



ELEVATE ADOLESCENCE PROGRAMS

# FACILITATOR *Training*



## EFFECTIVE LISTENING RESOURCE PACKAGE

# EFFECTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

**Purpose:** While active listening techniques (like nodding or repeating back words) help show attention, effective listening is about creating a space where participants feel safe to go deeper. It's where trust grows and meaningful conversations happen.

## 1

### HOLD SPACE WITH INTENTIONAL SILENCE

Silence is more than the absence of talking—it's an invitation.

Why it matters: Pausing shows patience and respect, giving youth time to gather thoughts or feelings without feeling rushed.

Tip: If someone stops speaking, wait a slow count of five. Often, that space allows them to share more.

## 2

### LISTEN WITH YOUR BODY

What you do physically often speaks louder than words.

Why it matters: Open, relaxed posture and warm eye contact signal safety and acceptance.

Try this: Uncross your arms, lean slightly forward, and keep your face soft. Notice how participants respond.

## 3

### USE GENTLE ECHOES AND INVITATIONS

Instead of jumping to solve or advise, mirror back key words or feelings to encourage deeper sharing.

Examples:

- "Sounds like that was hard for you..."
- "You felt left out?"
- "Tell me more about what that was like."

# COMMUNICATION TYPES

**Purpose:** To help facilitators understand the main types of communication and apply practical strategies to strengthen their ability to connect clearly and effectively with participants.

## TYPES OF COMMUNICATIONS:

<i><b>Non-Verbal Communication</b></i>	<i><b>Written Communication</b></i>	<i><b>Visual Communication</b></i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Body language, facial expressions, posture, and gestures.</li><li>• Communicates attitude, emotion, and engagement without words.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Messages conveyed through text—emails, notes, worksheets, and chat messages.</li><li>• Relies on clarity, tone, and correct grammar to avoid misunderstandings.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The use of images, diagrams, symbols, or visual aids to support understanding.</li><li>• Helps explain complex ideas and keeps participants engaged.</li></ul>

## HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

### *Practice Active Listening –*

Focus fully on the speaker, avoid interruptions, and ask clarifying questions.

### *Be Clear and Concise –*

Avoid unnecessary jargon; speak simply and directly.

### *Match Words with Body Language –*

Ensure your tone, expressions, and gestures align with your message.

### *Ask for Feedback –*

Invite others to share how your message came across and adjust accordingly.

### *Adapt to Your Audience –*

Consider the group's age, cultural background, and needs when communicating.

### *Use Visual Support –*

Reinforce verbal messages with images, props, or written key points.

**Facilitator Tip:** *The strongest communicators are also the most adaptable—observe how participants respond and adjust your approach to meet them where they are.*

# IMPROVE VERBAL COMMUNICATION

**Purpose:** To express ideas clearly, confidently, and with intention so your message is understood as you intend. Strong verbal communication helps build trust, foster engagement, and create an inclusive environment where participants feel heard and valued.

## THINK BEFORE YOU TALK.

While it might be tempting to just “start talking,” the best speakers plan out their messages. When you consider your words ahead of time, you’re less likely to say the wrong thing or deliver a confusing message. If you anticipate questions, think through what those questions might be so you can prepare and phrase your message appropriately.

## USE THE RIGHT TONE.

Your tone will reveal a lot about your message—either reinforcing or discrediting your meaning. Whether you’re feeling nervous, angry, sad, excited, or any other emotion, ask yourself if this is something you want your listeners to hear. If not, take a few deep breaths. Control your tone so that you can control your message.

## CHECK IN WITH YOUR LISTENER.

Verbal communication is about listening just as much as it’s about speaking. Once you’ve finished sharing your message, ask your listener if they have questions or feedback. Give them the floor. Consider their responses. Your goal is to make sure your listener understands the message the same way you do.

## SPEAK CLEARLY.

Speaking clearly is about volume, pace, and pronunciation. If you’re too loud, your message may come off as aggressive. If you’re too quiet, your listeners could struggle to hear you. Speak fast enough so that you don’t bore your listener, but also slowly enough so that your audience can process the words. When sharing those words, avoid misinterpretations by pronouncing them fully.

## REMEMBER YOUR AUDIENCE.

Depending on your audience, you’ll need to change how you share your message. Are you speaking with someone who already understands the topic or is new to the material? Does your listener agree with the message, or do you need to convince and persuade them? You should change your vocabulary and information depending on how you answer those questions.

# GROUP COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

**Purpose:** To help facilitators guide group discussions in a way that promotes inclusivity, clarity, and shared understanding, ensuring every voice is heard and valued.

## SETTING EXPECTATIONS

Clearly outline the purpose, process, and goals for the group discussion so everyone knows what to expect.

## USING POSITIVE FRAMING

Phrase instructions and feedback in ways that encourage participation and focus on strengths rather than deficits.

## REDIRECTING WITH CARE

If the conversation drifts or becomes unproductive, bring it back on track in a way that preserves dignity and engagement.

## ENCOURAGING EQUAL PARTICIPATION

Intentionally invite quieter voices to contribute and manage dominant voices to keep balance.

## CLARIFYING AND SUMMARIZING

Restate and confirm key points to ensure understanding before moving forward.

## HANDLING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

**Purpose:** To equip facilitators with example scenarios and language they can adapt to handle sensitive discussions while keeping relationships respectful and youth-centered.

### WHEN EMOTIONS RUN HIGH

"I hear how much you care about your child, and that's exactly why we're talking. Let's take a moment, and when you're ready, we can focus on what's going to help [youth's name] most right now."

### WHEN A FAMILY MINIMIZES A CONCERN

"I understand it may not seem like a big issue right now. What I've seen is [specific example], and I'd like to work together to prevent it from becoming a bigger challenge."

### WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE AN IMMEDIATE ANSWER

"That's a great question, and I want to make sure I give you the right information. Let me look into it and follow up with you by [specific time]."