures, people get to the point immediately in a conversation. In other cultures, people lead up to the main point, adding a lot of details and “storytelling.”
3. Mixing business with pleasure. Some cultures will not do business until there has been some social conversation. In others, people get right down to business and consider it inappropriate to talk about personal things.
4. Being too assertive for one’s age. If a person’s culture tells them to respect older people, then it may be difficult to have an equal relationship with an older coworker or subordinate.

5. Being too assertive for one's gender. Many cultures teach women to be subordinate to men, but in the American workplace women are usually given equal status. It can be hard for a woman to supervise men if her cultural background tells her this is wrong. Likewise, it can be difficult for men to accept a female supervisor if their culture puts women below men in status.
6. Even if people from other countries speak English well and have lived in the United States for a long time, they may retain much of their original culture's non-verbal communication styles. Eye contact is considered rude in some cultures, while in the United States it is considered honest and open, and essential in the workplace. In some cultures people stand very close to one another when they speak; in the United States that is often considered aggressive or inappropriate. Tone of voice, gestures, and posture also vary from culture to culture.
7. Bringing up problems. In some cultures problems are never brought up directly, because it is considered rude to do so. Instead, problems are referred to in a round about way, and the speaker assumes the other person will "get it." In others, it is important to be up front about the problem, naming it and trying to solve it. If you are from a culture where problems are never brought up directly, it may be hard for you when a supervisor or coworker confronts you.
8. Using someone's first name is considered impolite in some cultures, especially if the person is a boss, teacher or an older person. In the United States, generally people feel free to call one another by first names.

Can you think of some ways your personal culture is different from the American culture? What assertive behaviors in the general American culture are considered rude or aggressive in your culture, even if you grew up in the United States?

How to Become More Assertive !!!!

1. Ask for clarification if you don't understand what someone is asking you to do. It may feel hard the first time, but it will save you lots of problems later.
2. If someone asks you to do something that you aren't sure if you want to do, give yourself some time to think about it. Tell the person you will get back to them.
3. Know your boundaries and respect them. Boundaries are your personal limits; they let you know when someone is taking advantage of you, or trying to make you do something you don't want to do. Boundaries keep you safe.
4. Say no if you mean no, not... "I don't think so"... You don't need to give a long reason or explanation. Keep it short.
5. You may have to say no several times before the person believes you. Just keep repeating it.
6. If the person will not accept your "no" answer, use silence, or change the subject. You have the right to end the conversation.
7. You don't need to say you're sorry if you aren't. It takes your power away if you say it and don't mean it.
8. Avoid feeling guilty. It is not up to you to solve other people's problems or make them happy.
9. If you don't want to agree to the person's first request, but still want to help him or her out, offer a compromise. "I won't be able to baby-sit the whole afternoon, but I can do it for two hours."
10. You can change your mind and say no to a request that you originally said yes to.

If you need to tell someone to stop doing something, for example, use the following steps:

- Choose the time and place you will talk to the person, preferably away from the situation.
- Describe their behavior clearly and its effect on you. Use I statements to let them know how it makes you feel. "When you call me Paco, I feel angry and embarrassed."
- Ask for a specific change; i.e., "Please stop calling me that name."
- Describe the consequences, and do not make threats you will not keep. "If you continue, I will go to HR and report your behavior."

Remember, it takes time and practice to become more assertive. Start with people you don't know. Then try it with a family member you trust. Over time, you will feel stronger and more confident. People know when you respect yourself, and they will treat you with respect.

... that is the ultimate goal of assertive communication.

Adapted from Hampden-Sydney College Counseling Center website at www.hsc.edu/counseling.

Assertiveness in the Workplace Post-Test

Decide if the following statements are true or false, and mark T or F in the blanks.

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- _____ 2. In the American workplace, you should never be assertive when talking to your supervisor or coworkers.
- _____ 3. Acceptable levels of assertiveness are different in every culture.
- _____ 4. Generally, assertiveness is more acceptable in men than women in the United States.
- _____ 5. American companies have different ideas of what their employees can say and do to their supervisors and coworkers.
- _____ 6. Telling your supervisor your idea about how to improve a work process is an example of assertive behavior.
- _____ 7. Respecting other people's point of view is an important part of learning to be more assertive.
- _____ 8. Telling someone to shut up is an example of assertive behavior.
- _____ 9. Asking someone to turn down their radio is an example of aggressive behavior.
- _____ 10. If you don't speak up at work, you can feel depressed, tired and resentful.

Evaluation

Assertiveness in the Workplace

- 1. What was the most useful thing you learned in this class?**

- 2. Do you understand assertiveness in the American workplace better now?
How?**

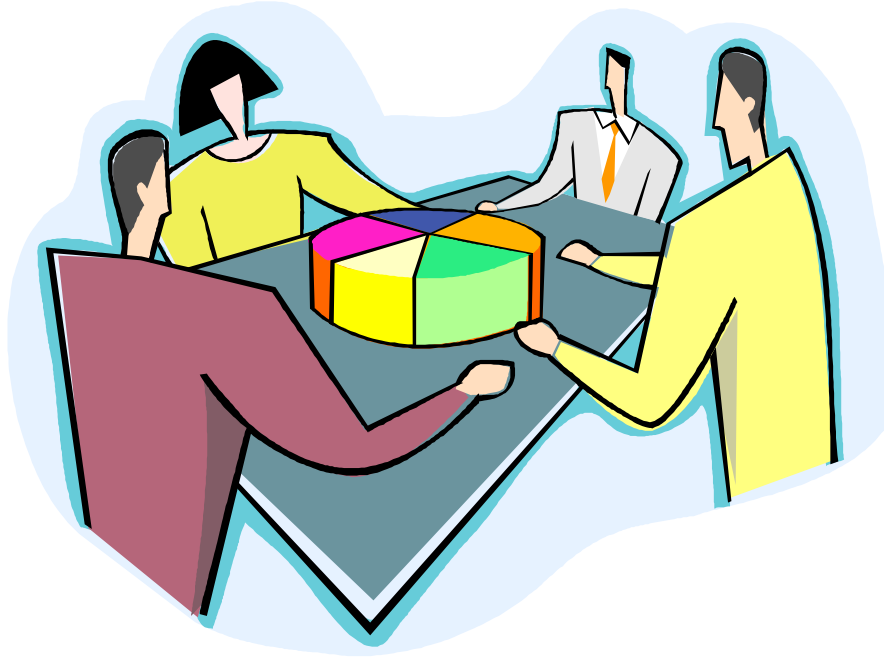
- 3. Do you feel you understand how differences in culture and language can create
problems in the workplace?**

- 4. Do you have some ideas for how you will be more assertive at work now? If so,
what will you do?**

- 5. Is there anything you would add or change in this class to make it better?**

- 6. Other comments about this class:**

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Pre-test

Basic Communication Skills Training

1. We communicate in several ways. We speak, using words and varying tones of voice. We also communicate non-verbally. What are some ways we communicate without words?
2. How does being from another country or culture affect how a person communicates?
3. What are three things you can do when listening to someone to let him or her know you are paying attention?
4. A common view of how people deal with conflict offers two choices: fight or flight. What do these mean to you?
5. Why is it important to use “I” statements when disagreeing with someone?
6. What does the phrase “Seek first to understand, then to be understood,” mean to you?
7. In relationships, which is more important, being a good listener or being a good speaker? Why?
8. Name three qualities of a successful employee.

Forms of Non-verbal Communication

Expressions

The adage, “A picture is worth a thousand words,” describes the meaning of facial expressions. Facial expressions are momentary expressions that signal our emotions. Some facial expressions are readily visible, while others go by so quickly they go unnoticed. Both types can positively or negatively reinforce the spoken word and convey cues concerning emotions.

Eyes

Eyes are the most dominant and reliable features of the face which provide a constant channel of communication. They can be shifty and evasive; convey hate, fear, and guilt; or express confidence, love, and support.

Vocal Intonation

The adage, “It is not what we say that counts, but how we say it,” reflects the meaning of vocal intonation. Vocal intonation is probably the most understood and valid area of nonverbal communication. Vocal variations are fundamental components of expressive oral communication. If vocal information contradicts verbal, vocal will dominate.

Touching

Touching is an important aspect of American culture. Even a handshake tells much about an individual character. The human skin has hundreds of thousands of submicroscopic nerve endings serving as tactual receptors and detecting pressure, temperature, texture pain and tickling. In a job interview, a handshake that barely clasps the tips of the fingers could indicate a person too timid for a sales position. On the other hand, a “death grip” squeeze handshake could indicate you are overbearing and insensitive.

Body Movements and Postures

Kinesics refers to body movements, and movements communicate meaning. Bodies elucidate true messages about feelings that cannot be masked. People communicate by the way they walk, stand, and sit.

Use of Space

The use of space (proxemics) is a subtle component of nonverbal communication that indicates territory to which access is allowed or denied to other people or objects.

Dress

Often dictated by societal norms, clothing indicates a great amount of information. It identifies gender, age, socioeconomic class, status, role, group membership, personality or mood, physical climate, and time in history. Colors and fabrics are coordinated to send messages just as words are put together to form sentences.

--From Non-verbal Communication in the Workplace by Patrick Miller, 2001.

Verbal, Non-Verbal Communication

Have you had the experience of listening to someone say something while their facial expression, tone of voice or posture is saying something else entirely? Example: Your friend is standing a few feet away from you, telling you that she is not mad at you. Her smile is tight, she looks past you rather than at you, and her fists are clenched. Which do you believe, her words or her body language?

Communication is 7% verbal and 93% non-verbal! If we don't pay attention to non-verbal cues, we can miss the point of a conversation completely. This can be especially difficult for people from other countries or cultures. For example, making good eye contact during a conversation is very important in the United States and shows that the person is listening; however, in many Asian cultures it is considered disrespectful to look directly at someone while you're talking.

It is important to look for nonverbal cues because people often have trouble talking when they are feeling emotional.

Example: Your supervisor wants to know why you haven't finished the order you've been assigned. Because of your fear, you may look down, mumble, and turn away from your supervisor. Your supervisor may take this as a lack of interest in your job or a sign of disrespect. But if the supervisor is tuned into non-verbal cues, he/she will be able to see that you are distressed and wait until you are calmer before asking again.

Here are some examples of non-verbal communication. Add your own ideas.

Facial Expressions

1. Smiling
2. Frowning
3. Cold, distant look
4. Blank look
5. Distracting expressions; i.e., moving mouth back and forth, pursing lips, etc.
6. _____
7. _____

Eye Contact, Head Movements

1. Looking directly at the person
2. Looking away
3. Staring blankly
4. Nodding
5. Looking down
6. _____
7. _____

Body Posture

1. Leaning forward
2. Leaning back
3. Hands behind head
4. Slouching
5. Stiffness
6. Arms crossed
7. Clenched (fists) or relaxed hands
8. Gestures
9. _____
10. _____

Tone of Voice

1. Pleasant
2. Loud
3. Soft
4. Uneven
5. Shaky
6. Monotone
7. _____
8. _____

Distracting Habits

1. Tapping fingernails on surface
2. Fiddling with hair
3. Rocking back and forth
4. Shaking foot
5. Opening and closing fists
6. Cracking knuckles
7. Gum chewing
8. _____
9. _____

Others

1. Sighing
2. Silence
3. Standing up, sitting down
4. Poking the other person
5. Sitting too close
6. Sitting too far away
7. _____
8. _____

Active Listening, or Listening from the Heart

Have you ever had someone you could talk to, who would listen until you were finished? Someone who asked the right questions, and really tried to understand you? Or perhaps you are a good listener yourself, and many people talk to you because they feel you really understand them. If so, you have experienced active listening.

