

**Community Building Through
Communication:
5 Steps to Resolving Conflict**



Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center



**The Key to Being a
Facilitative Leader is...**

***BEING AN ACTIVE
LISTENER***

Active Listening is a way of responding to the speaker which shows that person you are really trying to understand what they are saying, feeling, and doing.

Active Listening Guidelines:

- 1) Be *empathetic*. This doesn't mean feeling sorry for the person (that's being sympathetic), it means trying to put yourself in the other person's position to understand what they are saying and how they feel.
- 2) Show your *understanding* by your nonverbal behaviors:
 - Tone of voice
 - Facial expression
 - Eye contact
 - Posture
- 3) Use *Active Listening Techniques* to:
 - Listen for facts and feelings
 - Ask questions if you don't understand
 - Summarize what the speaker is saying
 - Validate what they are saying

Active Listening Techniques

TECHNIQUE	PURPOSE	EXAMPLES
<p>Attend Use open body language.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to demonstrate you are listening using nonverbal behaviors. 2. to be present with the speaker. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on speaker not outside distractions. 2. Maintain eye contact. 3. Use facial expressions.
<p>Summarize Restate facts and reflect the other person's feelings in your own words.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to show you are listening and trying to understand what is being said. 2. to check meaning and your interpretation. 3. to show that you understand how the person feels. 4. help the speaker to evaluate his or her own feelings after hearing them expressed by someone else. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "You are upset because I continues to undermine your efforts on this project?" 2. "You are confused because you received direction to do one thing, but was then told to do an opposite thing. Is that correct?"
<p>Clarify Ask questions, both close-ended and open-ended.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to help get a better understanding of what is being said. 2. to get more information. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "When did this happen?" (closed question) 2. "Tell me more about what happened." (open ended question) 3. "Explain what happened to lead up to that."

Clarify

Clarifying means getting additional information to make sure you understand. To clarify, you ask genuine questions:

Questions to help gather information:

- Can you tell me more about _____?
- Why is this issue important to you?
- What is your experience with this issue?
- What happened next?
- Is there anything you want to add?
- How would you like this to turn out?
- Can you help me better understand your perspective?
- How would you feel if you were me?

Questions to help people narrow the focus and make decisions:

- Where are we at this point?
- What do we need to do next?
- Where do we agree? Where do we disagree?
- What progress have we made?
- What might happen if we don't reach agreement?

Questions for a group:

- What do other people think about this idea?
- Are there any new thoughts about this topic?
- Can you think of any more information we need to fully explore this issue?

Listening Do's and Don'ts

DO	DON'T
Focus attention on the speaker.	Talk about yourself, be critical, or give advice.
Repeat back in your words what you heard.	Only say "mmm" or "ohh" or parrot their words.
Restate important thoughts and feelings.	Forget about the feelings part of what they are saying.
Reflect back so they can hear and understand themselves.	Pretend that you understand. Assume you know it all.
Ask questions if you don't understand or to get more information	Fill in every pause or moment of silence by talking.
Show you are listening with your voice, eyes, and body language.	Be a poor listener with your voice, eyes, and body language.
Summarize main points to keep things moving.	Fix, change, or try to improve what they said.
Stay neutral but be kind.	Take sides.

UNCOVERING NEEDS

Speakers usually present their positions rather than needs. The key to negotiating successfully is asking questions to uncover needs and discover any shared needs.

Position: what you want

Example: *"I do not want to work with Robert on that project."*

Need: why the want is important to you

Example: *"I want to do a good job on this project because I value my contributions to the project and Robert's work style will prevent me from doing that."*

Instructions: In the scenarios below, identify the position and need of each person. List any potential common needs of both people.

Scenario #1

- JOHN: "Why do you keep coming up with these crazy ideas in meetings? They'll never work."
- MARIA: "Why not? Some of the best ideas come when you think outside of the box."
- JOHN: "I don't like that you think you know it all when you are really too new to understand the team and our work."
- MARIA: "PLEASE... You need to get a new job because you've been in this one too long."
- JOHN: "I think you should stop blurting out suggestions and really think before responding. Your outbursts slow us down."
- MARIA: "If you have a problem with me talk with the manager!"

