



Strengthening Your Communication Skills

Good communication takes constant practice. If you would like to become a more effective communicator in both personal and professional settings, these tips may help:

- **Be polite and kind.** Say please and thank you. Ask how the other person is doing or have a brief chat about a shared interest.
- **Create rapport.** Foster rapport by making eye contact and listening without interrupting. Non-verbal cues, such as nodding or smiling, may also help you to connect with the other person.
- **Mirror the other person's emotions.** Be sensitive to the other person's state of mind and respond appropriately. For instance, if someone is sad or disappointed, reply with an empathetic or soothing response. This will demonstrate that you see them and respect their feelings.
- **Avoid distractions.** Stay off your computer or phone unless you need to reference key information.
- **Provide constructive feedback.** Keep the focus on facts and avoid being judgmental or second-guessing the person's choices. Point out something positive about the process the person followed or the effort that was put into the project.
- **Ask questions.** Open-ended questions will help you elicit information and gain greater understanding and context. This may be especially helpful in stressful situations. When at work, prepare for conversations or meetings by familiarizing yourself with the subject matter and engaging in research when necessary.
- **Request a break (when needed).** If you are too tired to talk about a difficult subject, or if the topic is creating feelings of stress or anger, ask for a pause in the discussion. Consider scheduling time to revisit the topic when you can be better prepared. A break may also be helpful if you need to gather more information or think through options for solving a problem.



If you are nervous or anxious about an upcoming conversation, meeting, or presentation, LifeMatters can help. A LifeMatters counselor can assist with sorting through your concerns and planning for possible outcomes. Call 24/7/365.

1-800-367-7474

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Call collect to **262-574-2509** if outside of North America

Language assistance services in your preferred spoken and written languages are available at no cost by calling 1-800-367-7474.