Active listening is a skill to be learned and practiced. It is useful in almost every situation you encounter: an argument, listening to a friend in need, or solving a problem at work. Active listening is really caring about what the other person is saying. Becoming a better listener will make you a more successful spouse, friend, employee, coworker and citizen.

The goal of active listening is mutual understanding. It's not about deciding who's right or wrong, but about hearing each other out so the situation can be solved.

Let's explore the main points of active listening:

1. Listen from your heart, *even if you don't agree with the other person*. Most of us have a point of view in any situation, and we are determined to have it heard. What occurs next is familiar to all of us: no one listens, nothing is solved, and everyone leaves dissatisfied.
2. Tell me more. These three little words can go a long way in solving a conflict. Stephen Covey, a world class communications expert and author of the best-selling book The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, puts it another way: "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." Ask for the other person's help in understanding their point of view. Most conversations focus on who is to blame, which requires the other person to defend themselves. The truth is, what happens is usually the result of things *both* people did or didn't do. Ask questions to help you understand their point of view. Some sample questions: How do you see it differently? What impact have my actions had on you? Can you say a little more about why you think this is my fault? Were you reacting to something I did? How are you feeling about all of this? (source: Difficult Conversations, by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, Sheila Heen, 1999).
3. Acknowledge the other person's feelings and point of view. You don't have to agree with them, only acknowledge them. Here is an example: Mary and Andrew are having a disagreement over a comment Mary made over dinner. Andrew is very upset about what Mary said, and he keeps repeating how badly he feels. Mary keeps telling him how she didn't mean to upset him, and that it wasn't her intention to hurt him, so why can't he just let it go? As you can imagine, neither is truly listening to the other and the argument will continue throughout the evening. What if Mary were to say to Andrew, "I can see that you are hurt by what I said. I didn't mean to hurt you, but I can see that I did." Can you see how that would change the situation almost immediately? Most of us, more than anything, want our feelings to be acknowledged.
4. Don't assume anything. How often are you certain you know why someone did what they did? Or that they meant to hurt you or make you mad? When you don't really know someone's intentions, the tendency is to assume the worst. There is a difference between *why* someone did something, and the impact it had on you or others. For

example, someone cuts you off on the freeway. You're instantly angry at them for being so impatient and inconsiderate. What if you knew they were on their way to the hospital because their spouse was dying? Wouldn't you feel differently about what they did on the freeway?

5. Listen without interrupting the other person, to ask questions. Let the other person finish before giving your point of view.
6. Check in with the other person by repeating what you think they said. Make sure that what you heard is what they said *and* what they meant. One way to do this is by **paraphrasing**, or restating what you heard them say. Paraphrasing lets the other person know you are trying to understand him/her and his/her feelings.

Here are some ways you can prepare to be an active listener in any situation:

- **Let the person know you are ready to listen.** Breathe. Listen with your ears, your eyes and your heart. Face the person, maintain good eye contact, sit quietly and keep a relaxed posture. Conversely, leaning forward into someone's space, glaring, sighing, snorting, rolling your eyes or looking up or away will discourage the other person from talking.
- **Use "I" statements.** When you're angry it is tempting to say, "That is the most ridiculous thing I ever heard!" Instead, try "I don't understand why you think that. Can you tell me more about that?" Or when you feel hurt, saying "You think only about yourself, and you don't care about me at all" instead of "I'm feeling very hurt and confused about our relationship." It will avoid making the other person defensive, and it's hard to argue with someone about how they feel.
- **Respect the other person.** Maintain an attitude of respect for the other person, even if you don't agree with what they are saying.
- **Practice empathy.** Empathy can be defined as the ability to put oneself in the other person's shoes. It is easy to believe that our position is the right (and only) position, and that the other person simply doesn't understand the situation correctly. Having some humility about the rightness of our position is helpful. Ask yourself this question when in the middle of a disagreement: "I wonder why they think that way..." or "What if they are right?"

Following are some examples of situations in which active listening can make a big difference in the outcome. Choose two or three to practice in your small group, and be prepared to act them out in front of the class. Follow these steps:

- ***Explain the problem from your point of view.***
- ***Listen to the other person's point of view and really try to understand it. "Seek first to understand, then to be understood."***
- ***Work together to find a solution that is good for both people. Think "Win-Win."***

Examples:

1. A coworker is often late, forcing you to work extra time in order to finish the work orders. You want to talk to the person about the situation.
2. Your friend who is also a coworker is upset because you have cancelled plans with her three times. She has quit talking to you at work, and you think she is talking to other people about you. Have a conversation with her about it.
3. You work all night in order to meet a deadline your boss set. The next morning you find out that he had extended the deadline another day and forgot to tell you. This has happened before, and you are tired of it. Talk to him about your feelings, and what you would like him to do differently.
4. Someone you supervise is missing a lot of work lately, and although she is calling in, she isn't saying why she is not coming in. It is causing problems with the rest of your staff. Have a conversation with her about it.
5. Someone at work never says hello to you in the morning. It bothers you because you feel he is ignoring you. Have a conversation with him about it.

Paraphrasing, or Did I Understand You Correctly?

As an active listener, one of the ways you can make sure you are understanding the other person is to **paraphrase**, or to repeat what you think he/she said. It lowers the emotional level of the conversation, slows things down a bit, and helps you get more information in a respectful way. It also helps the other person focus on the problem and not continue to repeat themselves.

The following suggestions and situations are taken from www.va.gov/adr/paraphrs.html, a US government website.

Three steps to paraphrasing:

- Start by using a neutral lead-in question, such as:
 - I think you said...
 - It sounds like...
 - It seems like...
 - What I hear you saying is...
 - You seem to be...
- Look for the basic emotions of mad, glad, sad and afraid and acknowledge them. Remember, anger often covers up fear, pain and feelings of powerlessness. Avoid making judgments, and be careful about saying things like “I know just how you feel” or talking about yourself. This is an exercise in listening from the heart.
- State what you thought they said, and ask if it’s correct. People who feel acknowledged in this way are more likely to reduce their level of anger and hostility. Then ask them to continue, and until the conversation is complete keep stopping to paraphrase what they are saying. You will be amazed at how effective this is in a tense situation.

Following are some situations to practice paraphrasing. Write out how you could paraphrase the statements in a work situation.

1. “I can’t understand you when you talk. You speak so softly it’s hard to hear you. And your accent makes it harder for me to understand what you’re saying. Can you speak louder?”

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Handling Conflict, or “Would you rather be right or happy?”

Think of a conflict you had recently. What was the outcome? Did both/all of you leave satisfied with the outcome? What would you do differently if you could do it again?

Most of us don't know how to handle conflict successfully, and tend to react to situations either by becoming defensive and blaming, or withdrawing. These responses are often called *fight or flight*, and for our ancestors they were quite reasonable responses to being chased by wild animals or fighting other tribes! However, today most of us are not fighting for our lives, and a fight or flight response to conflict often results in chaos, or a standoff.

In the past module we learned about active listening, which is part of handling conflict well. Sometimes, though, we are so angry or someone is so angry with us that we can't just stop and listen. This module will offer some ideas for what to do in very emotional situations.

- Breathe. Take a break before responding. This can make a big difference in how we react. When you are anxious, your breath tends to become shorter and shallower, and it actually triggers a kind of panic feeling in your brain. Taking a few deep breaths can help you calm down and think more clearly.
- Give yourself the option of not responding at that time; in fact, you can tell the other person that you will need to think about this, calm down, and get back to them. By the way, it is always a good idea to set a specific time to do so rather than leave it open ended.
- Do your best to respect yourself and the other person. Name calling, bringing up the past, using always and never statements, and “hitting below the belt” make both people feel bad, and rarely solves anything. It is usually better to remain silent than to attack another.
- Did you know that anger often covers up hurt? Admitting you're hurt is making yourself vulnerable, and it often feels too risky. The same is true for the other person. Do your best to understand what the real emotion is behind the anger. It will help reduce the intensity of the situation.
- During a conflict, try to keep from making withdrawals from your emotional bank account with another person. Better yet, try to make deposits. It can make a bad situation better quickly.
- Realize that there will always be conflict. We are human. Learning to address it well (and probably differently from our parents) will make our lives and relationships easier and happier.

Following are some suggestions for practicing these principles along with active listening from Stephen Covey's excellent book Seven Habits of Highly Effective People:

1. Think of a relationship in which your emotional bank account is "in the red." Try to put yourself in their shoes and write down the situation from the other person's point of view.
2. Ask a group member to tell you about something that made them very angry recently. Use active listening to encourage them to give as much detail as possible. See if you can tell what the hurt is beneath the anger, and then check in with them to see if you are accurate.
3. Cover your ears and just watch people communicating in other groups. What feelings are being communicated that may not come across in words alone?
4. The next time you catch yourself saying something like "I know just how you feel, because it happened to me..." or interrupting someone so you can talk, **stop!** Make a deposit into your bank account with him/her and say, "I'm sorry, I just realized I wasn't really listening. Could you start over?"

Communicating in the Workplace

Working in any company can bring up lots of emotions: joy and excitement, anger and despair, and everything in between. Feelings and emotions build up when we try to ignore them. Paying attention to them and then doing what is necessary to feel OK about the situation is important. Whether it is one incident, or a series of things built up over time, it is important to pay attention to your feelings before you react.

Here is a list of things to do when you are upset over something at work:

1. How do you feel: mad, sad, glad or afraid?
2. Take time to think about the situation before acting on it.
3. Think about the situation as if it happened to someone else. How would they feel? What would they think?
4. "Choose your battles". Can you realistically do anything about it? Or is it better to let it go this time?
5. What part, if any, is your responsibility? *In almost every situation, each person shares a part of the blame.*
6. Decide what to do next. What's the worst that could happen if you take action? What's the best that could happen? If you decide that it's not a fight worth having, make peace with the person or situation and move on. If you decide to take action, make a plan and ask for support from people you trust.

