

Communication

Aims: To enable young people to be able to communicate effectively

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the session the participants will:

- be able to listen to each other
- communicate effectively using NVC
- be confident about speaking.

Group size: 6 young people

Time: 1hr

Venue: Youth club

Materials:

- Flip chart & pens
- Communication info sheet
- Conversation subject cards
- Chairs

Time	What	Who	With
5 mins	As the group “why do we need to communicate effectively?” Note their responses on the flipchart.	YW	Flipchart
10 mins	What is NVC? Use the following exercise to give an example. Ask all the young people to line up in order of the month of their birth i.e. Jan, Feb, March etc. but they must do this without talking.	Young people	Line up exercise
10 mins	Ask the group if this was difficult and why was that? Discuss NVC and how it can help; being aware of your other tools is very important. Go through examples of different types communication.	YW	info sheet
15 mins	Break the groups into twos; ask them to sit back to back. The first person talks about a subject they are interested in for two minutes while the other one listens, they then swap over and do the same thing. The next part of the exercise is that they come together in a big group and feedback what they have learnt.	YW explains the activity	Chairs back to back
5 mins	Explain the art of listening and not waiting to speak.	YW	
15 mins	Ask young people to again get into pairs and give each pair a card with a subject written on it. Tell them to have a conversation about the subject given to them. Ask the young people to use all the skills that they have learnt in the session.	Young people	Subject cards
	Close session.		

Communication

Non-Verbal Communication

Communication is a complex process involving words, tone of voice and body movements. Albert Mehrabian (Tactics in Social Influence, Prentice Hall, New Jersey 1969) found that when we communicate, the significant factors are:-

7% verbal (words only)

38% vocal (tone of voice, inflection, other sounds)

55% non-verbal (body language)

Does this surprise you?

The verbal channel is used primarily for conveying information. The non-verbal channel is used for negotiating interpersonal messages. In other words it's not only what you say and how you say it, but also the way you stand or sit when you're saying it!

Often non-verbal messages have more impact than the spoken word. When talking with young people it is important to pay attention to the non-verbal signals as well as what is said. A great deal has been written about body language. There are some general points to be aware of:-

- body posture
- Personal space
- touch & physical contact
- facial expressions
- tension & tone of voice
- gestures
- eye contact

To put young people at ease, workers should maintain an open posture- ready to receive ideas. Try to maintain a relaxed manner and friendly tone of voice. By observing the body language in a group, you may be able to decide when it is appropriate to intervene.

Body posture can be used to send all kinds of signals. One posture can have a variety of meanings depending on circumstances; the most sensitive people are those who can interpret both information and emotion through verbal and non-verbal cues. Because we learn to control what we say, we often, sometimes quite deliberately, allow our bodies to convey the real message that we dare not put into words. There are also cultural differences in body language which can create misunderstandings if we aren't careful.

You could try out an exercise with a friend, taking turns to interpret the words and non-verbal messages of the other. Check out how accurate your observations have been.

Another way to check out your own ability to decipher body language is to watch a video with the sound turned off. Note down the body language signals you see and try to interpret them. Finally replay the video with sound and see if you read the situation correctly.

Note down 2 or 3 examples of body language that you would recognise and what you think they mean.

Body Posture

Now try the following exercise. Consider the postures in the figures below. Using the lists given, decide which five attributes fit with each figure and put them in the boxes provided.



Impatient
Shy
Doubtful
Aloof
Resigning

Self Conscious
Angry
Suspicious
Describing
Self-satisfied

Disinterested
Surprise
Casual
Modest
Undecided

Questioning
Arrogant
Sad
Dominating
Ashamed

Types of Communication

Verbal

This includes:

- one-to one conversations
- group chats
- interviews
- phone/video calls

It can also be in the form of a presentation where communication is mostly one way.

Written

This includes:

