



How are you communicating?

A LESSON FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Brought to you by the Prevention Department at



THE COUNCIL
ON RECOVERY

What is communication?

Communication is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another.

Challenges of communication

1. Reacting instead of responding
2. Asking loaded questions NOT curious questions
3. Social media
4. Stress and out of control emotion
5. Negative and/or inconsistent body language
6. Poor listening skills

Reacting instead of responding

Whether at school, home, or work, we can react negatively.

In turn, this can cause a domino effect. People may automatically become defensive or upset.



Instead, **TRY**

If you find yourself reacting instead of responding try stepping away from the situation in order to think about it. Try to look at it from the other person's point of view. Think about the way in which the message was conveyed (text, email, face to face). Take time to calm down and let the situation diffuse. Sometimes the message conveyed is not always the way it is interpreted by the receiver.



Asking loaded questions, NOT curious questions

Sometimes we have a tendency to ask questions that automatically put another person on the defensive. “Why can you never be on time?” or “Why are you so lazy?” are loaded questions. These types of questions shut down any lines of communication.

Instead, TRY

Ask a person participatory questions or open-ended questions. Make sure you are not letting your personal judgments or beliefs guide your conversation. The way a question is phrased can make all the difference in effective and constructive communication.



Social Media

Before social media, we depended on phone calls and face to face interactions to strengthen our relationships.

Technology has challenged us to make meaningful connections. One survey, 74% of millennials prefer conversing digitally rather than face to face. Think how much a person checks their phone. Individuals have the “fear of missing out”. Technology has helped us to stay connected with people who are not close in proximity, however it has also created some bad habits and rewired how we connect with others. Tone, inflection, and word emphasis cannot necessarily be determined digitally.

Instead, **TRY**

Try and make some time for face to face interaction with friends or family members to the extent that you are allowed and safely able to do so. If you can't visit face-to-face, various sites are allowing family, friends, neighbors, or co-workers to interact more personally. Zoom, Google Hangouts Meet, GoToMeeting, WebEx, and TeamViewer are a few examples of these sites. Or a simple phone conversation can be quite effective for both parties.



Stress and out of control emotion



Instead **TRY**

These days, during COVID-19, we are faced with new challenges. People have added stress or are emotionally overwhelmed. Therefore, a person can displace their frustrations and send confusing or off-putting verbal and nonverbal signals.

Be able to recognize your stressors. Step back and reevaluate the situation.



Negative and/or inconsistent body language



Instead, **TRY**

Sometimes we may say one thing but our body language expresses something else.

Non-verbal cues such as crossing your arms, avoiding eye contact, and tapping our feet can make messages look dishonest.

To communicate effectively and put the person at ease, try to avoid any negative or inconsistent signals. You may not always agree, or even like what another person is saying.

Poor listening skills

We tend to forget communication is a two-way process. People tend to not really listen to others in a conversation, instead they are focusing on what they have to say next.

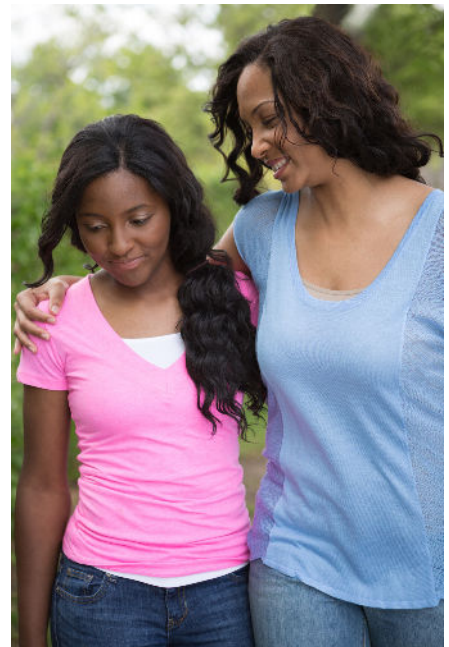


Instead, **TRY**

Ask more questions. Follow the 2:1 ratio which means we need to listen twice as much as we speak. Take the time to focus more on what the other person is trying to express. Allow a person to get their complete thought out before any type of response, and even then consider the audience to whom you are responding.

Tips For Talking With My Teens

- Try to see it from their point of view
- Ask open ended questions
- Make time for face to face interactions
- Be able to recognize your stressors
- Avoid negative body language
- Listen twice as much as you speak
- Show trust
- Control your emotions
- Don't be a dictator (Listen to them)
- Be patient
- Give genuine praise



Ideas to help improve communication with my teen(s)

- Do things together
- Share regular meals
- Talk about topics your teen likes
- Create a topic jar



Communication Activities

Making Conversation:

Ask open ended questions and see how they respond.

It sure is a nice day outside!

Student's response may initiate an outdoor bonding activity or opportunity for more conversation topics

You look like you're sad. Are you doing ok?

Student's response will most likely open up about feelings and emotions, may bring up how they miss peers, teachers, etc.

How do you feel about distance learning?

Student's response can make way for social media and communication through technology conversation, how it's affecting them, etc.

What are you looking forward to the most after the COVID-19 pandemic?

Student's response can make way for hope, goals, and continued aspirations once the pandemic has passed. A good follow up question could be, why that?

Communication Unscramble

Unscramble the words related to communication

tahc

xett

rettle

ykesp

ohpne

ielma

aklt

rlaveb

iwttren

lsiagn

Would You Rather?

A fun way to communicate with others is getting to know each other better. Ask questions or statements with choices. Ask why they prefer one thing over the other. It's a great ice breaker.

Would you rather

use a smartphone to do your work or a desktop/laptop?

Would you rather

only charge your phone once a week or not have a camera on your phone?

Would you rather

only use email to communicate or only use voice calls (no video calls)? Would you rather never play video games again or never use your favorite mobile app again?

Would you rather

say the morning announcements or be the school sports commentator?