

## Communication Skills

### **Sending (“Speaking”)**

**Think, then speak** – Don’t just blurt out the first words that come to mind. Plan what you are going to say. Think it through.

**Use “I” messages** – Express your concerns in terms of yourself. You will be less likely to make others feel angry or defensive.

**Make clear and simple statements** – Be specific and accurate. Stick to the subject. Give others a chance to do the same.

**Be honest with your thoughts and feelings** – Say what you really think and feel, but be polite. Respect the feelings of your listener.

**Use appropriate body language** – Make eye contact. Show that you are involved as a speaker. Beware of gestures, especially when speaking with people of different cultural backgrounds. Some gestures, such as pointing, are considered rude in certain cultures.

### **Receiving (“Listening”)**

**Listen actively** – Recognize the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is just being aware of sound. Listening is paying attention to it. Use your mind as well as your ears.

**Ask questions** – This is another way to show that you are listening. It also helps to clear up anything you don’t understand. It prevents misunderstandings, which are a roadblock to successful communication.

**Mirror thoughts and feelings** – Pay attention to what is being said. Repeat what someone says to show that you understand.

**Use appropriate body language** – Even if you disagree, listen to what the other person had to say. Make eye contact, and don’t turn away.

**Wait your turn** – Don’t interrupt. Let the person finish speaking. You’ll expect the same courtesy when it’s your turn.