

Module 3 Handouts

The following handouts are included in this module:

1. Warm-up: Nonverbal Communication
2. Strategies for Successful Nonverbal Communication (optional)
3. Quiz! Paying Attention to Nonverbal Communication
4. Strategies for Active Listening (optional)
5. Active Listening Exercise
6. Reflection: Nonverbal Communication and Active Listening
7. Types of Nonverbal Communication and Body Language (optional)
8. Active Listening Overview (optional)
9. Recommended Resources for Building Effective Communication Skills (optional)
10. Training Feedback Survey



Warm-up: Nonverbal Communication

Facilitator: For this warm-up, you will be asking people to get into pairs. Copy and cut this sheet of paper so that you can distribute a “Role” (speaker and listener) to each person in the pair. The “speaker” and “listener” should not see what their partner’s role says.

Role 1: SPEAKER. Think about an ideal vacation spot you would like to visit. In 2 minutes, tell your partner all about it and why you want to go there. Be enthusiastic!

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Role 2: LISTENER. As your partner begins to talk, use nonverbal cues to show that you aren’t fully listening. For instance, occasionally look away or look down, turn your body partly away from him/her, check your watch, touch or glance at papers, fold your arms across your chest, slump, lean into someone else’s conversation.

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Strategies for Successful Nonverbal Communication*

1. Pay Attention to Nonverbal Signals for More Effective and Meaningful Communication

Information is communicated in numerous ways; pay attention to things like eye contact, gestures, posture, body movements, and tone of voice. All of these signals can convey important information that isn't put into words. Improve your spoken communication by using nonverbal signals. Remember that verbal and nonverbal communication work together to convey a message.

2. Concentrate on Your Tone of Voice

Voice tone can convey a wealth of information, ranging from enthusiasm to disinterest to anger. Notice how your tone of voice affects how others respond to you and be intentional about using your voice tone to emphasize ideas that you want to communicate.

3. Use Appropriate Eye Contact

While it may seem that when people fail to look others in the eye, they are trying to hide something, be aware that some children/youth consider eye contact too intense. Too much or direct eye contact can seem confrontational or intimidating, even disrespectful in some cultures. While eye contact is an important part of communication, it's important to remember that good eye contact does not mean staring fixedly into someone's eyes. Some communication experts recommend intervals of eye contact lasting four to five seconds.

4. Check for Inconsistencies

If someone's words do not match their nonverbal behaviors, pay attention. Nonverbal communication should reinforce what is being said. If you get the feeling that something is "off," you may be picking up on a mismatch between verbal and nonverbal cues. Is the person is saying one thing, and their body language something else? For example, someone might tell you they are happy while frowning and staring at the ground. Furthermore, consider the nonverbal signals you are sending (eye contact, tone of voice, body language). Are your nonverbal cues consistent—or inconsistent—with what you are trying to get across?

5. Be Aware that Nonverbal Signals can be Misread; Get Clarification

Culture, gender and age all influence nonverbal signals. To avoid the possibility of misreading nonverbal signals, always remember to look for groups of behavior. A person's overall demeanor – the words and body language- are far more telling than a single gesture viewed in isolation. If you are confused about another person's nonverbal signals, don't be afraid to ask about it. A good idea is to repeat back your interpretation of what has been said and ask for clarification. An example of this might be, "I noticed that you are slouched over even though you say you are happy about the move. What else is going on?"

*Adapted from Top 10 Nonverbal Communication tips by Kendra Cherry, About.com Guide and Nonverbal Communication Skills: The Power of Body Language by Jeanne Segal, Ph.D., Melinda Smith, www.helpguide.org (retrieved July 2011)

6. Look at Nonverbal Communication Signals Together

Don't read too much into a single gesture or nonverbal cue. A single gesture can mean any number of things, or maybe even nothing at all. To accurately read nonverbal behavior, look for the cluster of signals that appear to reinforce a message. If you place too much emphasis on just one signal out of many, you might come to an inaccurate conclusion about what a person is trying to communicate.

7. Consider Context

When you are communicating with others, always consider the situation and the context in which the communication occurs. Some situations require more formal behaviors that might be interpreted very differently in any other setting. For instance, a desired hug after a tutoring session may not be acceptable for that same child in front of his friends. If you are trying to improve your own nonverbal communication, concentrate on ways to make your signals match the level of formality appropriate for the situation.

