

# Communication & Teamwork

K5. Identify the impact of effective interpersonal communication skills upon the relationships with other individuals

(Able to give examples of effective and ineffective interpersonal communication)

## Communication skills according to varying contexts

### Questions

#### 1. Listening

- (a) Do you listen to people's opinions? Yes Or No
- (b) If you think someone is making a good point, do you thank them for it and act on it? Yes Or No
- (c) Do you encourage people to listen to their colleagues? Yes Or No

#### 2. Blaming and Praising

- (a) If someone makes a suggestion that proves successful in practice, do you ensure he or she receives thanks and praise? Yes Or No
- (b) If someone makes a mistake, do you first praise the person for an achievement before discussing the error? Yes Or No
- (c) If you hear someone blaming another person, do you join in with your own negative comments? Yes Or No
- (d) Do you criticise people in front of others? Yes Or No

#### 3. Availability

- (a) If you know an awkward colleague wants to talk to you, do you hide? Yes Or No
- (b) If you're too busy to see someone, do you make a point of getting back to them as soon as possible? Yes Or No

#### **4. Adapting Your Style**

- (a) Do you adapt your communication style for different people and circumstances? Yes Or No

#### **5. General Communication Issues**

- (a) Do you prefer to give advice or instructions by discussing matters with colleagues or staff face to face? Yes Or No
- (b) If a colleague or member of staff is struggling to understand something, do you go out of your way to help them? Yes Or No
- (c) Do you try to write letters, documents, etc. in plain English? Yes Or No

#### **Answers**

1. Listening Award yourself a point for each of the following correct answers: (a) yes; (b) yes; (c) yes (maximum three points).

Listening skills are as important as the ability to talk and write effectively. Such skills indicate to people that you are treating them with respect. Furthermore, you need to respond positively to what people say, and show that you were listening.

2. Blaming and Praising Award yourself a point for each of the following correct answers: (a) yes; (b) yes; (c) no; (d) no (maximum four points).

People like to receive praise and recognition for their achievements. The right words of praise are also great motivators.

You should always praise people before talking about their mistakes. This helps maintain a positive attitude among everyone in a workplace. Being negative and apportioning blame is too easily done;

you must nurture an approach that praises people at every opportunity. You should also speak in private to someone about a problem he or she has caused.

3. Availability award yourself a point for each of the following correct answers: (a) no; (b) yes (maximum two points).

Awkward colleagues can be a nuisance, but you need to face them at the earliest opportunity. You should also make a point of getting back to people without delay if you're to maintain their respect.

4. Adapting Your Style Award yourself a point for the following correct answer: (a) yes.

You must adapt your communication style to suit the person or people you're talking or writing to. Try to put yourself in their place, and communicate accordingly.

5. General Communication Issues Award yourself a point for each of the following correct answers: (a) yes; (b) yes; (c) yes (maximum three points).

It's always better to discuss matters rather than simply give instructions. Also try not to give such instructions by email. In this circumstance, people may assume you've something to hide.

You should also make time to help others in the workplace; after all, you may need help yourself at some time. As for using plain English, this should go without saying. Time and again, however, people communicate with unnecessary jargon, long words, and convoluted sentences. If you do, the content of your message is easily lost.

### **Your Score**

13 points: you clearly know how to communicate well at work. Good communication isn't easy, though, and you need to maintain your success day in, day out.

11/12 points: address the areas where you've failed to score points, and keep working at your communication skills. You should soon become a good workplace communicator.

Fewer than 11 points: you have some work to do. Try to improve your communication skills in the areas where you've lost points.



## Effective and ineffective interpersonal communication

Every communicative act is based on something that conveys meaning, and that conveyance is the message. The message may be either verbal (spoken or written) or nonverbal (body language, physical appearance, or vocal tone). Messages may also come from the context or place and time of the communication. For instance, if you choose to make a critical comment to someone, the place and the time you choose to make that comment will make a big impact on how it will be received.



Indicate how frequently you engage in the following behaviors when communicating with another person or persons.

Use this scale to describe your behavior.

4 – I always do this.

3 – I often do this.