Imagine the following scenes for discussion:

- You're working on a high tech manufacturing line. You see that the process you and your coworkers are following is not very efficient. You can see a way to do it differently that would save time (and money), and would cut down on the amount of overtime your team is putting in each week. However, you have never talked to your supervisor about anything more than taking time off or calling in sick, and you wonder if and how to approach her. You know from some of your coworkers that she can be difficult to talk to, so you remain paralyzed between wanting to share your ideas and just keeping your mouth shut.
- You're hurt and a little angry because you have been passed over again for a promotion. It seems like everyone is moving up but you. You want to talk to someone about it, but you don't know who to go to. You're not sure who you can trust.
- You're tired of doing the same job, and you don't see any opportunities for change or advancement. You wonder if you should look for another job, but you like the people you work with and would like to stay with the company's good retirement plan.
- It seems like at your company, it isn't *what* you know but *who* you know that determines who gets the good jobs and pay raises. You have watched people you

work with move up the ladder, and you know you are more qualified and better at your job than they are. You come from a family in which no one talked about their feelings, and so you don't say anything and keep your frustration inside. Some days it feels like you are going to explode at work.

- You are grateful that your boss recognized you needed some time off to deal with a difficult situation at home, and gave you the leave time you requested with no questions asked. You want to thank her, but you feel shy and a little intimidated, because in your culture it is not polite to talk directly to supervisors.
- You told a coworker something in confidence, and asked him not to tell anyone else. You learn that he told several other people, and you are embarrassed and furious that he betrayed you. You don't know whether it would be better to say something to him or just avoid him. The situation is making your stomach hurt and keeping you awake at night.
- In meetings, no one ever asks your opinion about anything. In fact, you feel invisible much of the time. It is upsetting to you, because you know you have a lot to offer, but you're a quiet person and someone who needs to be asked to contribute to a conversation. You don't want the situation to continue. You want to tell someone, but you don't know what to say.
- A team leader shouted at you in front of your coworkers about a mistake you made, and you were so embarrassed and upset that you left work. He has done this before to others, and everyone is walking on eggshells to avoid inciting his anger. You feel it is unfair to have to tiptoe around this person, but you feel helpless to change the situation.

Each of these real-life situations is common to many workplaces. Indeed, they are common in many families! The workplace can be a place where employees feel appreciated and respected, or it can be a place of fear and hostility. Most workplaces fall somewhere in between, and learning how to deal with difficult situations through healthy communication can save your mental, emotional and physical health.

In your small group, choose two of the scenarios on page 1 (or come up with two of your own). Talk about them as a group—what would be the best way to handle the situation? What would you do?

Afterward, using the skills of active listening and dealing with conflict you learned in past class sessions, role play two or three of these situations. Seek a positive, successful outcome.

The Art of the Excellent Employee

What makes people successful at work, in addition to job skills or experience? Think back to the people you remember best from your past jobs. Was it their job expertise? Maybe, but more likely it was their ability to make people feel comfortable. It was probably the person who came in every day with a smile on their face and always had something good to say about the day.

When you start a new job, you can decide to become the best employee the company ever had. Yes, you must develop the skills to perform the job you were hired to do. But beyond that, develop your ability to make others feel welcome, to feel valued and appreciated just for whom they are, and you will find success at your job beyond anything you could imagine. The secret to good relationships centers on one basic human need: the need to be acknowledged. Even if you are shy or talking to new people is difficult for you, you can learn to bring out the best in others.

Here are some ideas that work:

1. Smile and greet others, even if you don't know them well. How do you feel when a coworker walks past you and acknowledges you with a smile and a hello? You feel happier, more connected, more at home. Well, so will he if you do the same!
2. Remember names. It takes so little, yet most people don't try to do this. Remember people's names and use them when speaking to them.
3. Learn something about the lives of the people you work with, and ask them about it. Ask about their children, their wife's new job, or how they like their new car. People will be pleasantly surprised that you remembered, and they will remember YOU for having done it.
4. Say please and thank you. Our parents taught us to do this as children, and it's as important today as it was back then. Good manners and attitude will take you far.
5. Keep a sense of humor. When things go wrong, and they will, handling the situation with humor and grace will make you someone people want to be around.
6. Be willing to help others. If something needs to be done, volunteer to help out. People will remember you for it.
7. Treat everyone with respect, even those you don't like or that don't respect you.
8. Be flexible.
9. Be kind.
10. Really listen to other people. Look them in the eye. Practice active listening on a daily basis, even in short conversations.
11. Leave people better than you found them.

Discussion questions for The Art of the Excellent Employee

1. Do you remember people from your last job who demonstrated and lived these qualities? How did you feel about them? How did others feel about them?
2. Did you or do you live these qualities at home? At work? Why or why not?
3. Is it easy or hard to you to talk to people you don't know? Why?
4. How do you feel about people from other countries, or even Americans when they don't speak to you at work, on the street, etc.? How about when they DO speak to you?
5. Choose at least three of these things that you will do in your new job, and tell your group what they are.

Post-Test Manufacturing Skills Training

1. We communicate in several ways. We speak, using words and varying tones of voice. We also communicate non-verbally. What are some ways we communicate without words?

2. How does being from another country or culture affect how a person communicates?

3. What are three things you can do when listening to someone to let him or her know you are paying attention?

4. A common view of how people deal with conflict offers two choices: **fight** or **flight**. What do these mean to you?

5. Why is it important to use “I” statements when disagreeing with someone?

6. What does the phrase “Seek first to understand, then to be understood,” mean to you?

7. In a relationship, which is more important: being a good listener or being a good speaker? Why?

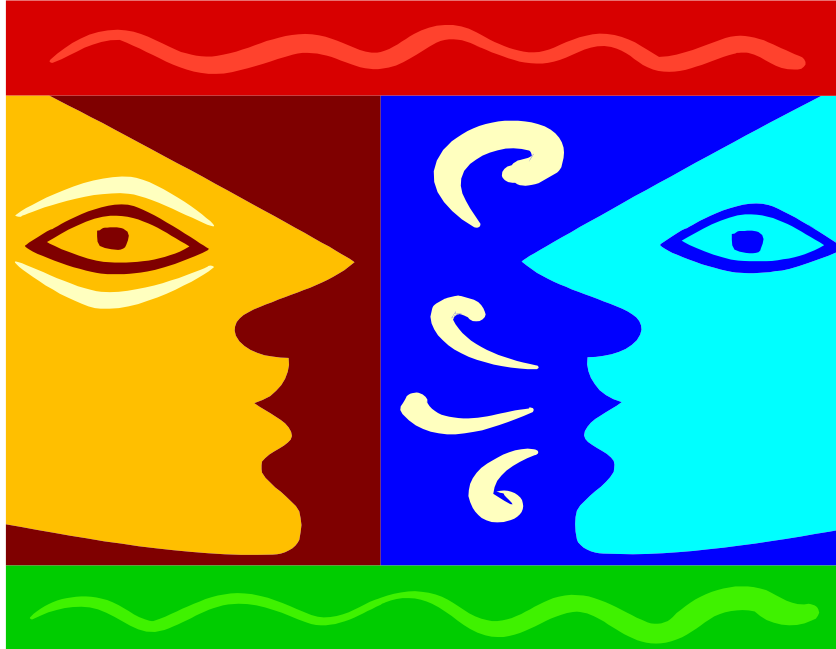
8. Name three qualities of a successful employee.

Turning Conflict into Solutions:

Six Steps to Success

1. Stay Calm. If you are becoming very upset, excuse yourself and make an appointment to discuss the matter later.
2. Really Listen to the other person. Use all your listening skills! Be sure they feel "heard."
3. Find something to agree with them about. Establish a common ground.
4. Offer ideas for solving a problem. Be willing to compromise.
5. Use assertive communication at the right level of assertion.
6. Agree on a solution, and schedule a time to talk again about how the solution is working.

Communication Styles



Manufacturing Skills Training Instructor and Participant Materials

Original Material by Jeanette Beck
Adapted by Scott Sayles, Customized & Workplace Training
For PCC Washington County Workforce Development

Equal Opportunity Employer / Igual Oportunidad de Empleo

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Communication Styles

Skill in Communications:

No matter how brilliant and invaluable your idea, it is worthless unless you can share it with others. For this reason, effective communication is crucial at every level of an organization. However, the ability to communicate effectively does not come easily to many people, and it is a skill that requires practice.

We begin practicing our communication skills even before we learn to walk. A newborn child communicates by crying, but it slowly learns to mimic its parents' speech. Eventually, the child discovers that certain speech patterns elicit different responses; one of the joys of parenting is trying to decipher the meaning behind certain "words." Does "baaaaaw" mean that the baby wants his ball, his bottle, or his blanket? Slowly, through trial and error, the child learns to manipulate sounds to get what it wants, and as the child develops, this active oral practice leads to more nuanced and fluid conversations. In short, the child learns effective communication.

To effectively communicate a complex idea, however, requires skills beyond elementary conversation. There are three golden rules to remember and follow.

Golden Rule #1: The Original Golden Rule may not be your best bet.

Treating people the way you like to be treated sounds like a good idea at first, but in communications, it may backfire on you. Why?

...Simply because there are many kinds of personalities, and multiple types of communication styles. What works great for you may be ineffective, or even annoying to someone else.

What we have to do is try to figure out how the other person prefers to communicate, and communicate with them in the ways they like and understand. Obviously, this skill takes much practice, a good degree of patience, and the ability to "put yourself in the other persons' shoes". Unfortunately, we are not born with this, so it must be learned.

Golden Rule #2: Organize thoughts in your mind before sharing them with others.

One idea often prompts a torrent of others. In order to share your ideas, you must first shape them coherently. Organization is important, because it creates a pattern for your listener, allowing him or her to grasp the larger picture intuitively.

This allows the listener to focus on the details of your message, without struggling to understand how you went from Point A to Point B.

As a thought experiment, imagine that a colleague has asked you for directions to the airport. Write them down. Your directions will probably look something like:

- Drive west half a mile on Aurora.
- Take a left on Madison.
- At the third light, turn right and follow Dexter for 2-3 miles.
- Get on the interstate, heading south.
- Etc.

Now, with a pair of scissors, cut each line of instructions into a small strip of paper. Jumble the strips up and arrange them in a completely random order, then give them to your colleague. Even with mixed-up directions, s/he should have no trouble reaching the airport, right? After all, your directions are complete and accurate. Not a single step is missing.

The problem, of course, is that your directions are also completely unorganized, rendering them useless. Your colleague will find it impossible to focus on your message itself, because he or she will struggle to follow your message's structure (or lack thereof).

Golden Rule #3: Communication is collaborative, not competitive.

Thrusting your idea on others mars the beauty and integrity of conversation. Communication is in some ways like a dance; each partner plays off the other, basing his or her steps on the other person's, while simultaneously maintaining a certain amount of individuality.

Communication is a two-way process involving an exchange of ideas. If you try to make it one-way, you prevent this exchange and will eventually frustrate the other person. You may also frustrate yourself, if you read the other person's lack of verbosity as disinterest in the conversation, rather than an inability to get a word in.

The hallmark of effective communication is the coherent verbal projection of your ideas, so that your listener receives the message that you intend to send. By observing these three rules, you will reduce miscommunication and misunderstandings.

Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Barbara Stennes](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Barbara_Stennes) , [Resources Unlimited](#)

COMMUNICATION STYLES TABLE

Factors for 4 Different Personality Types: Expresser, Driver, Relater & Analytical.