8. When Overwhelmed by Stress, Take Time Out

Stress compromises your ability to communicate. When you're stressed out, you're more likely to misread other people, send off confusing or off-putting nonverbal signals, and lapse into unhealthy knee-jerk patterns of behavior. Take a moment to calm down before you jump back into the conversation.

9. Practice

Some people have a knack for using nonverbal communication effectively, and correctly interpreting signals from others. In reality, you can build this skill by paying careful attention to nonverbal behavior and practicing different types of nonverbal communication with others. You can dramatically improve your communication abilities.

Quiz! Paying Attention to Nonverbal Communication

Instructions: Work with a partner to test your knowledge on nonverbal communication (body and vocal).

1. When Amanda (age 15) slouches, you can assume she is bored. True or False?

2. It is helpful for you to get your head physically on the same level as Jamal (age 6), when you are talking with him. True or False?

3. Alex (age 13) is clenching his fists. What is going on?

- a. He's angry.
- b. He's anxious.
- c. Can't say for sure, we would need to check other nonverbal signals and what he is saying.

4. Maria (age 9) constantly mumbles when she talks. She is showing disrespect. True or False?

5. You lean forward while the youth or child is talking because you know this generally suggests interest and openness. In what ways might you need to be careful about your physical distance with the child/youth? Name two.

1.) _____

2.) _____

6. Lupe (age 11) is avoiding eye contact with you. You can assume:

- a) Eye contact could be too intense for Lupe. Try to alter your approach.
- b) She lacks self-confidence.
- c) She lacks respect.
- d) She is lying.
- e) B, C and D.

7. Smiles are contagious. What are some other helpful facial expressions that let Jill (age 14) know that you are "on the same page" with her? Name two.

1.) _____

2.) _____

Strategies for Active Listening

1. Use Nonverbal Signals and Cues

- A simple nod or facial expression (e.g. raised eyebrows) lets the child or youth know you are with them. Murmur (“uh-huh” and “um-hmm”) and nod.
- Use body position and face the child/youth. Bend down to their level, sit up straight or lean forward slightly to show your attentiveness through body language. For adolescents, it may be more comfortable sitting side by side.
- Maintain eye contact, to the degree that you all remain comfortable. Be mindful of cultural differences in which direct eye contact might be uncomfortable or considered disrespectful.

2. Appreciate Silence

Conversations have natural pauses. What should you say next? Learn to settle into the silence and use it to better understand what the child/youth is saying.

3. Minimize External Distractions

Create an environment conducive to conversation. Put down the phone, magazine or other materials that could distract you. Depending on the nature of the conversation, move to a quiet or private place to talk.

4. Ask Questions for Clarification

Wait until the child or youth has finished speaking so you won't interrupt their train of thought. To let them know that you are making a good effort to understand, listen carefully to what they say and formulate a relevant question which asks for more clarification (e.g. “can you give me an example of what you mean?”). This also helps the child/youth evaluate their own opinions and perspective. Words such as “Really?,” “Interesting,” as well as more direct prompts “how” and “what” help clarify or encourage more conversation: “What did you do then?” or “How do you think that happened?” or “Tell me more about that; what do you think about it?” Avoid “why” questions, if possible. Youth typically answer, “I don't know” or respond defensively.

5. Focus on the Child/Youth; Hold Interruptions, Opinions, Advice and Judgments

Focus solely on what the child/youth is saying and try not to think about what you are going to say next or formulate your opinions. If your own thoughts keep horning in, simply let them go and re-focus your attention on the child or youth. Trust that the conversation will logically flow after the child or youth makes his/her point. Unless they specifically ask for advice or an opinion, assume they just need to talk it out.

6. Paraphrase and/or Summarize What You Heard

Try to capture what the child/youth said by paraphrasing it in your own words, and say it back to him/her (without judging the correctness or merit of what they said). Check to make sure you got it right. For instance, start with: “So you're saying...”. Restating or paraphrasing the content will allow the child/youth to decide whether you got the message or if they need to clarify further. It can help prevent troublesome miscommunication. It will also help the child/youth become more aware of how he/she is coming across to another person.

7. Acknowledge Feelings (Reflect) and Empathize

You might think the child or youth wants you to agree with him/her, but in reality, they just want you to understand how they feel. Take in the “whole message” including body language, tone of voice, and intensity as well as the words, and try to determine what emotion they are conveying. In a sentence or two, acknowledge and reflect the feeling as you understand it. For instance, “It sounds like you felt *angry* or *confused* when. . .[a particular event happened].” Empathize with the child/youth without telling the child/youth how they should feel. For example, “I imagine that you might feel frustrated when you can’t figure out how to complete your math homework” or “I wonder if that made you mad to keep getting yelled at for what your little brother did.”