2 – I sometimes do this.

1 – I seldom do this.

0 – I never do this.

- \_\_\_ 1. When I have something to say, I am open and honest about my need to say it.
- \_\_\_ 2. I communicate with an awareness that the words I choose may not mean the same thing to other people that they do to me.
- \_\_\_ 3. I recognize that the message I receive may not be the same one the other person intended to send.
- \_\_\_ 4. Before I communicate, I ask myself questions about who my receiver is and how that will affect his or her reception of my message.
- \_\_\_ 5. As I communicate to someone, I keep a watchful eye and ear out for an indication that I am understood.
- \_\_\_ 6. I make my messages as brief and to the point as possible.
- \_\_\_ 7. I consciously avoid the use of jargon with those who may not understand it.
- \_\_\_ 8. I consciously avoid the use of slang words with those who may be put off by them.
- \_\_\_ 9. I try not to use red-flag words (words that might trigger an emotional response) that may upset or distract the receiver of my message.
- \_\_\_ 10. I recognize that how I say something is just as important as what I say.
- \_\_\_ 11. I analyse my communication style to determine what nonverbal messages I send and how well they conform to the meaning I desire to get across.

- \_\_\_ 12. I carefully consider whether my message would be best understood by my receiver in a face-to-face meeting, over the telephone, or in writing.
- \_\_\_ 13. I form opinions about what others say to me based on what I hear them saying rather than what I think of them as a person.
- \_\_\_ 14. I make a genuine effort to listen to ideas with which I don't agree.
- \_\_\_ 15. I look for ways to improve my listening skills.

**TOTAL SCORE**

**Find your score on the following table.**

<b>Score</b>	<b>Interpretations</b>
50 – 60	Are you sure you were honest? If so, you are an extremely effective communicator who almost never contributes to misunderstanding.
40 – 49	You are an effective communicator who only infrequently causes communication breakdown. The goal of these exercises is to move everyone up to this level.
30 – 39	You are an above average communicator with occasional lapses. You cause some misunderstandings but less than your share.
20 – 29	Many people (at least those who are honest) fall into this category. While things could be worse, there is much room for improvement in your communication style. The goal of these exercises is to move you to a higher category.
10 – 19	You are a frequent source of communication problems. Enthusiastically tackle the rest of these exercises and consider their implications for you personally.
Less Than	Your honesty is commendable, but it will take more than honesty to improve your communication effectiveness. Consider taking a communication course.

**Interpersonal Communication Skills**

	<b>USUALLY</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>SELDOM</b>
1. Is it difficult for you to talk to other people?			
2. When you are trying to explain something, do others tend to put words in your mouth, or finish your sentences for you?			
3. In conversation, do your words usually come out the way you would like?			
4. Do you find it difficult to express your ideas when they differ from the ideas of people around you?			
5. Do you assume that the other person knows what you are trying to say, and leave it to him/her to ask you questions?			
6. Do others seem interested and attentive when you are talking to them?			
7. When speaking, is it easy for you to recognize how others are reacting to what you are saying?			
8. Do you ask the other person to tell you how she/he feels about the point you are trying to make?			
9. Are you aware of how your tone of voice may affect others?			
10. In conversation, do you look to talk about things of interest to both you and the other person?			

# Formal and Informal

Read through the exercise below placing a tick in the correct box to decide which phrase is formal or informal in conversation with a co-worker/manager?

	Phrases:	Formal	Informal
1	Of course, I will attend to that at once.		
2	How's it all going over there today?		
3	Good afternoon Sir.		
4	Just wait a minute, okay?		
5	When the opportunity arises, we will make arrangements.		
6	Thank you all for your attention, it is much appreciated.		
7	I don't get it, will you explain it again?		
8	Sure, will do.		
9	Can you give me a minute please?		
10	This is a win-win result for the whole team.		
11	Going forward, we will increase our workload on this project.		
12	Can you give me the lowdown on the last meeting?		
13	Staff must re-focus their priorities.		
14	Thanks a million!		
15	Can you give me a hand with this?		
16	Please do not hesitate to contact me immediately.		
17	Whenever you get the chance, send me a soft copy of the document.		