FACTORS:	EXPRESSER	DRIVER	RELATER	ANALYTICAL
How to Recognize:	They get excited.	They like their own way; decisive & strong viewpoints.	They like positive attention, to be helpful & to be regarded warmly.	They seek a lot of data, ask many questions, behave methodically & systematically.
Tends to Ask:	Who? (the personal dominant question)	What (the results oriented question.)	Why? (the personal non-goal question.)	How? (the technical analytical question.)
What They Dislike:	Boring explanations/wasting time with too many facts.	Someone wasting their time trying to decide for them.	Rejection, treated impersonally, uncaring & unfeeling attitudes.	making an error, being unprepared, spontaneity.
Reacts to Pressure and Tension By:	"Selling" their ideas or argumentative.	Taking charge taking more control.	Becoming silent, withdraws, introspective.	Seeking more data & information.
Best way to Deal With:	Get excited with them. Show emotion.	Let them be in charge.	Be supportive; show you care.	Provide lots of data & information.
Likes To Be Measured By:	Applause, feedback, recognition.	Results, Goal-oriented.	Friends, close relationships.	Activity & busyness that leads to results.
Must Be Allowed To:	Get ahead quickly. Likes challenges.	Get into a competitive situation. Likes to win.	Relax, feel, care, know you care.	make decisions at own pace, not cornered or pressured.
Will Improve With:	Recognition & some structure with which to reach the goal.	A position that requires cooperation with others.	A structure of goals & methods for achieving each goal.	Interpersonal and communication skills.
Likes to Save:	Effort they rely heavily on hunches, intuition, feelings.	Time. They like to be efficient, get things done now.	Relationships. Friendship means a lot to them.	Face. They hate to make an error, be wrong or get caught without enough info.
For Best Results:	Inspire them to bigger & better accomplishments.	Allow them freedom to do things their own way.	Care & provide detail, specific plans&activities to be accomplished.	Structure a framework or "track" to follow.

	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
Definition	Communication style in which you put the rights of others before your own, minimizing your own self worth	Communication style in which you stand up for your rights while maintaining respect for the rights of others	Communication style in which you stand up for your rights but you violate the rights of others
Implications to Others	my feelings are not important I don't matter I think I'm inferior	we are both important we both matter I think we are equal	your feelings are not important you don't matter I think I'm superior
Verbal Styles	apologetic overly soft or tentative voice	I statements firm voice	you statements loud voice
Non-Verbal Styles	looking down or away stooped posture, excessive head nodding	looking direct relaxed posture, smooth and relaxed movements	staring, narrow eyes tense, clenched fists, rigid posture, pointing fingers
Potential Consequences	lowered self esteem anger at self false feelings of inferiority disrespect from others pitied by others	higher self esteem self respect respect from others respect of others	guilt anger from others lowered self esteem disrespect from others feared by others

Communication Styles: A Self-Assessment Exercise

Instructions: Please select from each pair of attributes the one which is most typical of your personality. No pair is an either-or proposal. Make your choice as spontaneously as possible. There are no wrong answers.

1. I like action.
2. I deal with problems in a systematic way.
3. I believe that teams are more effective than individuals.
4. I enjoy innovation very much.
5. I am more interested in the future than in the past.
6. I enjoy working with people.
7. I like to attend well-organized group meetings.
8. Deadlines are important for me.
9. I cannot stand procrastination.
10. I believe that new ideas have to be tested before being used.
11. I enjoy the stimulation of interaction with others.
12. I am always looking for new possibilities.
13. I want to set up my own objectives.
14. When I start something, I go through until the end.
15. I basically try to understand other people's emotions.
16. I do challenge people around me.
17. I look forward to receiving feedback on my performance.
18. I find the step-by-step approach very effective.
19. I think I am good at reading people.
20. I like creative problem solving.
21. I extrapolate and project all the time.
22. I am sensitive to others' needs.
23. Planning is the key to success.
24. I become impatient with long deliberations.
25. I am cool under pressure.
26. I value experience very much.

- 27. I listen to people.
- 28. People say that I am a fast thinker.

- 29. Cooperation is a key word for me.
- 30. I use logical methods to test alternatives.

- 31. I like to handle several projects at the same time.
- 32. I always question myself.

- 33. I learn by doing.
- 34. I believe that my head rules my heart.

- 35. I can predict how others may react to a certain action.
- 36. I do not like details.

- 37. Analysis should always precede action.
- 38. I am able to assess the climate of a group.

- 39. I have a tendency to start things and not finish them up.
- 40. I perceive myself as decisive.

- 41. I search for challenging tasks.
- 42. I rely on observation and data.

- 43. I can express my feelings openly.
- 44. I like to design new projects.

- 45. I enjoy reading very much.
- 46. I perceive myself as a facilitator.

- 47. I like to focus on one issue at a time.
- 48. I like to achieve.

- 49. I enjoy learning about others.
- 50. I like variety.

- 51. Facts speak for themselves.
- 52. I use my imagination as much as possible.

- 53. I am impatient with long, slow assignments.
- 54. My mind never stops working.

- 55. Key decisions have to be made in a cautious way.
- 56. I strongly believe that people need each other to get work done.

57. I usually make decisions without thinking too much.
58. Emotions create problems.

59. I like to be liked by others.
60. I can put two and two together very quickly.

61. I try out my new ideas on people.
62. I believe in the scientific approach.

63. I like to get things done.
64. Good relationships are essential.

65. I am impulsive.
66. I accept differences in people.

67. Communicating with people is an end in itself.
68. I like to be intellectually stimulated.

69. I like to organize.
70. I usually jump from one task to another.

71. Talking and working with people is a creative art.
72. Self-actualization is a key word for me.

73. I enjoy playing with ideas.
74. I dislike wasting my time.

75. I enjoy doing what I am good at.
76. I learn by interacting with others.

77. I find abstractions interesting and enjoyable.
78. I am patient with details.

79. I like brief, to the point statements.
80. I feel confident in myself.

Scoring Sheet for the Communication Styles Assessment

Instructions: Circle the items you have selected and add up the totals for each style (one point per answer). The maximum is 20 per style and your total for the four styles should be 40.

<u>Style</u>	<u>Circle your answer here</u>	<u>Total Score (max. 20)</u>
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Style 1	1 - 8 - 9 - 13 - 17 - 24 - 26 - 31 - 33 - 40 - 41 - _____ 48 - 50 - 53 - 57 - 63 - 65 - 70 - 74 - 79	
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Style 2	2 - 7 - 10 - 14 - 18 - 23 - 25 - 30 - 34 - 37 - 42 - _____ 47 - 51 - 55 - 58 - 62 - 66 - 69 - 75 - 78	
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Style 3	3 - 6 - 11 - 15 - 19 - 22 - 27 - 29 - 35 - 38 - 43 - _____ 46 - 49 - 56 - 59 - 64 - 67 - 71 - 76 - 80	
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Style 4	4 - 5 - 12 - 16 - 20 - 21 - 28 - 32 - 36 - 39 - 44 - _____ 45 - 52 - 54 - 60 - 61 - 68 - 72 - 73 - 77	
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What style are you? _____

The Four Communication Styles

<p style="text-align: center;">Style 1</p> <p>WHAT</p> <p>Results Objectives Achieving Doing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ACTION (A)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Style 2</p> <p style="text-align: right;">HOW</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Strategies Organization Facts</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PROCESS (PR)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">IDEA (I)</p> <p>WHY</p> <p>Concepts Theories Innovation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Style 4</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PEOPLE (PE)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">WHO</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Communication Relationships Teamwork</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Style 3</p>

Action = Driver, Process = Analytical, Idea = Expresser, People = Relater

The Main Characteristics of Communication Styles

STYLE	CONTENT-People with this style talk about:		PROCESS-People with this style are:
ACTION (A)	Results Objectives Performance Productivity Efficiency Moving ahead Decisions	Responsibility Feedback Experience Challenges Achievements Change	Pragmatic (down to earth) Direct (to the point) Impatient Decisive Quick (jump from idea to idea) Energetic (challenge others)
PROCESS (PR)	Facts Procedures Planning Organizing Controlling Testing	Trying out Analysis Observations Proof Details	Systematic (step-by-step) Logical (cause and effect) Factual Verbose Unemotional Cautious Patient
PEOPLE (PE)	People Needs Motivation Teamwork Communications Feelings Team spirit Understanding	Self-development Sensitivity Awareness Cooperation Beliefs Values Expectations Relations	Spontaneous Empathetic Warm Subjective Emotional Perceptive Sensitive
IDEA (I)	Concepts Innovation Interdependence New ways New methods Improving Problems Alternatives	What's new in Creativity Opportunities Possibilities Grand designs Issues Potential	the field Imaginative Charismatic Difficult to understand Ego-centered Unrealistic Creative Full of ideas Provocative

Normative Communication Styles & Values For Cross-Cultural Collaboration

Communication Style (Focus Groups)	Very little	Little	Medium	Much	Very Much
Task-Based Purpose vs. Relationship	Native, Hispanic, Asian	African			Anglo
Written vs. verbal	Native, Hispanic, African			Asian	Anglo
Long term history between groups is important	Anglo				Native, Hispanic, Asian, African
Perceived right to set rules and agenda for meeting	Native, Hispanic, Asian	African			Anglo
Perceived right to speak freely at meeting	Native, Hispanic, Asian	African			Anglo
Authority of the person more important than the logic	Native, African		Hispanic, Anglo		Asian
Formal dress		Hispanic, Native, African			Anglo, Asian
Perceived right to represent or speak for the group	Native Asian	African, Hispanic			Anglo
Collaboration based on authority	Native African				Anglo, Asian, Hispanic
Self-Identity, how one describes oneself, related to skin color or ethnicity	Anglo			Asian	Native, African, Hispanic
Ignoring "turns"	Native, Asian	Hispanic		Anglo	African
Self-promotion	Native, Asian	Hispanic		Anglo	African
Use first names vs. titles (Mr., Ms., Reverend)	African, Asian			Hispanic	Anglo, Native
Spiritual elements included in meetings	Anglo	Asian, Hispanic			Native, African
Defer to older persons in group	Anglo		African, Hispanic	Native	Asian
Speed of Response	Native		Hispanic, Asian		African, Anglo
Collaborators must have community respect and support	Anglo				Native, Hispanic, Asian, African

Normative Communication Styles & Values For Cross-Cultural Collaboration

Communication Style (Review of Literature)	Very little	Little	Medium	Much	Very Much
Animation/Emotional Expression	Asian,* Native*	Hispanic*	Anglo*		African*
Gestures	Asian, Native		Anglo	Hispanic	African
Range of Pitch between words	Hispanic, Native	Asian	Anglo		African
Volume of speech	Asian	Hispanic	Native	Anglo	African
Directness of questions	Native, Asian	Hispanic			African, Anglo
Directness of answers	Native, Asian	Hispanic			African, Anglo
Directness of rhetorical style, "getting to the point"	Asian	Hispanic, Native			African, Anglo
Accusations require a direct response	Native, African, Asian	Anglo		Hispanic	
Directness of eye contact	Native, Asian	Hispanic			Anglo, African,
Firm, long handshaking	Native, Asian		Hispanic	African	Anglo
Touching	Native, Asian		Anglo		African, Hispanic
Concern with clock time	Native, Hispanic	African		Asian	Anglo
Hierarchical membership in group	Native, African	Anglo			Asian, Hispanic
Individualism more than lineal identity	Native	Hispanic, Asian, African			Anglo
Individualism more than collateral group identity	Asian	Hispanic, African	Native		Anglo
Awareness of unearned "white" privilege	Anglo				Native, African, Asian, Hispanic
Closeness when standing	Native, Asian	Anglo	African		Hispanic

*Asian American, African American, Anglo or European American, Native American, Hispanic American or Latino

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Adjusting to Other Communication Styles

Communicating with an Action (A) oriented person:

- Focus on the result first; state the conclusion at the outset.
- State your best recommendation; do not offer many alternatives.
- Be as brief as possible.
- Emphasize the practicality of your ideas.
- Use visual aids.