8. Wait and Keep an Open Mind

Wait until the child or youth is finished speaking before responding. Try not to make assumptions about what the child/youth is thinking. Even if s/he is launching a complaint against you, wait until s/he is finished to respond. The child/youth will feel as though s/he got everything out and won’t feel the need to repeat it. You’ll know the whole argument before you respond.

9. Practice

Some people have a knack for active listening communication. You can build this skill by practicing active listening behavior with others and dramatically improve your communication abilities.

Active Listening Exercise

Instructions: *Decide who will take which role first in your group. You will do this exercise 3 times so that each of you will have a chance to experience each of these roles. You will have a total of 5 minutes for each round. Take one of those minutes to read and consider your role before you begin.*

Speaker Role: Child/Youth

Think of a conversation that a child/youth may have with his/her mentor (i.e. trouble with school work, problems with a teacher at school, misunderstanding with a friend, or excitement about an event).

- Identify the topic and sink into the role. Be ready to talk for 3-4 minutes.
- The goal is to give the listener a chance to practice, not a hard time. Try to share information that allows the listener to practice the listening skills of questions, paraphrasing, and reflecting feelings.
- Be sure to pause often to encourage the listener to respond, even if this feels a bit unnatural.

Listener Role: Mentor

The “child/youth” will talk with you for 3-4 minutes. Concentrate and try to use active nonverbal communication and active listening skills. As appropriate, try to:

- Encourage the conversation (nods, minimal encouragers- “un-huh”) and use eye contact
- Ask clarifying questions
- Paraphrase what is being said
- Reflect feelings, empathize with what the speaker is feeling

Observer Role

Observe the listener’s verbal and nonverbal responses.

- Note if and how the listener uses clarifying questions, paraphrasing, and reflecting of feelings.
- Note how s/he uses nonverbal signals (eye contact, minimal encouragers, silence, body posture, voice intensity).
- Be ready to report what worked well.

Notes:

Reflection: Nonverbal Communication and Active Listening

Instructions: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 indicating that you have “mastered” the strategy. This is just for you and will be most helpful if you can use it to focus on skills you would like to improve.

Pay attention to nonverbal signals. Pay attention to things like eye contact, gestures, body movement and tone of voice. Your Rating: _____
Idea that would help you improve this skill: _____

Ask questions for clarification. After the child/youth has finished speaking, ask for clarification using words such as “Really,” “Interesting,” as well as more direct prompts using “what” and “how” to clarify or encourage more conversation: “What did you do then?” or “How do you think that happened?”.
Your Rating: _____
Idea that would help you improve this skill: _____

Paraphrase or summarize. After you ask questions, paraphrase and summarize the content to make sure you didn’t misunderstand. For instance, start with: “So you’re saying...”
Your Rating: _____
Idea that would help you improve this skill: _____

Identify feelings and empathize. Note feelings you heard by adding something like, “It sounds like you felt *angry* or *confused* when. . .[a particular event happened]. Empathize with the child/youth without telling the child/youth how s/he should feel. For example, “I imagine that you might feel frustrated when you can’t figure out how to complete your math homework” or “I wonder if that made you mad to keep getting yelled at for what your little brother did.”
Your Rating: _____
Idea that would help you improve this skill: _____

Appreciate silence. Conversations have natural pauses. What should you say next? Learn to settle into the silence and use it to better understand what the child/youth is saying.
Your Rating: _____
Idea that would help you improve this skill: _____

Types of Nonverbal Communication and Body Language

There are many different types of nonverbal communication. Together, the following nonverbal signals and cues communicate your interest and investment in others.

Facial Expressions

The human face is extremely expressive, able to express countless emotions without saying a word. And unlike some forms of nonverbal communication, facial expressions are universal. The facial expressions for happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, fear, and disgust are the same across cultures.

Body Movements and Posture

Consider how your perceptions of people are affected by the way they sit, walk, stand up, or hold their head. The way you move and carry yourself communicates a wealth of information to the world. This type of nonverbal communication includes your posture, bearing, stance, and subtle movements.

Gestures

Gestures are woven into the fabric of our daily lives. We wave, point, beckon, and use our hands when we're arguing or speaking animatedly—expressing ourselves with gestures often without thinking. However, the meaning of gestures can be very different across cultures and regions, so it's important to be careful to avoid misinterpretation.