18	I sincerely apologise for the delay.		
19	Attached is the requisite document.		
20	Sorry, my friend!!!!!!!!!!!!!!		
21	Hi there all.		
22	This requires immediate attention!		
23	Please replicate the examples provided in the document.		

24	No problem, anytime!		
25	I am pleased to inform you of our upcoming event.		
26	There is no mention of a proposed delay in her recent email communication.		
27	Have you seen their recent work? We really have to step-up our game in this department.		
28	I need to jog my memory? I can't remember those statistics for the meeting.		



**Answers:**

	<b>Phrases:</b>	<b>Formal</b>	<b>Informal</b>
1	Of course, I will attend to that at once.	X	
2	How's it all going over there today?		X
3	Good afternoon Sir.	X	
4	Just wait a minute, okay?		X
5	When the opportunity arises, we will make arrangements.	X	
6	Thank you all for your attention, it is much appreciated.	X	
7	I don't get it, will you explain it again?		X
8	Sure, will do.		X
9	Can you give me a minute please?		X
10	This is a real win-win result for us all team.		X
11	Going forward, we will increase our workload on this project.	X	
12	Can you give me the lowdown on the last meeting?		X
13	Staff must re-focus their priorities.	X	
14	Thanks a million!		X
15	Can you give me a hand with this?		X
16	Please do not hesitate to contact me immediately.	X	
17	Whenever you get the chance, send me a soft copy of the document will you?		X
18	I sincerely apologise for the delay.	X	
19	Attached is the requisite document.	X	

20	Sorry, my friend!!!!!!!!!!!!		X
21	Hi there all.		X
22	This requires immediate attention!	X	
23	Please replicate the examples provided in the document.	X	
24	No problem, anytime!		X
25	I am pleased to inform you of our upcoming event.	X	
26	There is no mention of a proposed delay in her recent email communication.	X	
27	Have you seen their recent stuff? We really have to step-up our game in this department.		X
28	I need to jog my memory. I can't remember any of those statistics for the meeting.		X



# Communication Skills

A little voice in our head gives us messages. Sometimes the messages say that we are clever and doing well. At other times they say that we are 'stupid' or that we can't do anything.

Write down how you feel when the messages are negative as well as how you feel when they are positive.

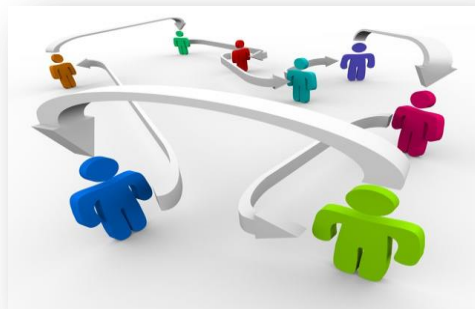
The first has been done as an example

**You can also add some other situations to the list.**

Situation	Negative self-talk	Positive self-talk
Example:	I'm dull. They won't want to talk to me.	I'm interesting. Maybe I'll make a new friend.
Speaking to someone new		
<b>Feelings</b>	<i>Frightened</i>	<i>Excited</i>
1. Trying a new problem	I'll make a mistake.	The more I try the better I'll get.
<b>Feelings</b>		
2. Giving a talk to the class	They'll laugh and tease me.	I can do it.
<b>Feelings</b>		
3. Asking if you can join a game	They don't like me.	This will be fun.
<b>Feelings</b>		
4. Asking to borrow something	They'll say no.	They'll say yes.
Special		
<b>Feelings</b>		
5. Giving an opinion	They'll all laugh.	They'll think I'm smart.
<b>Feelings</b>		
6. Making a speech	I'll make a fool of myself.	I'll do a pretty good job.

**Other situations...**

Situation	Negative self-talk	Positive self-talk
7.		
<b>Feelings</b>		
8.		
<b>Feelings</b>		
9.		
<b>Feelings</b>		
10.		
<b>Feelings</b>		
11.		
<b>Feelings</b>		



# Decision-Making & Problem-Solving

K6. Find links between a decision and possible consequences

(Is able to explain what constitutes a problem)

## What constitutes a problem?

For every single decision we make or problem we solve, our brains have to go through the following **steps**.

