

Communication Skills

- Asks relevant questions
- After asking a question, maintains an open mind about the response and is not defensive
- Discerns between actual questions and value-laden statements; minimizes the use of statements
- Challenges ideas without intimidating
- Understands the right place and time for a conversation
- Listens carefully for the true intent of a message and weighs it against nonverbal messaging
- Looks for meaningful nonverbal communication
- Shows an interest in others and maintains eye contact
- Looks beyond a speaker's words and is sensitive to his or her emotions and feelings
- Listens to the whole message
- Avoids rambling
- Works on message clarity and delivery
- Relies on facts and evidence
- Checks to see if the audience has heard the board's intended message
- Tries to avoid words that are all-inclusive and overly generalizing (for instance, *all*, *never*, *everybody*, or *always*)
- Speaks with confidence but does not assume he or she is always right
- Relies on expert authority, minimizing feedback
- Uses well-prepared sound bites
- Responds respectfully, choosing words that will not incite or elevate a situation but rather show understanding even when additional information is needed
- Is open to constructive criticism and other ideas, especially if the data are inconclusive