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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Use of Skill</th>
<th>How to Use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Listening/Feelings</td>
<td>• To diffuse the situation</td>
<td>Listen to tone of voice. Observe body language. Acknowledge feelings and reflect them back. “You sound disappointed…”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• To reflect feelings back to person</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• To show understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing</td>
<td>• Indicates you are listening</td>
<td>Say back your understanding of what they said, in your own words. “You thought the resident would fall down…”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Lets you check for understanding</td>
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<td>Questioning</td>
<td>• To gather information</td>
<td>Use open ended questions – beginning with what, how, when, where. “How did the activity surprise you?”</td>
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<td>• To focus discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• To expand understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summarizing</td>
<td>• To bring important points out</td>
<td>Restate the main points of the discussion, facts and feelings. “Your main priorities were…”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• To review progress</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• To bring closure to move on</td>
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<tr>
<td>Validating</td>
<td>• To show what people say is important</td>
<td>Acknowledge issues and feelings as valuable. Appreciate efforts. “Thanks for explaining the impact on the residents…”</td>
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<td>Encouraging</td>
<td>• To show interest</td>
<td>Body language, nodding. Ask probing questions. Avoid agree/disagreeing. “And then what happened?”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• To encourage discussion</td>
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<td>Clarifying</td>
<td>• To ensure you understand</td>
<td>Ask questions. Ask if interpretation is on track. “By impacts, you mean…”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• To clear confusion</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Colma Keating (2003): Facilitation Toolkit, (pp.74-75))