Use this worksheet to help your brain make decisions that will get you more out of life!



### 1. **STOP and Think!**

Describe the decision/s you are trying to make in your life?



## Links between a decision and possible consequences

Step 1 Identify a Problem...

Break it down into smaller steps and decide what you need to action first

Step 2 Brainstorm and write down as many ideas as you can that might help solve the problem, no matter how silly they seem – don't dismiss any possible solutions.

Step 3 Consider the pros and cons of each possible solution, using a separate piece of paper.

Step 4 Choose one of the possible solutions that looks likely to work, based on the advantages and disadvantages

Step 5 Plan out step-by-step what you need to do to carry out this solution. What? When? How? With whom or what? Could cause problems? How can you get around those problems? Is this realistic and achievable?

Step 6 Carry out a plan







# Problematic situations

**Problem Solving Team Scenarios** Here are a list of suggested workplace scenarios. Give each small group one scenario to act out and work through as a team. Team members may take turns acting as the difficult team member.

**Each problem solving team should act out and come up with ways to solve the problem behavior.**

**Scenario 1:** The leader of the team wants to do everything him or herself. They have a very big ego and are difficult to work with.

**Scenario 2:** One team member is extremely shy. However, he or she has the most expertise and background to help solve the technical issue your team is experiencing in your best product.

**Scenario 3:** Two of your team members do not get along. There are many hard feelings between the two and they refuse to communicate with one another.

**Scenario 4:** One of your team members is very social. In fact, he or she believes they are the life of the party. This team member enjoys telling jokes continually which derails the conversation.

**Scenario 5:** One team member is very sensitive and emotional. This member gets upset when he/she doesn't feel listened to and is extremely offended if all of his or her ideas do not get used. To further complicate matters, most of this team member's ideas are not practical.

**Scenario 6:** One of your team members enjoys hearing themselves talk. They dominate the discussion and expect everyone to listen to them. This person is not the assigned leader of the problem solving team.





# Responsible decision making

*You can develop a proactive decision-making style. When you have decisions to make, use the Responsible Decision-Making Model. The Responsible Decision-Making Model is a series of steps to follow to assure that people make good decisions.*

## How to Use the Responsible Decision-Making Model...

**Step 1: Describe the situation that requires a decision.** Describe the situation in writing

if no immediate decision is necessary. Describe the situation out loud or to yourself in a few sentences if an immediate decision is necessary. Being able to describe the situation in your own words helps you see it more clearly.

**Step 2: List possible decisions you might make.** List all the possible decisions you can think of in writing, if no immediate decision is necessary. If you must decide right away, review the possible decisions out loud or to yourself.

**Step 3: Share the list of possible decisions with a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult.** Share possible decisions with a responsible adult when no immediate decision is necessary. If possible, delay making a decision until you have had a chance to discuss the possible decisions with a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult. The adult may help you evaluate the possible consequences of each decision.

**Step 4: Use six questions to evaluate the possible consequences of each decision.**

1. Will this decision result in actions that promote health?
2. Will this decision result in actions that protect safety?
3. Will this decision result in actions that follow laws?
4. Will this decision result in actions that show respect for myself and others?
5. Will this decision result in actions that follow the guidelines of my parents and of other responsible adults?
6. Will this decision result in actions that demonstrate good character?



# Upcoming situations and decision making...

**Step 1: Think what the problem might be and in what situation will it possibly occur:**

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<b>Step 2: List all Possible Solutions</b> List all ideas, even bad ones. Remember not to evaluate at this stage	<b>Step 3. Evaluate Each Possible Solution</b> Quickly go through the list of all possible solutions and think about the pros and cons of each one	
	Pros	Cons

**Step 4: Choose the Best or most Practical Solution**

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**Step 5: Plan how to carry out the best solution.**

Plan out step-by step **how** you will carry out your solution, and **when** you will do it.

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**Step 6: Review Progress**

What has been achieved? What is there left to do?

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