



## Wellness Tip Sheet

# Open the door to better relationships

Practising effective communication skills in the workplace creates a more positive and encouraging atmosphere. This reduces the stress and frustration that many workers feel, while increasing their productivity and morale.



Social support

“If you just communicate, you can get by. But if you communicate skillfully, you can work miracles.”

– Jim Rohn

### Some basic tips

- Work on how you feel first
- Identify what you want to get across
- Prepare yourself to listen
- Choose the right time
- Build rapport, point out some positives
- State your aim appropriately e.g. “to explore possible solutions to...”
- Ask for feedback as you go
- Summarise what’s happening
- End conversation on a positive note
- Follow up if needed.

### A reminder about assertiveness

People who communicate assertively choose what to think and how to behave in different situations carefully. They usually believe in their rights and they also respect the rights of others.

Try to express your thoughts and feelings appropriately, openly and honestly. Don’t be afraid to ask for what you need – but be mindful of the others person’s position.

People who act passively don’t really believe in their own rights – they think others probably know better. They like to keep the peace and are often worried about sharing how they feel or what they want.

If you feel that you don’t often don’t get your needs met or opinions heard, or you feel ignored or resentful, you may be being passive – it’s worth some reflection.

People who act aggressively place their own rights and needs above those of others. They usually like to be in control and often make decisions for others and are known as bossy or pushy.

If you get often seem to get a negative response when you communicate, or you often think people are way too sensitive, you could seek feedback on your communication style. Just ask a trusted colleague and some friends if you are an aggressive communicator at times.

### Being positive

People generally like communicating with people who are reasonably upbeat and optimistic. Be aware of the kinds of things you tend to talk about. If you talk behind people’s backs negatively or do a lot of complaining people may want to avoid you. Try to put a more positive spin on your conversations, especially casual ones around the office. Leave the heavier discussions for the right times, you will have built rapport so they will be easier.

## Being mindful of “politics” and communicate in a politically savvy way

- Be aware of “who gets what, when and how” around your workplace
- Get involved in the activities through which people make, preserve and amend the rules, where possible support the positive moves at work and downplay the negative
- Be aware of the conditions under which decisions are made in group contexts
- Notice people co-operating to achieve common goals
- Achieve own goals within a group context while helping others to achieve theirs.


## Being honest with yourself

We talk to ourselves more than we talk to anybody else. It's a good idea to check that what we are telling ourselves is actually true. Don't fall into the trap of communicating on the basis of assumptions that are often incorrect.

- If you are unsure about something – ask, don't assume
- Where appropriate be honest about your reactions – this helps people get to know you and builds up strong relationships so communication gets easier
- Draw on your strengths – if you are funny – use that, if you are great at detail build that into your communication (e.g. Back up your argument with stats and examples)
- Try to align your values with what you say and how you behave – it's not easy but it makes life a lot simpler
- Walk the talk.

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