Communicating with a Process (PR) oriented person:

- Be precise; state the facts.
- Organize your discussion in a logical order:
 - Background
 - Present situation
 - Outcome
- Break down your recommendations.
- Include options and alternatives with pros and cons.
- Do not rush a process-oriented person.
- Outline your proposal.

Communicating with a People (PE) oriented person:

- Allow for small talk; do not start the discussion right away.
- Stress the relationship between your proposal and the people concerned.
- Show how the idea worked well in the past.
- Indicate support from well-respected people.
- Use an informal writing style.

Communicating with an Idea (I) oriented person:

- Allow enough time for discussion.
- Do not get impatient when he or she goes off on tangents.
- Try to relate the discussed topic to a broader concept or idea
- Stress the uniqueness of the idea or topic at hand.
- Emphasize future value or relate the impact of the idea to the future.
- If writing, try to stress the key concepts that underlie your recommendation at the outset. Start with an overall statement and work toward the particulars.

Dealing with Difficult Individuals.....the Verbal Bully.

Anyone who has been in the concrete jungle for more than five minutes soon learns two lessons fast:

- Many very important decisions are made during informal meetings, e.g. passage meetings, spur of the minute meetings, sudden meetings in offices or even the canteen, etc.
- Verbal bullies thrive during informal meetings.

Have you ever faced a situation where you were trying to make your point during one of these informal discussions and a verbal bully constantly interrupted you? Most of us have experienced this unpleasantness at some time.

Usually it would have happened at a meeting of two or more people (verbal bullies love an audience). It is very frustrating and annoying, especially if the meeting ended without you having had a chance to make your point.

But there is hope. There is a way to deal with the verbal bully.

And remember: A formal meeting with weak chairperson soon turns into an informal meeting with the verbal bully ruling the roost and the chairperson.

Here is a method of dealing with the interrupting bully effectively:

Step 1

As the verbal bully interrupts, do not take your eyes off the person you are addressing and continue to address that person in a calm voice. You must not make eye contact with the interrupting bully.

If Step 1 does not stop the bully, proceed to Step 2.

Step 2

Simply raise the volume of your voice, making sure that you keep your eyes on the person you are addressing. You must not make eye contact with the interrupting bully.

If Step 2 does not stop the bully, proceed to Step 3.

Step 3

Keep your eye on the person you are addressing, raise your voice slightly, and raise your hand in a stop sign indicating to the interrupting bully to stop speaking.

At this stage, most interrupting bullies will keep quiet. However, if the bully continues to interrupt, proceed to Step 4.

Step 4

Stop speaking to the person you are addressing. Turn and face the interrupting bully face to face. Look the interrupting bully, directly in the eyes, and say: "Would you mind keeping quiet until I finish?" This will silence almost all verbal bullies. When the verbal bully keeps quiet say "thank you" and continue to calmly make your point.

This strategy usually works. Your self-respect will be intact and you will gain the respect of the group and perhaps even the verbal bully.

Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=John Bartels](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=John_Bartels)

Communication Style Check

Ever felt being grossly misunderstood? That the message received was exactly the opposite of what you set out to communicate! There are even times when our communication seems to get out of our control due to factors like novelty of the situation, and lack of understanding of dynamics like other person's personality and life situations.

Communication is a loaded process because it involves more than just words or thoughts conveyed. Where talking in terms of the 'source-channel-receiver-feedback' process makes it look very simple, there one can't discount the more dynamic aspect of communication - the receiver's thoughts, beliefs and interpretations.

Moreover, through the socialization process, we develop our own unique style of communication. A lot of research has gone into the various communication styles; the gist of all being that the very presence of a variety of styles means friction is inevitable. Furthering your information on the styles will however help you loosen up your own while being tolerant of others' style of communication.

The styles in communicating official messages

Factual style: The presenter of facts will give undue importance to figures and will neglect sentiments and emotions. As a manager if you are the factual type, you will strive relentlessly towards bettering the performance through figures but sooner or later will run into a roadblock. You need to consciously merge a caring style with factual style. Instead of driving your team to exhaustion, learn of their realities. A good, happy and trusting team is as important as the numbers.

Interpreter style: The interpreter will always translate the numbers into a picture for the employees to understand. An interpreter will typically be more sensitive to the needs of his employees. This style displays a logical flow of thought processes. The interpreter usually uses emotions to increase the effectiveness of the communication. It leads to a sense of reassurance in the employee.

Symbolic style: Symbols are heralded as a 'communication shortcut' that an employee comprehends immediately. The person with this style almost invariably turns the message to be communicated into some sort of a graph or chart. An inspiring logo is an example of this style of communication.

The styles found in interpersonal interactions

Aggressive style: 'Everyone should be like me'; this is the motto of an individual with an aggressive style. Since the motto is basically implausible, communication troubles are almost inevitable. In addition to a closed mind, this person is a poor listener, interrupts others and drips sarcasm. These traits could be present in varying quantities. This person displays the non-verbal cues to match like frequent pointing, frowns, glares, squints and a rigid posture. In addition to subjecting others to verbal abuse, this person operates from a win-lose position, which is invariably harmful for both the organization and the individual.

Passive style: "Don't express your true feelings", is the motto of a person with a passive style of interpersonal communication. A self-proclaimed martyr, this person seldom disagrees, is plagued by hesitancy, is always apologetic and has no faith in his or her own abilities or work. This person sighs a lot, complains incessantly and has difficulty making choices and implementing plans. Non-verbal traits include fidgeting, downcast eyes, nodding in agreement even if feeling otherwise and a slumped posture. This person will frequently avoid, ignore, leave or postpone work. This person ends up in dependency relationships that further hinder growth of self-reliance.

Assertive style: "I have rights and so do others", is the motto of a person who adopts an assertive style. This person is not purely driven by self-interest and winning. He believes in fair play and is fully cognizant of his abilities. An active listener, he states observations and is not afraid of speaking his mind. He is non-judgmental, expresses trust in others and cultivates a sense of humor. Action oriented, firm and realistic in drawing out plans, this person experiences a feeling of well being that is permanent through ups and downs. Non-verbal cues include a direct eye contact, attentive facial expression, natural and open gestures and a relaxed posture. Motivation and self-esteem are invariably on his side.

Fine-tuning one's communication style to fit the situation is an art that comes with time. There are even times when an aggressive or a passive style comes in handy. Using and developing a style that is effective can give a decisive positive turn to your career and personal life.

When you send a message, you intend to communicate meaning, but the message itself doesn't contain meaning. The meaning exists in your mind and in the mind of your receiver. To understand one another, you and your receiver must share similar meanings for words, gestures, tone of voice, and other symbols.

1. Differences in perception

The world constantly bombards us with information: sights, sounds, scents, and so on. Our minds organize this stream of sensation into a mental map that represents our perception of reality. In no case is the perception of a certain person the same as the world itself, and no two maps are identical. As you view the world, your mind absorbs your experiences in a unique and personal way. Because your perceptions are unique, the ideas you want to express differ from other people's.

Even when two people have experienced the same event, their mental images of that event will not be identical. As senders, we choose the details that seem important and focus our attention on the most relevant and general, a process known as selective perception. As receivers, we try to fit new details into our existing pattern. If a detail doesn't quite fit, we are inclined to distort the information rather than rearrange the pattern.

2. Incorrect filtering

Filtering is screening out before a message is passed on to someone else. In business, the filters between you and your receiver are many; secretaries, assistants, receptionists, answering machines, etc. Those same gatekeepers may also 'translate' your receiver's ideas and responses before passing them on to you. To overcome filtering barriers, try to establish more than one communication channel, eliminate as many intermediaries as possible, and decrease distortion by condensing message information to the bare essentials.

3. Language problems

When you choose the words for your message, you signal that you are a member of a particular culture or subculture and that you know the code. The nature of your code imposes its own barriers on your message. Barriers also exist because words can be interpreted in more than one way. Language is an arbitrary code that depends on shared definitions, but there's a limit to how completely any of us share the same meaning for a given word.

To overcome language barriers, use the most specific and accurate words possible. Always try to use words your audience will understand. Increase the accuracy of your messages by using language that describes rather than evaluates and by presenting observable facts, events, and circumstances.

4. Poor listening

Perhaps the most common barrier to reception is simply a lack of attention on the receiver's part. We all let our minds wander now and then, regardless of how hard we try to concentrate. People are essentially likely to drift off when they are forced to listen to information that is difficult to understand or that has little direct bearing on their own lives. Too few of us simply do not listen well! To overcome barriers, paraphrase what you have understood, try to view the situation through the eyes of other speakers and resist jumping to conclusions. Clarify meaning by asking non-threatening questions, and listen without interrupting.

5. Differing emotional states

Every message contains both a content meaning, which deals with the subject of the message, and a relationship meaning, which suggests the nature of the interaction between sender and receiver. Communication can break down when the receiver reacts negatively to either of these meanings. You may have to deal with people when they are upset or when you are. An upset person tends to ignore or distort what the other person is saying and is often unable to present feelings and ideas effectively.

This is not to say that you should avoid all communication when you are emotionally involved, but you should be alert to the greater potential for misunderstanding that accompanies aroused emotions. To overcome emotional barriers, be aware of the feelings that arise in your self and in others as you communicate, and attempt to control them. Most important, be alert to the greater potential for misunderstanding that accompanies emotional messages.

6. Differing backgrounds

Differences in background can be one of the hardest communication barriers to overcome. Age, education, gender, social status, economic position, cultural background, temperament, health, beauty, popularity, religion, political belief, even a passing mood can all separate one person from another and make understanding difficult.

To overcome the barriers associated with differing backgrounds, avoid projecting your own background or culture onto others. Clarify your own and understand the background of others, spheres of knowledge, personalities and perceptions and don't assume that certain behaviors mean the same thing to everyone.

