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.

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.

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.

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.

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.