**What do good communicators do?**

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| **They tend to…** | |
| Treat others how they’d like to be treated | People want to be treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. To show respect for others you might:   * encourage people to express their ideas and opinions * avoid communicating in a way that might be disparaging of individuals or groups and their points of view * offer praise when deserved and not be overly critical. |
| Recognise preferred forms of communication | People in different fields and professions may prefer particular channels and styles of communication. Connect with people in a way that they understand and are comfortable with. For instance, some people or audiences may:   * prefer written information, whilst others electronic or face-to-face interaction * be interested in the detail, the validity of your ideas, whilst others might care more about concepts and possibilities. |
| Think before speaking | Think about your message before rushing to communicate. It’s good practice to ensure that your messaging is:   * accurate * appropriate * effective * necessary * timely. |
| Listen before talking or typing | Take time to listen, read about, and reflect on what others might think about issues. This will help you connect and have relevance. When listening, try to:   * give the person speaking your focused attention * confirm your understanding by rephrasing key points * avoid unnecessarily interrupting * be conscious of, and use appropriate body language that helps build rapport. |
| Ask questions to better understand | Show interest in what other people have to say. Ask relevant questions and participate in conversations.  Asking open questions is more likely to elicit information, while asking closed questions tend to result in short, or single word answers.  Consider using *(“What do you think of…?”, “How could we…?”, “When should we …?”)* |

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| Be aware of nonverbal behaviour | Your tone of voice, appearance, posture, gestures, facial expressions, and the distance you put between yourself and others all influence how you’re perceived, and the impact of your communication.  For instance, lack of eye contact may be perceived as boredom, discomfort or embarrassment. Slouching when talking or listening to someone may be interpreted as disinterest. |
| Be professional in handling differing points of view | Both within and outside of academia, it’s not unusual for people to have differing points of view. If you’re faced with differing points of view when presenting, try to:   * clarity your understanding of the other person’s view or opinion * acknowledge that you value the other person as an individual despite differing opinions * clearly state your opinion or position. |
| Be open to new ideas or contributions | It’s impossible for any one person to know everything about a particular field or subject. In approaching how and what you communicate, be open to new ideas, different perspectives and fresh insights. Doing so may help you:   * further develop your ideas and thinking * communicate in a more compelling, insightful way * refine and clarify your own position * be viewed as someone who’s collaborative, and interested in others. |
| Not commit to things they don’t want to, or can’t do | Good communicators learn to:   * ask themselves if they can imagine actually doing what they’re about to commit to * question how long things might take to complete * break down complex, large projects into smaller chunks that may be easier to communicate. |
| Recognise that emotions may be at play | People’s emotions can dramatically influence how they perceive and respond to what’s been communicated. In the words of David Goleman, a thought leader on emotional intelligence:  *“If your emotional abilities aren't in hand, if you don't have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can't have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far.”*  Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to effectively manage ourselves and our relationships, and has been found to consist of four fundamental capabilities:   * self-awareness * self-management * social awareness * social skill.   The topic of emotional intelligence is discussed more in the online ‘Unleash your Leadership’ course for graduate students. |