

Leadership and Management

Communication skills



One of the most critical elements in effective leadership is that of interpersonal skills. Communication is a two-way process that involves listening, sharing ideas, thoughts, and suggestions. It is about expressing feelings and emotions and hearing one another. Non-verbal communication is just as important as verbal communication. Non-verbal indicators include;

- Gesture
- Posture
- Facial expression
- Eye contact
- Tone of voice
- Behaviour

TASK 1

With your team discuss how the above indicators influence effective communication.

With this in mind, discuss and reflect on the following questions:

- What non-verbal traits would you expect to see if someone is engaged and actively listening to what is being said?
- What non-verbal traits would you expect to see when someone is not actively listening or showing disinterest in what is being said?

Something to Remember!

“It isn’t so much what you say, but how you say it. Effective communication gets results and makes people feel involved, informed, and valued. Ineffective communication means tasks don’t get done and generally there is a lack of commitment.”

(Barber, J, 2018)

TASK 2

As a leader it is essential that you finetune your communication skills in being effective in the role of both **The Sender** (delivering the communication) and **The Receiver** (listening to what is being said to you).

Below is a list of key points to consider when being the sender. Decide on which are the **do’s** and the **don’ts** and discuss the reasons why:

- Be clear about what you say, make your point.
- Look at the person you are speaking to.
- Complicate what you are saying with too much detail or difficult language.
- Talk so much that the listener has no chance to comment or ask questions.
- Put down, attack, or ridicule the listener.
- Speak clearly, matching the language you use to the listener, anticipating how they might react and respond.
- Consider the feelings of the person you are speaking to, are they likely to be upset, happy, confused, cross and how you can help them?

- Ignore signs of confusion, resentment, or disinterest to the person you are speaking to.
- Carefully choose the time and place you need to speak to someone.
- Check the listener has understood what you have said.
- Speak in a detached, remote fashion.
- Pretend or exaggerate.
- Keep to the facts.

Below is a list of key points to consider when being the receiver. Decide on which are the **do's** and the **don'ts** and discuss the reasons why:

- Interrupt the speaker to give your views.
- Look at the person who is speaking to you and give them your full attention.
- Let your previous experience of the speaker shape your view.
- Make assumptions or jump to conclusions before the speaker has spoken.
- Recognise how the speaker feels about what they are saying, if appropriate show empathy and sympathy.
- Look for points to agree with, rather than to argue with.
- Give a quick summary of what you have heard.
- Be negative or belittle what the speaker is saying.
- Fidget and become easily distracted.

These key points may seem fairly obvious, however, we can all develop bad habits and it is important that we are aware of how our communication skills influence our interactions.

TASK

As a leader sharing ideas and information is essential. Good communicators ask questions, listen, brainstorm, and share. Reflecting on your own practice as a leader, consider the strategies you apply to communicate with your team e.g.

- Staff notice boards.
- Emails, text messages and WhatsApp.
- Informal conversations
- Staff meetings
- Supervisions and appraisals
- Memos
- Staff newsletters

Having established your strategies, spend some time with your team reflecting on their effectiveness:

- How do others like to be communicated with? What is their preferred form of communication?
- What do they need more or less of?

“The broader and wider range of communication within a setting, the more likely you are to ensure everyone feels informed. What we choose to communicate is just as important as how we communicate it. We need to use communication as a tool for effective leadership. The ability to communicate and articulate runs through all different types of leadership.”

(Barber, J 2018)

Useful links:

[Communicating Your Vision | Early Years Management | Teach Early Years](#)

Useful texts:

Barber, Jenny, 2018, Effective Leadership and Management in the EYFS