

## Communication Skills

Communication is essential for all interactions between people. It is a two-way process of sending and receiving signals and information. For communication to work effectively, both sender and receiver need to be aware of and understand the method of communication. However, communication can be both intended and unintended. Communication can fail if sender and receiver interpret messages in different ways, leading to misunderstandings or conflict.

Communication Skills for Facilitators		
Skill	Use of Skill	How to Use
Reflective Listening/Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To diffuse the situation</li> <li>To reflect feelings back to person</li> <li>To show understanding</li> </ul>	Listen to tone of voice. Observe body language. Acknowledge feelings and reflect them back. "You sound disappointed..."
Paraphrasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicates you are listening</li> <li>Lets you check for understanding</li> </ul>	Say back your understanding of what they said, in your own words. "You thought the resident would fall down..."
Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To gather information</li> <li>To focus discussion</li> <li>To expand understanding</li> </ul>	Use open ended questions – beginning with what, how, when, where. "How did the activity surprise you?"
Summarizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To bring important points out</li> <li>To review progress</li> <li>To bring closure to move on</li> </ul>	Restate the main points of the discussion, facts and feelings. "Your main priorities were..."
Validating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To show what people say is important</li> </ul>	Acknowledge issues and feelings as valuable. Appreciate efforts. "Thanks for explaining the impact on the residents..."
Encouraging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To show interest</li> <li>To encourage discussion</li> </ul>	Body language, nodding. Ask probing questions. Avoid agree/disagreeing. "And then what happened?"
Clarifying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure you understand</li> <li>To clear confusion</li> </ul>	Ask questions. Ask if interpretation is on track. "By impacts, you mean..."
(Source: Colma Keating (2003): Facilitation Toolkit, (pp.74-75)		