

MODULE #4: Social Skills

Objectives

- Participants will understand the importance of two-way communication.
- Participants will identify physical and material characteristics that are important to them.
- Participants will remember where they have been, where they are heading and where they want to be.

Context



Social skills are essential for leadership development. Possessing social skills allow us to interact and communicate with others, and solve problems effectively. Social skills include verbal and non-verbal communication.

Handouts & Resourced Needed:

Handout 4.1: Active Listening

Handout 4.2: Diagram #1: One-Way Communication

Handout 4.2A: Diagram #2: Two-Way Communication

Handout 4.3: Anger Management

Handout 4.4: The Miracle Workers

Sheet of paper – one for each participant

Pens/pencils

Journals – one per students

Activity #1: Active listening (30 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- Effective communication requires not only choosing your words correctly but also listening actively. First of all, listening is not hearing. When you hear something your ears are receiving a sound. You hear traffic, dogs barking, and babies crying. However, listening requires you to hear AND interpret the message you are receiving. Anyone can hear, but leaders are able to listen.
- Discuss what active listening is and why it is important in the communication process (Handout 4.1).
- Break into groups of 2 and practice active listening. Students can discuss, for example, what they did this past weekend.
- Debriefing

Activity #2: One Way/Two Way Communication (55 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- The purpose of this activity is to teach participants the advantages of two-way communication for building social skills. While being oneself is important, having life skills such as positive attitude, respect and courtesy can help you get what you want in life.
- Explain to participants that in one-way communication, only one person talks and does not allow the other person to ask questions or offer opinions.
- Ask for or select three volunteer assistants, one as demonstrator and the other two as observers to take note on the behavior of the demonstrator and the participants.
- Distribute blank paper and pencils to participants and ask them to label one sheet Diagram #1 and the other Diagram #2.
- One-way communication: Give the demonstrator a copy of Diagram 1 (Handout 4.2) and allow two minutes of study. The demonstrator must stand in front of the participants with his or her back to the partner. Explain that the demonstrator will give directions for drawing a series of squares and that each should construct the diagram as described. The person describing is the only person who can speak. The drawer cannot ask any questions. When everyone has finished, show the correct diagram and ask how many people got it right. Find out what some of the problems were.
- Two Way Communication: Repeat the same directions with that exception that the person drawing will now serve as demonstrator. Provide Diagram #2 (Handout 4.2A).
- This time the person drawing may ask questions. When everyone has finished, show the correct diagram and ask how many people got it right. Find out what some of the problems are the second time around and what helped.
- Be sure to discuss the importance of communication and being clear about what we are trying to say.
- Discuss the conclusions made from the activity.
- Debriefing

Activity #3: Building coping skills (55 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- Often lack of coping skills affect how people react in difficult situations. For example, being able to manage anger is important for avoiding conflicts. Anger management entails thinking about your reaction before acting on the emotions and feelings. Sometimes, when we are angry we tend to jump to conclusions,

react violently and use inappropriate language instead of confronting the situation calmly.

- Tell participants that during this activity they will be asked to participate in a role-play on anger management.
- Review scenarios on Handout 4.3. Then ask for volunteers to do a role-play indicating how they would handle the situations to avoid a fight.
- Discussion.
- Debriefing.

Activity #4: The miracle workers (55 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- The purpose of this activity is for participants to be able to identify physical and material characteristics that are important to them as well as have an opportunity to think about where they have been and what their future may impart. Decision-making is important in building social skills.
- Provide miracle worker exercise (Handout 4.4). Ask students to form groups of 3 or 4 and to choose 4 workers, whose miracle they would like to have from the list provided.
- A representative of each group now tells the class which miracle they chose and why they chose it.
- Then students discuss their feelings about the exercise. Did the students have strong feelings about the subgroup that choosing some miracles that were not their personal choices? Did this exercise help them determine what is really important in their lives?
- Debriefing

ACTIVE LISTENING

 Despite what you might think, listening is not hearing. When you **hear** something your ears receive a sound like traffic, dogs barking, or babies crying. However, **listening** requires your ears AND your brain, hearing AND interpreting the message you are receiving. Anyone can hear, but leaders listen.