- emails
- text messages
- letters
- posters

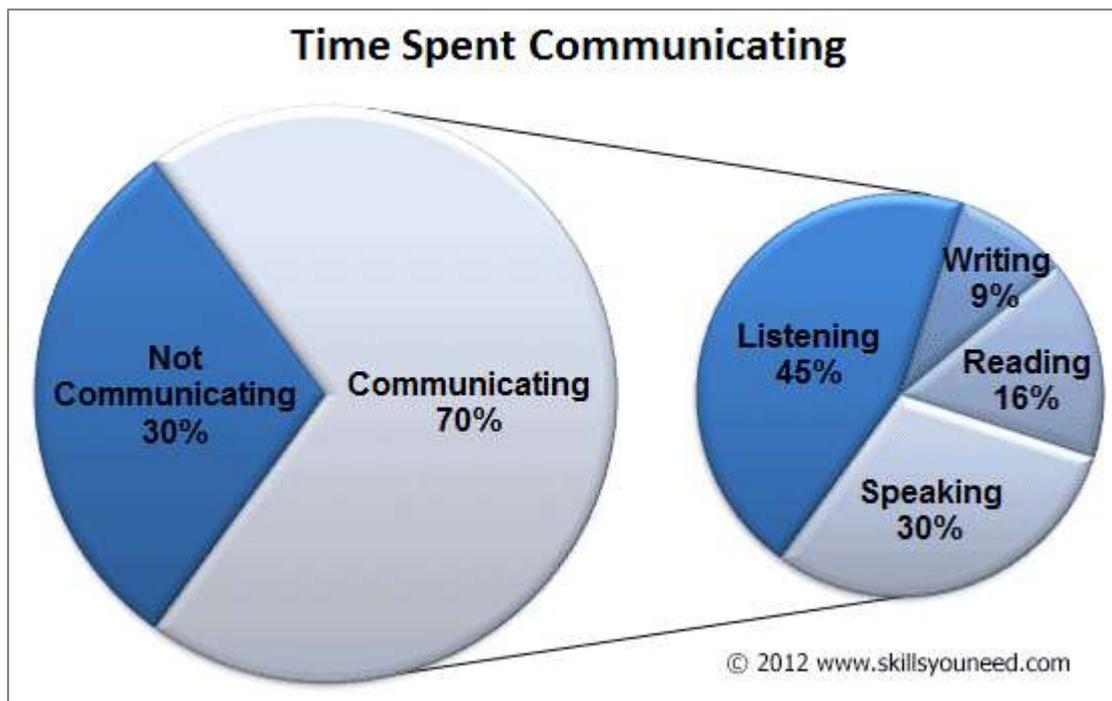
Non-verbal

This includes:

- body language
- facial expressions
- gestures

Listening

We spend a lot of time listening - Adults spend an average of 70% of their time engaged in some sort of communication, of this an average of 45% is spent listening compared to 30% speaking, 16% reading and 9% writing. (Adler, R. et al. 2001).



Based on the research of: Adler, R., Rosenfeld, L. and Proctor, R. (2001)

Interplay: the process of interpersonal communicating (8th edn), Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt.

10 Principles of Listening

1. Stop Talking

“If we were supposed to talk more than we listen, we would have two tongues and one ear.” Mark Twain.

Don't talk, listen. When somebody else is talking listen to what they are saying, do not interrupt, talk over them or finish their sentences for them. Stop, just listen. When the other person has finished talking you may need to clarify to ensure you have received their message accurately.

2. Prepare Yourself to Listen

Relax.

Focus on the speaker. Put other things out of mind. The human mind is easily distracted by other thoughts – what's for lunch, what time do I need to leave to catch my train, is it going to rain – try to put other thoughts out of mind and concentrate on the messages that are being communicated.

3. Put the Speaker at Ease

Help the speaker to feel free to speak.

Remember their needs and concerns. Nod or use other gestures or words to encourage them to continue.

Maintain eye contact but don't stare – show you are listening and understanding what is being said.

4. Remove Distractions

Focus on what is being said.

Don't doodle, play with your phone, look out the window, pick your fingernails or similar. Avoid unnecessary interruptions. These behaviours disrupt the listening process and send messages to the speaker that you are bored or distracted.

5. Empathise

Try to understand the other person's point of view.

Look at issues from their perspective. Let go of preconceived ideas. By having an open mind we can more fully empathise with the speaker. If the speaker says something that you disagree with then wait and construct an argument to counter what is said but keep an open mind to the views and opinions of others.

6. Be Patient

A pause, even a long pause, does not necessarily mean that the speaker has finished.

Be patient and let the speaker continue in their own time, sometimes it takes time to formulate what to say and how to say it. Never interrupt or finish a sentence for someone.



7. Avoid Personal Prejudice

Try to be impartial.

Don't become irritated and don't let the person's habits or mannerisms distract you from what the speaker is really saying. Everybody has a different way of speaking - some people are more nervous or shy than others; some have regional accents or make excessive arm movements; some people like to pace whilst talking - others like to sit still. Focus on what is being said and try to ignore styles of delivery.

8. Listen to the Tone

Volume and tone both add to what someone is saying.

A good speaker will use both volume and tone to their advantage to keep an audience attentive; everybody will use pitch, tone and volume of voice in certain situations – let these help you to understand the emphasis of what is being said.

9. Listen for Ideas – Not Just Words

You need to get the whole picture, not just isolated bits and pieces.

Maybe one of the most difficult aspects of listening is the ability to link together pieces of information to reveal the ideas of others. With proper concentration, letting go of distractions, and focus this becomes easier.

10. Wait and Watch for Non-Verbal Communication

Gestures, facial expressions, and eye-movements can all be important.

We don't just listen with our ears but also with our eyes – watch and pick up the additional information being transmitted via non-verbal communication.

Communication

Conversation Subject Cards

Below are some examples, add some of your own as well.

Baby animals	Football or Rugby?
The best meal I ever ate	Get up early or stay up late?
How would we manage without the internet?	University fees