Martin Hahn Ph.D., 'Overcoming Communication Barriers between People and in Organizations', Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com>

Diversity in the Workplace



Manufacturing Skills Training

Participant Materials

Original Material by Pamela R. Causgrove
Adapted by Linda Moore Browning and Scott Sayles,
Customized & Workplace Training
For PCC Washington County Workforce Development

Equal Opportunity Employer / Igual Oportunidad de Empleo

This program financed in whole or in part with funds provided through Worksystems, Inc., from the U.S. Department of Labor. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities /

Las personas incapacitadas pueden solicitar medios y servicios auxiliares.

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Defining Diversity

What is the definition of diversity?

Diversity includes all the ways that we are different from others. Some areas are common to certain cultures, religions, or ethnic groups; others are found throughout the world in every country.

What makes us diverse? List as many factors as you can think of that make us different from one another.

Primary & Secondary Types of Culture

As you have discovered, there are many kinds of diversity. Primary types of culture are those that cannot be changed, and secondary types of culture are those things that can be changed. What ones would you put in these columns?

<u>Primary Dimensions:</u>	<u>Secondary Dimensions:</u>

Personal Diversity Profile

Diversity includes whatever we think makes us different from others. To get a glimpse of the diversity within our group, interview another participant and create a diversity profile listing the things that have made this person who he/she is. *You will be introducing your partner to the group.*

Gender Differences

How much do you know about how men and women communicate?

Circle True or False.

- | | | | |
|-----|--|------|-------|
| 1. | Women talk more than men. | True | False |
| 2. | Women interrupt men more often than men interrupt women. | True | False |
| 3. | In general, women talk about more subjects than men. | True | False |
| 4. | In conversation, a woman generally nods her head to show that she agrees with the speaker. | True | False |
| 5. | Men do not speak as politely as women. | True | False |
| 6. | Women ask more questions. | True | False |
| 7. | Generally, women are more intuitive than men. | True | False |
| 8. | At business meetings, people are more likely to listen to men than women. | True | False |
| 9. | Women touch others more often. | True | False |
| 10. | Women deal with problems more directly and are likely to be the first one to bring up a problem. | True | False |

Adapted from: "Self-Check: Gender Differences," in *Handling Diversity in the Workplace* by Kay duPont (1997)

Guidelines for Communicating Across Genders

For WOMEN speaking with MEN

- Move from a feeling style to a content style.
- Try to get to the point more quickly.
- Avoid rambling and using filler phrases.
- Use humor that is related to topics other than children or self. In mixed groups, talk about things other than people and surroundings.
- Answer questions directly.
- Be more authoritative and take more control of the conversation.
- Be honest when you are angry.
- Don't be afraid of confrontation.
- Compliment men on their achievements, not on personal characteristics.
- Avoid tag endings and confirming questions at the end of statements ("I've been in this job for, what? Three years? Isn't that right?").
- Be patient.

For MEN speaking with WOMEN

- Listen more closely to what is being said or conveyed.
- Paraphrase and clarify what the woman is saying.
- Talk about feelings.
- Talk about people, not just things or ideas.
- Ask about intent, not just content.
- Avoid nicknames for women (ex. gals, ladies, babes, etc.)
- Compliment women on their characteristics, not just on their achievements.
- Talk about things other than sports and business in mixed groups.
- Ask more, tell less.
- Avoid discounting or slipping into "one-upping"
- Be patient.

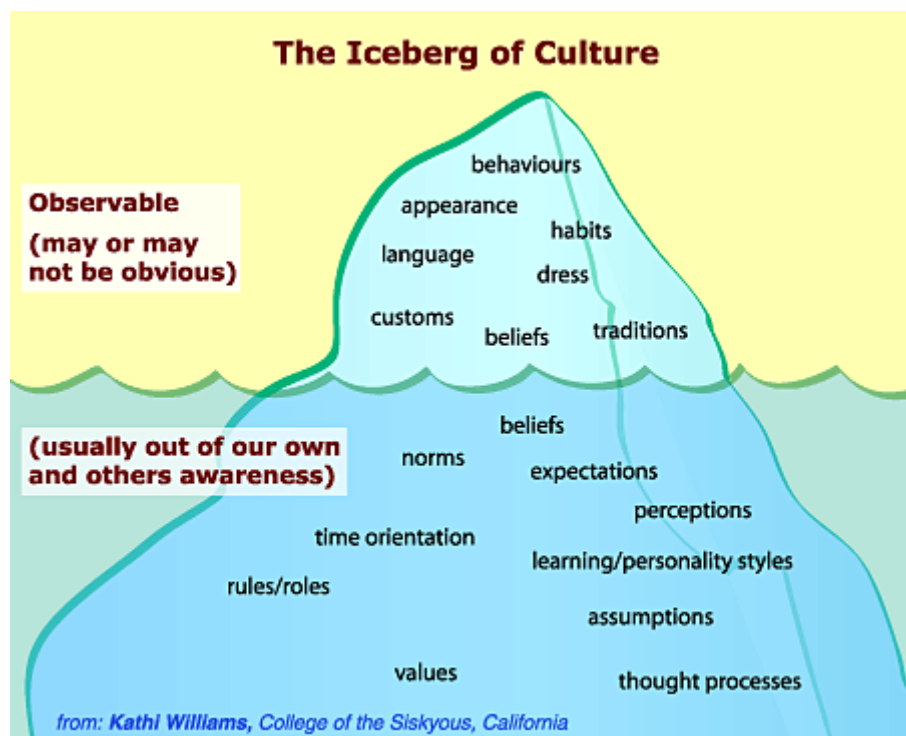
Adapted from: *Handling Diversity in the Workplace* by Kay Dupont (1997)

The Iceberg Model of Culture

Culture is the way of life of a group of people – the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next. The purpose of culture is to simplify the everyday decisions of living. Culture prescribes our values, behavior, thinking patterns, dress, communication styles, etiquette, traditions, rituals, etc.

Which elements of culture can be easily observed?

Which elements of culture cannot be seen?



Universal, Cultural, & Personal Behaviors

- Universal behavior applies to everyone, regardless of culture, and is considered “human nature.
- Cultural behavior applies to people in one cultural group, who still share some assumptions, values, and behaviors that are universal.
- Personal behavior refers to personal preferences, such as likes and dislikes

Indicate whether the following behaviors are universal (U), cultural (C), or personal (P):

- ___1. Sleeping with the bedroom window open
- ___2. Running from a dangerous animal
- ___3. Considering a snake to be “evil”
- ___4. Men opening doors for women
- ___5. Respecting older people
- ___6. Learning one’s native language
- ___7. Speaking English
- ___8. Speaking English as a second language
- ___9. Eating every day
- ___10. Eating with chopsticks
- ___11. Liking The Matrix movies.
- ___12. Calling a waiter with a hissing sound
- ___14. Feeling sad at the death of your mother
- ___15. Wearing slippers in the house instead of shoes
- ___16. Disliking having to take your shoes off in the house

Can you think of other behaviors that fall into these categories?

Adapted from: Figuring Foreigners Out: A Practical Guide by Craig Sorti (1999)

Exploring Stereotypes

A stereotype is a general idea or image, usually negative, that is learned about a group of people. When we have a stereotype of a group of people (black, Russians, women, homosexuals, etc.), it is hard for us to see individual people in those groups as unique.

What stereotypes are common in our society today? The list is endless and always hurtful. African Americans play sports. Latinos are gang members. Native Americans are alcoholics. Wheelchair-bound individuals are helpless. Gays are effeminate. Lesbians wear their hair short. Older adults need constant care. Immigrants are all on welfare. Anglos are either racists or rednecks. Homeless people are drug addicts. Unemployed people are lazy. Fat people are stupid. It goes on and on...

The first step toward eliminating stereotypical thinking is to realize what we believe about other groups of people, and then questioning that thinking.

- Where did I learn this?
- Why do I think this?
- Who told me this?

Stereotypes: Are they talking about US?

Don't believe all of the stereotypes you may have heard about Americans. Even the ones that are true in general may not be true about specific individuals or even a large part of the population. For example, although Americans tend to be louder and more noisy than people from other cultures (especially at sports events), many of the people you meet will be quiet and polite. Some people may be prejudiced and hostile, but most will be pleasant and welcoming. Remember that American films and television exaggerate in order to interest people, and so often they present a rather unrealistic picture of what life in the United States is really like

Americans do tend to be more informal than people from other countries. It is common for Americans to wear casual clothing to work and to greet people by first names. However, there are situations and environments in which formality is the norm. Some businesses require their employees to wear a uniform or a suit. It would be inappropriate to wear a T-shirt and blue jeans to a job interview. Some of the more prestigious restaurants require a coat and tie. Americans tend to dress up for cultural events (the opera, theater and ballet) and to dress down for athletic events. Formal wear is required at weddings and funerals, or any other event with religious overtones.

Rid yourself of any preconceived notions of American behavior before you arrive. If you rely on the stereotypes, you will likely put yourself into an awkward and embarrassing situation and offend your American acquaintances. Some of the more common stereotypes of American citizens include:

- Boastful and arrogant
- Disrespectful of authority
- Drink too much
- Spend too much and wasteful
- Generous
- Ignorant of other countries & cultures
- Informal
- Insensitive
- Lazy
- Uninformed about politics.
- Loud and obnoxious
- Have sex with a lot of people
- Racist
- Rich and wealthy
- Rude and immature
- Stuck up; think they are better than others
- Stingy
- Think they know it all
- Think every country should be like US

Adapted from: "Stereotypes" by Edupass <http://www.edupass.org/culture/stereotypes.phtml>

Exercises:

1. Read “Stereotypes: Are they talking about US?”. This article was written for foreign students who were coming here to study. Did you know that Americans are thought of like this by many other cultures? What could have contributed to this stereotype?
2. Choose one cultural group as your topic. Using chart paper and markers, write down as many characteristics, both negative and positive, that come to mind. Don't stop to think too much about your responses. Just write down all of the images you've been exposed to from television, movies, radio, observations, personal experience, family beliefs, etc.

Thinking Across Cultures 1

CULTURAL VALUES determine the way we interpret incidents and assign meaning to them. Read the descriptions below and write down your immediate response to or interpretation of the behavior.

1. You are attending a mandatory team meeting to discuss an important issue for your department. Everyone is there except Ahmad. Half an hour into the meeting, he comes strolling in and takes his seat without explaining his tardiness.

Your interpretation:

2. Hector is talking with his cousin Antonio in front of a stack of boards to be processed. His supervisor approaches him and says, "They're ready for this job in plating." Hector says, "Okay, I got it." The supervisor walks away expecting the task to be taken care of immediately. Instead of getting on the task right away, however, Hector continues his conversation with his cousin.

Your interpretation:

3. As a lead operator, you are responsible for supervising the operators on swing shift. You notice that Moen, a Cambodian operator, has having some difficulty with the new process and you want to help her. However, whenever you try to talk with her, she looks down or away.

Your interpretation:

Thinking Across Cultures 2

Read the descriptions of the following incidents and write down your immediate response to or interpretation of the behavior.