 In order to be an active listener, you must not only pay attention to what another person says, but also identify how to respond properly. Active listeners concentrate, clarify, and check the meaning, content, context, and intent of what other's say. You have to try to understand what the other person is saying, feeling, or thinking, then put that understanding into words, feeding it back to them for verification.

 Open communication between leader and follower is essential in the leadership process. It is the responsibility of the leader to be an active listener and to be able to respond to the needs of the follower.

There are four major components of active listening:

1. ATTENDING (THE USE OF BODY LANGUAGE)

- Sit or stand a comfortable distance from the speaker.
- Face the person directly and lean forward.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Nod approval or agreement.

2. PARAPHRASING

- Put others' thoughts into your own words to verify you understand what they are trying to say.

Example: "So let me see, you mean..."

3. REFLECTING FEELING

- Express emotions that the other person may have not put into words.

Example: "That must make you feel sad."

4. REFLECTING MEANING

- Restate the feeling/ emotion with reason.

Example: "You must feel sad because..."

How to be a Good Listener

When involved in a conversation:

- Spend more time listening than talking.
- Do not finish others' sentences.
- Do not answer questions with questions.
- Be aware of biases. We all have them and we need to control them.
- Never daydream or allow yourself to become preoccupied with your own thoughts when talking with others.
- Let the other speaker talk. Do not dominate the conversation.
- Plan your response **AFTER** the other person finishes speaking...**NOT** while they are speaking.
- Provide feedback but do not interrupt.
- Analyze by looking at all the relevant factors and asking open-ended questions. Summarize by walking the other person through your analysis.
- Keep the conversation focused on what the speaker says, **NOT** what interests you.
- Take brief notes, forcing you to concentrate on what is being said.

FEEDBACK is a series of verbal and nonverbal responses to another person's message. By incorporating these traits of a good listener, and the following nonverbal behaviors of communication, you will be highly successful in whatever conversation you choose to participate.