Eye Contact

Since the visual sense is dominant for most people, eye contact is an especially important type of nonverbal communication. The way you look at someone can communicate many things, including interest, affection, hostility, or attraction. Eye contact is also important in maintaining the flow of conversation and for gauging the other person's response.

Touch

We communicate a great deal through touch. Think about the messages given by the following: a firm handshake, a timid tap on the shoulder, a warm bear hug, a reassuring pat on the back, a patronizing pat on the head, or a controlling grip on your arm.

Space

Have you ever felt uncomfortable during a conversation because the other person was standing too close and invading your space? We all have a need for physical space, although that need differs depending on the culture, the situation, and the closeness of the relationship. You can use physical space to communicate many different nonverbal messages, including signals of intimacy, aggression, dominance, or affection.

Voice

We communicate with our voices, even when we are not using words. Nonverbal speech sounds such as tone, pitch, volume, inflection, rhythm, and rate are important communication elements. When we speak, other people “read” our voices in addition to listening to our words. These nonverbal speech sounds provide subtle but powerful clues into our true feelings and what we really mean. Think about how tone of voice, for example, can indicate sarcasm, anger, affection, or confidence.

It’s not what you say, it’s how you say it! Consider:

- **Intensity.** A reflection of the amount of energy you project is considered your intensity. Again, this has as much to do with what feels good to the other person as what you personally prefer.
- **Timing and pace.** Your ability to be a good listener and communicate interest and involvement is impacted by timing and pace.
- **Sounds that convey understanding.** Sounds such as “ahhh, ummm, ohhh,” uttered with congruent eye and facial gestures, communicate understanding and emotional connection. More than words, these sounds are the language of interest, understanding and compassion.

Source: *The Language of Emotional Intelligence*. Authors: Jeanne Segal, Ph.D., Melinda Smith

Self Evaluation for Nonverbal Communication Skills*

How well do you use nonverbal communication? How good are you at picking up nonverbal cues from others? Where would you like to improve?

<i>I am working on it</i>	<i>I have mastered this!</i>	Nonverbal Communication	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Facial expression	What does your face show? Is it mask-like and unexpressive, or emotionally present and interested? Are you picking up the facial signals of the child/youth?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Posture and gesture	Does your body look still and immobile, or relaxed? Check the tension in your shoulders and jaw. What do you observe about the degree of tension or relaxation in the body of the child/youth you are speaking to?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eye contact	Is this source of connection missing, too intense, or just right?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Space/Touch	Are you mindful of respecting the personal space of the child/youth? Do you practice appropriate touch (pat on hand or shoulder)? Are you able to pick up what touch the child/youth finds comfortable? Remember, for some children/youth, touch of any kind may be unwelcome.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tone of voice	Does your voice project warmth, confidence, and delight, or is it strained and blocked? What do you hear as you listen to the child/youth?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intensity of voice	Do you or the child/youth you are communicating with seem flat, cool, and disinterested, or over-the-top and melodramatic? Are you able to control your voice to help you communicate clearly?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Timing and pace	What happens when the child/youth makes an important statement? Does a response (not necessarily verbal) come too quickly or too slowly? Is there an easy flow of information back and forth?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sounds	Do you use sounds to indicate that you are attending to the other person? Do you pick up on sounds from the child/youth that indicate emotions?

*Adapted from Jean Segal, Ph.D., Melinda Smith

Active Listening Overview*

Active Listening is:

- ✓ A way of listening attentively while someone else speaks
- ✓ Can include paraphrasing and reflecting back what is said
- ✓ Includes both verbal and non-verbal communication
- ✓ Withholds judgement and advice

Below are some active listening techniques. No doubt you already use many of these techniques in your daily interactions.

Attending

What is it? Providing verbal or nonverbal signals of awareness of the other person, such as:

- Eye contact. If comfortable for the child/youth, maintain eye contact.
- Gesture/Posture. Squarely face the person, Open your posture, Lean towards the child/youth. Don't forget to relax while paying attention.
- Minimal encouragers (uh-huh, I see)
- Use of silence

Purpose: To show that you are listening; you care and you are interested.

Paraphrasing or Restating

What is it? Restating a message, but usually with fewer words. When listening, consider: *What is the speaker's basic **thinking** message? What is the basic **feeling** message?* Where possible, try and get more to the point as you restate.