Value: TIME -- Fixed or Fluid

1. You are attending a mandatory team meeting to discuss an important issue for your department. Everyone is there except Hassan. Half an hour into the meeting, he comes strolling in and takes his seat without explaining his tardiness.

How would this be interpreted by someone from a culture where people always arrive half an hour after the stated starting time?

New interpretation:

Value: RESPONSIBILITY for TASK or RELATIONSHIP

2. Hector is talking with his cousin Antonio in front of a stack of boards to be processed. His supervisor approaches him and says, "They're ready for this job in plating." Hector says, "Okay, I got it." The supervisor walks away expecting the task to be taken care of immediately. Instead of getting on the task right away, however, Hector continues his conversation with his cousin.

How would this be interpreted by someone from a culture that places a high value on family and relationship?

New interpretation:

Value: AUTHORITY and INDIRECT COMMUNICATION

3. As a lead operator, you are responsible for assisting the operators on swing shift. You notice that Moen, a Cambodian operator, has been having some difficulty with the new process and you want to help her. However, whenever you try to talk with her, she looks down or away.

How would this be interpreted by someone from a culture where it is considered rude to make eye contact when listening to older or senior people?

New interpretation:

Contrasting Cultural Values

How is American culture similar to Latino culture?

How is it different from Latino culture?

How do these values impact work.?

Self and Family

Latino Culture	American Culture
Family is all important. Family structures are hierarchal and patriarchal. Extended families are the norm. Older siblings take care of younger siblings.	Family is not so important by comparison. Family structures are more egalitarian. Nuclear families are the norm. Older children might baby-sit, but they don't take on responsibility at the same level.
Family loyalty is very strong. Children often participate in the family work, and preferred activities involve all family members.	Family loyalty to a point. Work and family are separate. Family members have their own activities. Families do some things together.
When a family obligation conflicts with a work obligation, the family usually takes precedence.	Work often takes precedence over family. Continual dilemma for working parents.
Independence is not encouraged; the welfare of the group is of primary importance.	Independence is expected; the focus is on the individual.

Relating to Others

Communication is usually indirect. Sometimes intermediaries are used to convey messages, particularly in the case of bad news.	Communication is usually direct. People in conflict usually deal with one another directly.
When asked their opinion, people might tell you what they think you want to hear rather than what they believe.	People say what they think rather than what they think you want to hear.
Formal titles are often used. Status and authority are respected. Looking down while being addressed by someone in authority is a sign of respect.	Informality is the norm. People are uncomfortable with status and authority. Equality is valued. Eye contact is direct and shows respect, interest, and honesty.
People tend to avoid behavior that sets them apart from others.	Conformity is boring.

Forms of Activity

<p>People work to satisfy immediate needs. Any accumulated wealth is shared rather than saved.</p> <p>Time is indefinite and things are done as they need to be done. Volunteer efforts tend to be informal and spontaneous.</p> <p>Emphasis is on living in the present, taking each day as it comes rather than planning for the future or thinking in the long-term.</p> <p>People are used to doing many things at the same time (multi-focus). Clerks may wait on more than one customer at a time. People don't stand in line.</p> <p>Serious discussion may occur amid loud music and lots of varied activity.</p>	<p>Immediate gratification is desired. Accumulated wealth belongs to the individual and some of it may be saved or invested.</p> <p>Time is fixed and scheduled. Volunteer efforts are formal and planned.</p> <p>Emphasis is on the short-term future. Any problems that cannot be solved soon will be solved by technological advances in the future.</p> <p>People do one thing at a time (single-focus). Clerks attend to one at a time. People stand in line.</p> <p>Serious discussion is done in quiet surroundings and often in private.</p>
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Attitude Toward Change

<p>Value is placed on stability, continuity, and harmony. Change is not desirable.</p> <p>In making decisions, people consult important family members. They usually agree with those in authority, or conform with group wishes.</p> <p>Leadership is vested in authority and status. Respect, honor, and trust are important considerations.</p> <p>Survival depends more on knowing how to deal with certain people than in fitting comfortably into a smooth-running organization</p>	<p>Change is good and is often viewed as a sign of progress.</p> <p>Decisions are made individually or in consultation with a few others.</p> <p>Leadership is vested in individual skill, competence, and charisma.</p> <p>Survival depends on skill and competence. Winning through risk-taking is admired.</p>
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What kinds of situations might arise in the workplace as a result of contrasting values?

Can you make some suggestions for improving communications with Latinos at work?

Adapted from:

http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/oregonoutreach/successful_practices/cultural_values.html

Guidelines for Living and Working with Diversity

Recognize that there are many differences between groups of people; learn to be curious and interested in them rather than judge them.

- Realize that not all people and all cultures are the same. Celebrate the differences!
- Look at your own cultural point of reference honestly and objectively.
- Be open to learning about other cultures and other points of view.
- Be open to questioning your beliefs and judgments.
- Be open to recognizing your own prejudices.
- Be open to talking about cultural differences and asking thoughtful questions about them.
- Be open to change and learning new things about people and cultures.
- Be open and sensitive to others, and gentle with yourself if you make a mistake and offend someone.

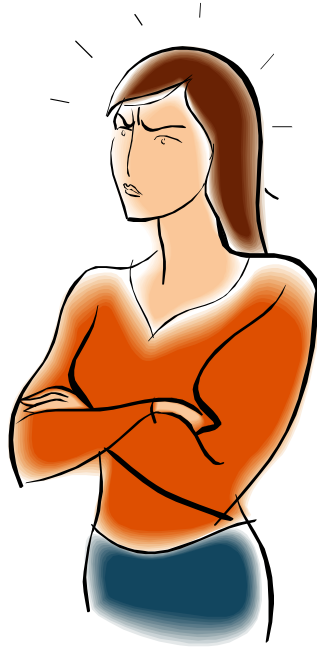
Why you don't know who you're talking to when you meet new people, or,

Reasons to Assume Nothing:

- Gender and age differences
- Verbal and non-verbal communication style differences
- Personality: passive, assertive, aggressive, Myers-Briggs type
- Personal communication types: Idea, Action, People, Process
- Individual psychological problems or character disorders
- Cultural communication styles
- Cultural traits: observable, non-observable
- Mix of cultural characteristics: universal, cultural, personal

All this means: First impressions are usually a lie!

Harassment and Violence in the Workplace



Manufacturing Skills Training Participant Materials

Original Material by Linda Moore Browning
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Harassment and Violence in the Workplace

What is harassment?

- A person who suffers from harassment feels offended by the behavior of another person.
- Generally the behavior of the harasser continues or is repeated several times until becoming intolerable and/or humiliating.
- Harassment is a show of power intended to intimidate, control or humiliate another person.

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, there are two official definitions of harassment:

Quid Pro Quo: “This for that”. This occurs when the behavior is unwanted and may include verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature (1) as a condition of employment or (2) as a basis for personnel decisions. It happens when the employee is forced to choose between accepting the unwanted behavior and losing his/her job or other benefits.

Hostile Environment: This happens when unwanted conduct of a sexual nature unreasonably* interferes with an employee’s work performance or creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile work environment. Hostile environment is also illegal if it is directed towards any covered group under the law such as race, national origin, religion, etc.

***Note:** A “reasonable person” standard is one in which a reasonable person would have known that the behavior in question was creating a hostile or intimidating environment.

Types of Harassment:

Harassment relates to classes of people who are protected under federal and state laws. It is a form of discrimination, and involves loss or harm to a person because of his belonging to a protected class. Protected classes include:

- Physical or mental disability,
- Gender(sex),
- Age,
- National Origin,
- Sexual orientation,
- Race,
- Religion.

Associating with a protected class member is *also protected*. In addition, there can be no retaliation (revenge) for reporting harassment.

Forms of harassment:

- Verbal: suggestive or insulting comments or jokes, shouting, aggressive comments, name calling, bullying, etc.
- Physical: unwelcome touching, hugging, kissing, interfering with someone's normal work movement. Unwelcome hanging around or following a person.
- Visual: offensive posters, photos, emails, gestures, voicemails, cartoons, etc.
- Other: unwelcome repeated social invitations, gifts, phone calls, notes, and emails. Unwelcome personal questions about social, religious or personal life.

Employee rights:

Workplaces should be free from all types of harassment covered under the law. ***All persons deserve dignity and respect. There should be zero tolerance for discrimination, meaning it will not be allowed in the workplace.***

If harassment occurs, it must be reported to the person(s) in the company that oversee it; it is most often Human Resources. This person must be impartial and trustworthy. There can be no retaliation or threats for a person reporting harassment. All employees must follow company policies and procedures, and complaints must be investigated.

Laws covering harassment and discrimination:

- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion and national origin.
- The Federal ADEA (Age Discrimination in Employment Act) prohibits discrimination on the basis of age for people 40 years and older. Under Oregon law, people that are 18 years or older are in a protected class.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) pertains to people with disabilities.
- The Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) enforces labor (work-related) laws in Oregon.

Company responsibilities

- Companies should provide training for managers and employees about harassment.
- Companies should also set policies and provide written complaint and investigation processes.
- Companies have the duty to investigate immediately and take quick corrective action in every case where a violation is found, no matter how small.
- Confidentiality is very important. Information should be shared only with the people involved during an investigation of harassment.

How to avoid a charge of workplace harassment

- Think before you act. Consider the **impact** of actions and words as well as the **intent**.
- If someone asks you to stop doing something, you must stop immediately (for example, telling jokes, making comments, sending emails, etc.). If you don't, you can be charged with harassment, even if it was not your intention to harass or be disrespectful.
- Be sensitive to the point of view of others. Some actions are acceptable to some and not to others.

What to do if you are the target of harassment

- If the harassment is sexual, let the harasser know that you are not interested in any way. You do not have to make excuses or give explanations.
- If it is abusive in other ways, clearly and firmly tell the offender that his/her behavior is unacceptable to you.
- If the behavior continues, document in writing what happened if possible, and then talk to the person in the company that is responsible for investigating harassment.
- ***Under no circumstances is it your fault if someone chooses to harass you.***
Report the behavior immediately if it continues.

Defining workplace violence

Defining workplace violence has generated considerable discussion. Some would include in the definition any language or actions that make one person uncomfortable in the workplace; others would include threats and harassment; and all would include any bodily injury inflicted by one person on another.

The spectrum of workplace violence ranges from offensive language to homicide, and a reasonable working definition of workplace violence is as follows: *violent acts, including physical assaults and threats of assault, directed toward persons at work or on duty.*

The circumstances of workplace violence also vary and may include robbery-associated violence; violence by disgruntled clients, customers, patients, inmates, etc.; violence by coworkers, employees, or employers; and any domestic violence that finds its way into the workplace.

Risk Factors

A number of factors may increase a worker's risk for workplace assault, and they include the following:

- Contact with the public
- Exchange of money
- Delivery of passengers, goods, or services
- Having a mobile workplace such as a taxicab or police cruiser
- Working with unstable or volatile persons in health care, social service, or criminal justice settings
- Working alone or in small numbers
- Working late at night or during early morning hours
- Working in high-crime areas
- Guarding valuable property or possessions
- Working in community-based settings

Kinds of Workplace Violence

Workplace violence may come from outside the workplace or from within.