NONVERBAL BEHAVIORS OF COMMUNICATION

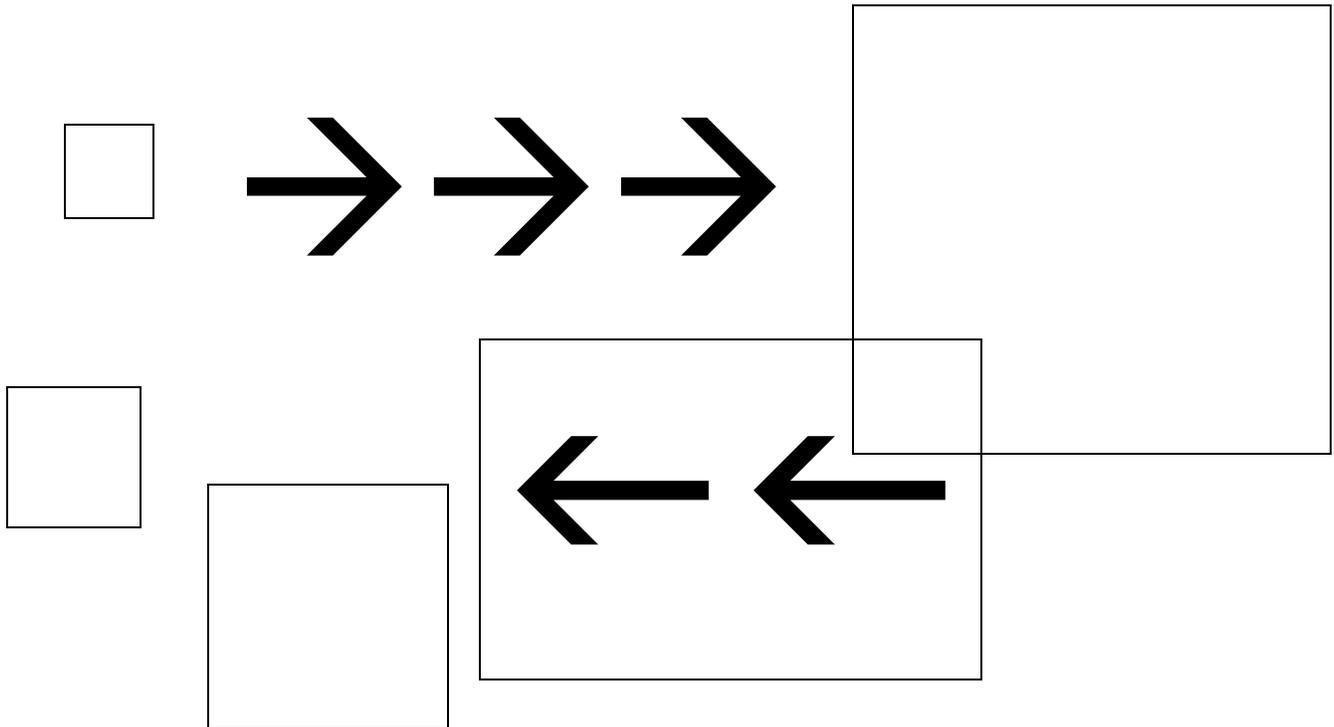
- **Eye Contact:** This helps improve the ease of communication. It signals interest in others and increases the speaker's credibility. People who make eye contact open the flow of communication and convey interest, concern, warmth, and credibility.
- **Facial Expressions:** Smiling is a powerful cue that transmits happiness, friendliness, warmth, and liking. So if you smile frequently you will be perceived as more likeable, friendly, warm and approachable. Smiling is often contagious and people will react favorably. They will be more comfortable and will want to listen more.
- **Gestures:** If you fail to gesture while speaking you may be perceived as boring and stiff. A lively speaking style captures the listener's attention, makes the conversation more interesting, and facilitates understanding.
- **Posture and Body Orientation:** You communicate numerous messages by the way you talk and move. Standing erect and leaning forward communicates to listeners that you are approachable, receptive and friendly. Interpersonal closeness results when you and the listener face each other. Speaking with your back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling should be avoided as it communicates disinterest.
- **Proximity:** Cultural norms dictate a comfortable distance for interaction with others. You should look for interaction with others. You should look for signals of discomfort caused by invading the other person's space. Some of these are: rocking, leg swinging, tapping, and gaze aversion.
- **Vocal:** Speaking can signal nonverbal communication when you include such vocal elements as tone, pitch, rhythm, timbre, loudness, and inflection. For maximum teaching effectiveness, learn to vary these six elements of your voice. One of the major criticisms of many speakers is that they speak in a monotone voice. Listeners perceive this type of speaker as dull and boring.

-Big Dog LDSP

One-Way Communication

Instructions for Demonstrator: Study the shapes below. Facing away from the rest of the group, direct members in how they are to draw the figures below (Remember: you are the *only* person who can speak!). Begin with the smallest square and describe the objects that follow clockwise, taking note of the particular relationship of each object to the preceding one. No questions will be allowed from the rest of the group.

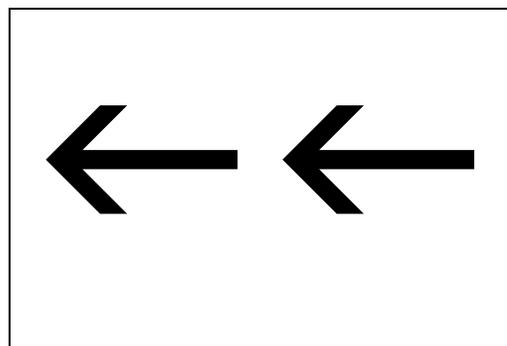
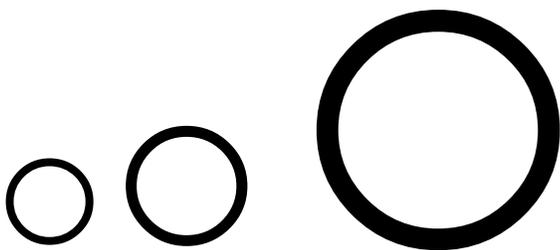
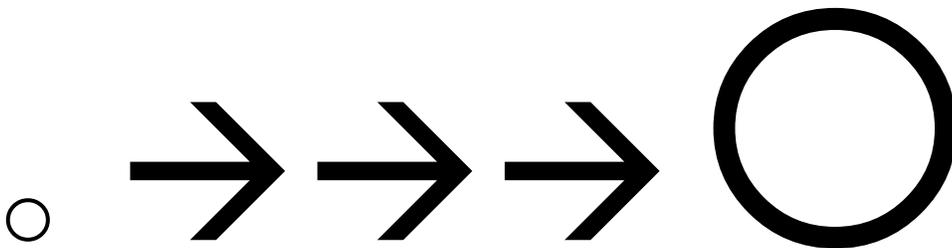
When finished, show the diagram to the rest of the class. Looking at the drawings, what were some of the problems?



