

MODULE 3B

LIFESKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

HOW TO PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

COMMUNICATION **VERBAL**

GOAL: This module emphasizes the value of good verbal communication. Participants will sharpen their listening skills and learn to make appropriate “I” statements. As a result of this training, there should be an increase in understanding in normal dialogs.

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

- practice skills that increase their ability to be understood and to understand what others are saying
- take responsibility for conveying messages more accurately
- ask for clarification when needed

MATERIALS: Handouts: Verbal Communication, Making “I” statements, Communication Skills

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Basic Rules of Engagement:

- Good speakers do not have to be great orators. They do need to listen. They do not cut others off. They answer questions appropriately.
- Good verbal skills begin with good manners: We say excuse me, thank you, good morning, I'm sorry, see you later, may I, please and thank you.
- Having eye contact, showing interest in what the other person is saying, asking for clarification, and speaking honestly, enhances good verbal skills.
- Good verbal skills are nice to listen to. The voice is not too loud or too low. The words are not spoken too fast. There is no bad attitude in the speech of the speaker.
- Good verbal skills do not require a big vocabulary. Simply getting one's point across in a manner that is easily understood is all it takes.

MAKING “I” STATEMENTS

The use of “I” statements (owning your own thoughts) helps to avoid criticizing or placing blame on others. Taking responsibility for what we understand, even if we are wrong, reduces defensiveness in those we are interacting with. Below are examples of “I” statements. The first statement is less inflammatory than the second statement. Practice making more “I” statements.

Examples:

1. I would like to talk more.
You don't let me talk!
8. I am bothered by your frequent lateness.
You come in here late all of the time!
9. I am concerned about your drinking habits.
You drink too much!
10. I worry that something may happen to you when you stay out late.
You could care less how I feel when you stay out late!
11. I am angry when I feel that you don't care.
You don't care about me!
12. I am disappointed over not receiving that last promotion.
You did not give me the promotion I wanted!
13. I am afraid that I won't be able to please you.
No one will ever be able to please you!

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Possible Topics for Discussion

- Conversation starters
- How to listen attentively
- How to let someone know in a nice way that you're not interested in talking to them.
- How to speak in a calm tone of voice
- How to initiate a conversation with a stranger
- How to ask for help/directions/assistance
- How to keep the conversation going
- How to end a conversation
- How to give constructive criticism or feedback
- How to respond to criticism or negative feedback
- How to disagree respectfully
- How to assert your point of view
- How to voice dissatisfaction
- How to ask the boss for a raise
- How to ask your supervisor for help
- How to discuss dissatisfaction with the job
- How to ask for a change of assignment
- How to politely state that you don't discuss your personal life at work
- How to ask the boss for a vacation
- How to give and receive praise/compliments
- How to invite someone out for coffee, lunch, etc.
- How to say "no"
- How to talk to doctors and other authority figures
- How to talk with your kids
- How to tell someone "thanks," but I am not interested.
- How to ask someone to stop yelling at you
- How to ask for clarification
- How to decline an unwanted offer
- How to discuss uncomfortable topics with others.