- Type 1: Criminal Act

In this case, the person causing the violence may not have anything to do with the workplace. For example, he or she may enter the workplace to commit a robbery, and during the robbery, employees are hurt.

- Type 2: Receiving a Service

Someone who receives or has received a service given by the workplace may do something violent. Examples are a client, customer, patient, passenger or student.

- Type 3: Employment Relationship

A person who works or used to work in the workplace may commit violence. He or she may now be an employee or used to work for the company or have a relationship to another employee.

Things That Help to Bring Violence to the Workplace

Violence in the workplace is complicated. Personal, workplace, and social problems can be reasons for violence. Workplace violence can be any act of physical violence, threats of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening, disruptive behavior that

occurs at the work site. Workplace violence can affect or involve employees, visitors, contractors, and outsiders.

A number of different actions in the work environment can trigger or cause workplace violence. It may even be the result of non-work-related situations such as domestic violence or “road rage.” Workplace violence can be inflicted by an abusive employee, a manager, supervisor, co-worker, customer, family member, or even a stranger. Whatever the cause or whoever the perpetrator, workplace violence is not to be accepted or tolerated.

However, there is no sure way to predict human behavior and, while there may be warning signs, there is no specific profile of a potentially dangerous individual. The best prevention comes from identifying any problems early and dealing with them.

Personal Problems

- Family or marital problems
- Loss of a personal relationship
- Violence at home
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Too much stress and can't control it
- Financial problems related to job loss, gambling, bad investments, or credit card debt
- Job promotion
- Other changes, which employee may see as being good or bad.

Workplace Problems

- Long work/management arguments
- Often having complaints filed by employees
- Not having enough staff or too much overtime
- Not many changes in how employees do their jobs
- Possible layoffs.

Societal Problems

- Unemployment
- Not enough social programs
- Stress of moving to a new place
- Fast-moving, constantly changing world
- Using drugs
- Availability of guns

Prevention of Workplace Violence

A sound prevention plan is the most important and, in the long run, the least costly portion of any company's workplace violence program. Many companies have the following types of programs in place to help prevent workplace violence:

Pre-Employment Screening – A company should determine, with the assistance of its servicing personnel and legal offices, the pre-employment screening techniques which should be utilized, such as interview questions, background and reference checks, and drug testing if it is appropriate for the position under consideration and consistent with Federal laws and regulations.

Security – Maintaining a safe work place is part of any good prevention program. There are a variety of ways to help ensure safety, such as employee photo identification badges, guard services, and individual coded key cards for access to buildings and grounds. Different measures may be appropriate for different locations and work settings.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) – This program is most effective in resolving disputes when a conflict has been identified early and one of the following techniques is used: ombudspersons, facilitation, mediation, interest-based problem solving, and peer review.

Threat Assessment Team – This interdisciplinary team will work with management to assess the potential for workplace violence and, as appropriate, develop and execute a plan to address it.

Company Work and Family Life Programs (such as flexiplace, child care, maxiflex, etc.) – An company should identify and modify, if possible, self-imposed policies and procedures which cause negative effects on the workplace climate.

Awareness/Training

One of the most critical components of any company's prevention program is training.

All employees should know how to recognize and report incidents of violent, intimidating, threatening, and disruptive behavior. All employees should have phone numbers for quick reference during a crisis or an emergency. In addition, workplace violence prevention training for employees would include the following topics:

- Company's workplace violence policy.
- Encouragement to report incidents and the procedures to do so.
- Ways of preventing or defusing volatile situations or aggressive behavior.
- Ways to deal with hostile persons.
- Managing anger.
- Techniques and skills to resolve conflicts.

- Stress management, relaxation techniques, wellness training.
- Security procedures, e.g., the location and operation of safety devices such as alarm systems.
- Personal security measures.
- Programs operating within the company that can assist employees in resolving conflicts, e.g., ombudspersons, alternative dispute resolution, and mediation.

Threat Assessment

Determining the seriousness of a potentially violent or stressful situation and how to best intervene is the basis of a threat assessment. Since it is impossible to know with any certainty whether a threat is going to be carried out, an employee should always treat threats in a serious manner and act as though the person may carry out the threat.

Your company handbook on workplace violence will tell you who specifically to contact within your company when you sense a potentially violent situation. That contact will take whatever action is necessary and appropriate to activate a threat assessment team. The purpose of the threat assessment team is to provide guidance on managing the situation in a way that protects the employees.

Threat assessment teams evaluate the risks persons under suspicion may pose to particular targets. The approach and the timing for these evaluations will be specific to the circumstances of the potentially violent situation. Threats from sources outside the company may require different actions.

Once a threat assessment is completed, management will decide what additional measures are needed to close any security gaps. Where appropriate and not a security breach, management will explain to employees and customers alike what new steps are being taken and why, to alleviate misunderstandings and confusion.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

ADR processes are designed to help parties resolve conflicts with the assistance of neutral third parties. ADR can be used as an alternative to court litigation or company adjudications, or to help disputing parties resolve a problem that they cannot resolve on their own. Some ADR processes include facilitation, conciliation, mediation, and ombudsperson programs.

ADR can help prevent the escalation of conflict into violent or potentially violent situations. The key is using ADR early, before emotions or conduct make discussion a non- option. Here are two examples of how ADR can work:

A **mediator** trained in listening and communicating can defuse tensions, clear up misunderstandings, and open the door to productive dialogue. By helping uncover

misunderstandings or enabling an individual to get something off his/her chest in a safe setting, the result may be not only immediate resolution of an issue, but improved relations and communications for the future.

An **ombudsperson** is the “eyes and ears” of the highest level of an organization. Individuals having complaints or grievances about the organization can bring them confidentially to the ombudsperson, who can listen, investigate, and recommend solutions to problems.

Identifying Potentially Violent Situations

If you ever have concerns about a situation which may turn violent, alert your supervisor immediately and follow the specific reporting procedures provided by your company. It is better to err on the side of safety than to risk having a situation escalate.

The following are warning indicators of potential workplace violence:

- Intimidating, harassing, bullying, belligerent, or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior.
- Numerous conflicts with customers, co-workers, or supervisors.
- Bringing a weapon to the workplace (unless necessary for the job), making inappropriate references to guns, or making idle threats about using a weapon to harm someone.
- Statements showing fascination with incidents of workplace violence, statements indicating approval of the use of violence to resolve a problem, or statements indicating identification with perpetrators of workplace homicides.
- Statements indicating desperation (over family, financial, and other personal problems) to the point of contemplating suicide.
- Direct or veiled threats of harm.
- Substance abuse.
- Extreme changes in normal behaviors. High-risk behaviors are everyday behaviors that occur in certain patterns - they occur long before threats or actual workplace violence.

The eight categories of workplace violence are:

- **Actor behaviors:** The employee acts out his or her anger with such actions as yelling, shouting, slamming doors, and so on.
- **Fragmentor behaviors:** The employee takes no responsibility for his actions and sees no connection between what he does and the consequences or results of his actions. As an example, he blames others for his mistakes.

- **Me-First behaviors:** The employee does what she wants, regardless of the negative effects on others. As an example, the employee takes a break during a last minute rush to get product to a customer, while all other employees are working hard.
- **Mixed-Messenger behaviors:** The employee talks positively but behaves negatively. As an example, the employee acts in a passive-aggressive manner saying he is a team player, but refuses to share information.
- **Wooden-Stick behaviors:** The employee is rigid, inflexible, and controlling. She won't try new technology, wants to be in charge, or purposefully withholds information.
- **Escape-Artist behaviors:** The employee deals with stress by lying and/or taking part in addictive behaviors such as drugs or gambling.
- **Shocker behaviors:** The employee suddenly acts in ways that are out of character and/or inherently extreme. For instance, a usually reliable individual fails to show up or call in sick for work. A person exhibits a new attendance pattern.
- **Stranger behaviors:** The employee is remote, has poor social skills, becomes fixated on an idea and/or an individual.

Once you have noticed a co-worker showing any signs of the above indicators, you should notify the employee's supervisor immediately of your observations. It is very important to respond appropriately, i.e., not to overreact but also not to ignore a situation. Sometimes that may be difficult to determine. To get help in determining how best to handle the situation, you should discuss the situation with managers or the human resources staff.

No matter how effective company' policies and plans are in detecting and preventing incidents, there are no guarantees against workplace violence. Even the most responsive employers face this issue. When a violent incident does occur, it is essential the response be timely, appropriate to the situation, and carried out with the recognition that employees are traumatized and that the incident's aftermath has just begun.

While it is difficult to predict how an incident will affect a given individual, several factors influence the intensity of trauma. These factors include the duration of the event, the amount of terror or horror the victim experienced, the sense of personal control (or lack thereof) the employee had during the incident, and the amount of injury or loss the victim experienced (i.e., loss of property, self-esteem, physical well-being, etc.). Other variables include the person's previous victimization experiences, recent losses such as the death of a family member, and other intense stresses.

Policies and procedures for assessing and reporting threats allow employers to track and assess threats and violent incidents in the workplace. Such policies clearly indicate a zero tolerance of workplace violence and provide mechanisms by which incidents can be reported and handled. In addition, such information allows employers to assess whether prevention strategies are appropriate and effective.

These policies should also include guidance on recognizing the potential for violence, methods for defusing or de-escalating potentially violent situations, and instruction about the use of security devices and protective equipment.

Procedures for obtaining medical care and psychological support following violent incidents may also be addressed. Training and education efforts by the company would be needed to accompany such policies. Supervisors and managers have the obligation to deal with inappropriate behavior by their employees and customers, to provide employees with information and training to employees on workplace violence, and to put effective security measures in place.

Employee Responsibilities

You can and should expect management to care about your safety and to provide as safe a working environment as possible by having preventive measures in place and, if necessary, by dealing immediately with threatening or potentially violent situations which occur. But employees have some responsibilities, too.

Employees should:

- Be familiar with company policy regarding workplace violence.
- Be responsible for securing their own workplace area.
- Be responsible for questioning and/or reporting strangers to supervisors.
- Be aware of any threats, physical or verbal, and/or any disruptive behavior of any individual and report such to supervisors.
- Be familiar with local procedures for dealing with workplace threats and emergencies, and how to contact police, fire, and other safety and security officials.
- Do not confront individuals who are a threat.
- Take all threats seriously.

Adapted in part from Workplace Anti-Harassment Training
By Susan O'Reilly, Instructor, Portland Community College, NIOSH, and other sources

Some Do's and Don'ts For dealing with Difficult People/Situations

- Do take a breath and pause for a moment.
- Don't overreact to negative or difficult people on impulse.
- Do try to avoid being drawn into an argumentative exchange.
- Don't forget to remain calm.
- If the conversation gets loud or heated, do try to bring the volume down with your softer voice and body language.
- Don't forget to remain calm.
- Do remember that anyone can have a bad day.
- Don't forget how it feels to be having a bad day.