Two-Way Communication

Instructions: Study the shapes below. Facing the group, the leader should now direct participants in how they are to draw the figures. Begin with the smallest circle and describe the objects that follow counter clockwise, taking note of the particular relationship of each object to the preceding one. Answer all questions from participants and repeat if necessary.

When finished, show the diagram to the rest of the class. Looking at the drawings, did they improve from the last time?



Anger Management

Situation 1: A friend tells you that your girlfriend/boyfriend is cheating on you. How would you handle this situation?

- How would you react?
- Would you confront your girlfriend/boyfriend immediately?
- Would you speak with your girlfriend/ boyfriend when you feel you won't get into a fight?
- Would you confront the other person with whom your girlfriend/boyfriend is presumably cheating with?
- Would you stop talking to your girlfriend/boyfriend with further explanations?
- Would you get into a fight with your friend for talking about your girlfriend/boyfriend?

Situation 2: You find that your "best friend" is talking behind your back. What do you do?

- Would you confront your friend immediately?
- How would you talk to your friend to avoid getting in a fight?
- Would you stop talking to your friend and disregard the friendship?

Situation 3: How would you handle put downs or bad teasing from peers?

- Would you answer back in the same way?
- Would you stay quiet?
- Would you tell them to stop talking like that?
- Would you fight with the people bothering you?

Handout 4.4

The Miracle Workers

The following group of miracle workers have gotten together and graciously decided to provide four of the following services to you. Whichever services you select, you are guaranteed to be 100 percent satisfied with them. It is up to you to select the four authorities whose services you most desire.

- Mr. Roberto Clemente—A famous athlete, he can make you an outstanding athlete in any one sport that you choose. If you select a well-paying sport, you will be guaranteed fame and fortune.
- Dr. Antonia Pantoja—A well known social worker and visionary leader, she will train you to become a highly competent social worker, and you will gain a national reputation for your outstanding work.
- Joshua Methuselah—Guarantees you a long life (beyond the age of 300) with the aging process slowed way down. For example, at age 100 you will look and feel like 25.
- Dr. Nancy Alvarez—An expert in sexuality, he will guarantee you a perfectly happy sexual life. Every day or two, or as often as you wish, you will be in sexual heaven, without criticisms, without hassles, and without fear of venereal disease.
- Ms. Opera Whinefield—Guarantees you a happy family life, both with your parents and your children.
- Mr. Edward Olmos—Guarantees you a famous film career. You will win an Academy Award and will also have a long-term series on television.
- Dr. John Kennedy—Guarantees that you will become the president of the United States. Although you will have some political hassles, you will go down in history as being recognized as one of our best presidents.
- Dr. Antonia Novello—A former US. surgeon general will guarantee you that she will promote public healthy and healthy communities. You can have the weight, height, color and kind of hair, and physical appearance that you want.
- Mr. Mario Molina—A famous scientist, he will guarantee you a well rounded education on atmospheric chemistry.
- Mr. Bill Gates—A billionaire will give you the skills to earn fantastic sums of money. You will become one of the richest people in the world.
- Dr. Gullermo Olivo- A famous psychiatrist, poet and writer will guarantee you freedom from emotional problems and a positive self-concept.