Purpose:

- To test your understanding of what you heard.
- To communicate that you are trying to understand what is being said. If you are successful, paraphrasing indicates that you are following the speaker's verbal explorations and that you are beginning to understand the basic message.

Example:

Youth: *I just don't understand, one minute she tells me to do this, and the next minute to do something completely different.*

Mentor: *It sounds like she really confuses you.*

Clarifying or Probing

What is it? The process of bringing vague material into sharper focus, or questioning in a supportive way that gets more information from the speaker.

Purpose:

- To untangle unclear or confusing statements
- To get more information
- To help the speaker see other points of view
- To identify what was said

Examples:

- *I'm confused. Let me try to state what I think you are saying.*
- *You've said so much; let me see if I've got it all.*

Perception Checking

What is it? Request for confirmation of what you are hearing – to check your interpretation of what the speaker is saying.

Purpose:

- To give and receive feedback
- To check out your assumptions

Example:

Let me see if I've got it straight. You said that you love your friends at school and that they are very important to you. At the same time you can't stand being with them. Is that what you are saying?

Summarizing

What is it? Putting key ideas and feelings into broad statements without adding any new ideas; pulling together, organizing, and integrating what was said; focusing ideas, themes and emotional overtones.

Purpose:

- To give a sense of movement and accomplishment to the conversation
- To establish a basis for further discussion
- To pull together and recap major ideas, facts, and feelings

Example:

If I understand you correctly, there are three major issues you have with your mom right now...

Reflecting or Empathizing

What is it? The basic formula is: “You feel (*state feeling*) because (*state content*).” This is a reflection of the content and feelings that have been heard or perceived. You may uncover feelings that were not directly expressed.

Purpose:

- To show that you understand the speaker’s experience and the feelings.
- To allow the speaker to think about his/her feelings after hearing them expressed by someone else.

Examples:

- Youth: *I just don’t know how I am going to deal with my friend’s betrayal and handle all the stuff going on at home.*
Mentor: *You are feeling frustrated and overwhelmed with everything happening right now. Did I get that right?*
- Youth: *I hate my teacher for calling on me when I had told her before class that I wasn’t able to do the work.*
Mentor: *I get the sense that you are really angry about what she did, but I am wondering if you also feel a little hurt because you had told her beforehand.*

*Adapted from: www.taftcollege.edu/lrc/class/assignments/actlisten.html and Interactive Skills Program: Helping Through Listening and Influencing, Hedlund and Freedman, Cornell University Cooperative Extension Service, 1981.

Recommended Resources for Building Effective Communication Skills

Below are some resources to help you build your communication skills with children and youth. Your supervisor may have additional recommendations.

Active Listening: Hear what people are really saying, from Mind Tools™, a website aimed at people interested in skill development to use in their careers, is a helpful article on active listening with simple steps, tips, and key points summarized.

<http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/ActiveListening.htm>

Active Listening: A Communication Tool (2005) by Daniel F. Perkins and Kate Fogarty. The University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension posted an article with information, tips, and examples for active listening when communicating with teenagers.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/he361>

The Child Welfare League of America offers advice, tips, and examples for communicating with very young children. <http://www.cwla.org/positiveparenting/tipscomm.htm>

Cooperative Extension System offers information and advice regarding intergenerational communication aimed at grandparents who are raising grandchildren.

[http://www.extension.org/pages/Issues in Intergenerational Communication:](http://www.extension.org/pages/Issues_in_Intergenerational_Communication)

The Intergenerational Initiative (a Project of the Illinois Board of Higher Education) discusses the process of getting acquainted between non-related older adults and young people involved in intergenerational programs.

<http://www.iii.siuc.edu/Communication/intergencommunication.html>

Training Feedback Survey

Please help us improve our training sessions by providing feedback on the training you attended. Thank you!

Training/Session Name: _____ Date: _____

Lead Facilitator: _____

Program you serve with: Foster Grandparent RSVP Other: _____

Please rate this session using the following scale:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. The subject matter was presented effectively.					
2. The facilitator was knowledgeable.					
3. The facilitator responded to questions.					
4. There were enough opportunities for discussion.					
5. The written materials are useful.					
6. The session met my expectations.					
7. As a result of this training, I gained new knowledge applicable to my volunteer assignment.					
8. I plan to apply what I learned at this session.					

9. What did you like best about this session?

10. What would have improved this session?

Thank You! Your feedback will help us to improve our training!