JOHN'S POSITIONS/NEEDS	Common needs	MARIA'S POSITIONS/NEEDS
Positions:		Positions:
Needs:		Needs:

UNCOVERING NEEDS

Scenario #2

TONIA: “Judy, can you carefully file these client folders in alphabetical order after you’ve entered them into the database?”

JUDY: “I do alphabetize them. If they are out of order, it is because someone else doesn’t file them correctly when they remove them.”

TONIA: “I don’t want to argue, I want to be able to properly greet clients by easily finding their files when they arrive for their appointments.”

JUDY: “You always blame me for the files being out of order. Why don’t you ask the rest of the office if they misfiled things?”

TONIA’S POSITIONS/NEEDS?	Common needs?	JUDY’S POSITIONS/NEEDS?
Positions:		Positions:
Needs:		Needs:

Speaking So Others Can Listen

- ❖ Use non-blaming language to engage another person in problem-solving.
- ❖ Describe what you need in the situation. Focus on your feelings and your perspective on what's happening rather than blaming the problem on the other person.
- ❖ Non-blaming language keeps the other person from feeling attacked or accused. It makes it easier for them to hear what you are saying.
- ❖ Avoid using "Poison Words" (see next page).
- ❖ Remember: the goal is to get the other person to work with you to find a solution to the problem.

An **"I" Message** is a way to use non-blaming language. It means you take responsibility for how the person's words or actions are affecting you.

For example:

I feel disrespected
(state your feeling)

when you come late to our meetings
(specific behavior)

because it wastes my time and
(how it affects me or the situation)

I would prefer that you call if you are running late.
(offer a possible alternative)

What do you think? (seek feedback)

Another non-blaming language tool that you can use is called **"I notice and I wonder."**

For example:

"I notice that you have been arriving late to our meetings and...
(your observation without judgement)

I wonder what is going on for you?
(your sincere curiosity without judgement)

Poison Words

Certain words have a tendency to "poison" communication. They can turn conversations into arguments and escalate emotions to unmanageable levels. Poison words are often used when people are angry or frustrated and they can cause people to lose their tempers or become defensive.

Try to avoid using these words and phrases in negotiating with another person. *(These words should be used with caution in any setting, because they tend to generate a reaction that is emotional and often destructive to good communication.)*



Commands

You should...
You shouldn't...
You'd better...
You ought to...
You're supposed to...
You can't...
You will...

Exaggerations

Always...
Never...
Constantly...
Forever...
Everybody...
Nobody...

Comparisons

You're just like...
That's like...
_____ wouldn't...
That's not the way _____ would...

The question

Why??? (try to use "could you explain" or "help me understand")

Ignoring

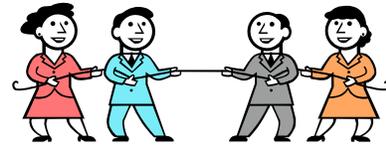
That's irrelevant.
Don't bother...
Whatever...

Other poisons

Shaming
Name-calling
Threatening
Blaming
Assuming

Adapted from: "Catch Them Being Good: Using Positive Reinforcement in ADR Processes", Jimmy Johnson, in BBB Solutions, Council of Better Business Bureaus Publication, January 1995

“Help, I’m Stuck!”



Disputant seems to be repeating the same things over and over...

- **Rephrase and reflect.**
They may not feel heard or understood. Be sure you have restated their point of view, including how they feel. If you can't tell how they feel about the problem, ask them or take a guess.
“So, you felt angry when she cut you off in the meeting.”
“How did it affect you when he told everyone about your personal conversation?”
- **Evaluate timing of the talk.**
The other person may not be ready to negotiate. Check in with them about the discussion.
“How do you think this is going so far?”
“What will happen if we don't resolve this?”

You are concerned because you cannot resolve the issue after going through all of the steps...

- **Validate and thank the other person.**
Explain that you wished to work it out with the person and thank them for listening. You can now do one of two things:
 - Move on with the issue unresolved (usually because the other person has more influence than you in the department). If this is your choice, you can ask the other person to revisit the issue at a later time; or
 - Let the other person know that you will do something else to address the issue, like discussing it with a manager. If this is your choice, make sure to think of how your manager will respond, and remind the manager of how you both respectfully tried to work it out but need assistance.