

Interpersonal Communications

Quick Note Sheet



Interpersonal communication is the process by which information, messaging, emotions, and meaning are exchanged between two people through verbal and non-verbal methods. It is face to face communication but it's about much more than what is actually said - it's about body language, facial expressions, hand gestures, the tone of your voice, and other variables that influence the message that you are delivering. It's important to have foundational knowledge of the parts of interpersonal communication and ways we can leverage that knowledge so we may become more effective communicators in our personal and professional lives.

Improve Interpersonal Communication

Practice Active Listening: Be physically present, make and maintain eye contact, be relaxed, and appear attentive. Additionally, active listening requires us to pay close attention, not to allow our mind to be elsewhere, and to keep an open mind.

Use Positive Body Language: Your body language is a direct indicator of your interest. Being an attentive listener means you have open body language.

Do Not Interrupt: There are not many habits that can immediately agitate another person during a conversation quicker than being interrupted. Interruption shows that you are not interested in what the other person is saying. It says that you don't possess the patience to allow them to finish their thought and that whatever it is you have to say is more important than the person with whom you are speaking.

Be Open to Feedback: Solicit feedback from the very people you engage in communication. Ask them for their unfiltered feedback and remain open-minded to receiving and accepting that feedback.

Avoid Conversation Fillers: Many times, we unintentionally add unnecessary conversation fillers such as "um", "uh" or "like" during speech. Unfortunately, we usually don't realize we're doing them. You must work to recognize that they are happening and remove them from your conversations.

Be Respectful and Control Your Emotions: The communication process only works when it works both ways. You may not always see eye-to-eye in every conversation but dialog will fall apart quickly when respect evaporates.

Think Before You Communicate: Taking time to thoughtfully and carefully craft the message is what many refer to as thinking before you speak. Think through the purpose of your message and the desired response. Only when you have thoughtfully and intentionally crafted the message with the best chance of being received as intended should you begin the process of delivering that message.

Practice: Each and every one of the improvement strategies described here can be practiced throughout the day. You communicate thousands of times daily so there is no shortage of opportunities to practice and improve.