

Communication

This learning tool has the goal of helping users to:

1. Understand the skill
2. Reflect on and identify ways they use the skill
3. Participate in activities to build skills

What is communication?

The Office of Skills for Success defines communication as:

Your ability to receive, understand, consider, and share information and ideas through speaking, listening, and interacting with others.

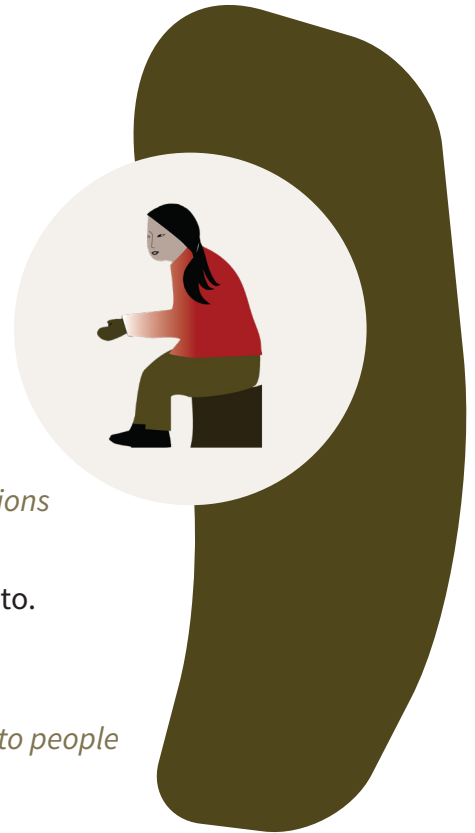


Reflection

There are many tasks that require communication.

Check off the communication tasks that you can confidently complete.

- ☐ Speak in familiar situations, about predictable topics.
For example, discuss plans for a weekend fishing trip with uncles.
- ☐ Share information clearly.
For example, tell your supervisor what time you will be at work.
- ☐ Pay attention when other people are speaking.
For example, actively listening to what is being said and asking questions to confirm your understanding.
- ☐ Adjust your language and tone depending on who you are speaking to.
For example, use basic words when speaking to children.
- ☐ Speak in unfamiliar or unpredictable situations.
For example, respond to questions when giving a group presentation to people you don't know.
- ☐ Speak to large groups of people.
For example, leading a large group tour.
- ☐ Recognize cultural influences on communication style.
For example, in some cultures making eye contact is a sign of respect and a way to indicate that you are actively listening. In other cultures, it is more respectful to avoid direct eye contact.
- ☐ Pay attention to nonverbal communication cues and body language.
For example, if someone steps back when you are speaking you might want to give them more personal space.



Look at the tasks you did not check off. We call these your “skills to build”.

How do you use your communication skills at home and/or at work?

Activity One

Today is your first day working in the kitchen at a restaurant in your community.

You and another community member are being trained by the Kitchen Supervisor.

The Supervisor is describing the restaurant's safety procedures and pointing out the fire exits.



What can you do to show that you are paying attention? *(Select all that apply)*

☐ Position your body to face the Supervisor and/or look at them while they are speaking.

☐ Try not to interrupt the kitchen supervisor while they are speaking.

☐ Nod your head to indicate that you understand what they are saying.

☐ Turn to look at the fire exits as they are pointed out.

☐ Once the kitchen supervisor has finished speaking, ask questions about anything that was unclear.

Activity One: Review

Skills Coach Answer:

All of these actions demonstrate that you are paying attention.

If you didn't select all of the options, that's okay too. Everyone has different communication styles. The options included above are simply some of the most common forms of body language that people use to indicate attention. And there are probably many other ways you could show that you are paying attention in this situation!

The Skills for Success has three levels of complexity, or difficulty, for communication tasks: entry, intermediate, and advanced.

This is an entry-level communication task because it simply requires listening to information, in a small group. You may not need to speak much, but, listening is just as important as speaking when it comes to effective communication.



Activity Two

You are part of a flagging team working on a remote section of highway that is under construction.

During the Site Supervisor's morning safety meeting, a very loud piece of machinery started up.

You heard everything that was said, but you are concerned that some of your co-workers may not have been able to hear the Supervisor clearly.



Who should you speak to about your concerns and what would you say to each person you speak to?



Activity Two: Review

Skills Coach Suggestions:

There are multiple people you could speak with.

1. Your co-workers

- Ask whether they were able to hear what was being said during the meeting.
- If they did not, either tell them what you heard, or suggest that they speak with the Site Supervisor to make sure they know the important details for the day.

2. Site Supervisor

- Let them know that the background noise made it difficult to hear during the safety meeting
- If your co-workers said they missed a lot of the information, suggest that the Site Supervisor call an additional meeting to review the information.

3. The Machinery Operator/Site Supervisor:

- Ask whether heavy machinery can be left off during the safety meetings.



If your answer was different than these suggestions, that doesn't mean it's wrong! A strong answer to this question involves identifying one or more people might have been impacted by the loud noise and asking them questions and/or informing them about the problem.

This is an intermediate-level communication task. It is more complex than the previous task because it involves more people and there are more barriers to understanding. It also involves communicating different things to different people. And, for each person you speak with, their response will inform what you do next.

Importance of Communication skills

Developing communication skills help individuals to build strong relationships with co-workers, friends and community including those from different backgrounds and cultures. The ability to listen, pay attention to and understand others impacts one's capacity to collaborate (teamwork), solve problems and innovate new ways of doing things whether at work or in your daily life. For more information on Communication visit the skill components and proficiency descriptors on the [Skills for Success](#) Website. For more information on the Indigenous Skills for Success Journey Refresh Project please visit the [Douglas College](#) Website.

Continue the Journey

How can you continuously improve your communication skills?
