Communicating with Style

Brought to you by the Counselling Service

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Training Outcomes

• How to use your own personal style to talk your way out of trouble
• Developing communication strategies for dealing with difficult people
• Why some people love, and others, hate, the way you talk.
• Getting what you want out of life and work without generating anger and resentment.
THE NOBLE

• A “tell it like it is” type of communicator
• Direct, straightforward, openly expresses opinions
• Avoids lengthy discussions involving details
• Prefers categorical, either/or statements
THE NOBLE’S FINE ATTRIBUTES

- **Assertiveness** accomplishes goals while taking needs of the other into consideration
- **Organization** can organize and summarize thoughts and ideas in oral and written communication
- **Focus** can cut through garbage and get to central issue
- **Credibility** speaks with confidence and authority
- **Animation** energetic and entertaining speaker with rapid and concise use of words
- **Leadership** dynamic style and desire to make quick decisions help project a leadership image
THE NOBLE’S POTENTIAL PITFALLS

- **Aggressiveness**: can go from assertive to aggressive and win through intimidation
- **Inattentiveness**: doesn’t pay attention to details or the person who is speaking
- **Absoluteness**: extremists don’t see the gray
- **Intolerance**: of differing styles of communication, expect everyone to be direct and totally honest.
THE SOCRATIC

• ENJOYS TALKING!
• Has an affinity for words, and a love of detail
• Tends to analyse everything, and will readily engage in discussion, debate, negotiation
• May use persuasive message techniques, yet resist the persuasive efforts of others
THE SOCRATIC’S FINE ATTRIBUTES

• **Rhetorical sophistication**: an influential public speaker, with a well-developed vocabulary

• **Persuasiveness**: ability to reduce hostility and guide behaviour with the use of words

• **Analysis**: can be successful problem solvers, as able to see issues from many perspectives

• **Thoroughness**: attention to detail allows for polished final product

• **Credibility**: speaks with confidence and from a base of knowledge

• **Illustration**: ability to paint visual images with words. Can use anecdotal stories and hypothetical examples to help the other person ‘see’ the point vividly
THE SOCRATIC’S POTENTIAL PITFALLS

- **Rigidity**: tendency to be so sure of their own rightness that they become inflexible, refusing to give up until the other person “admits” that the Socratic is right.

- **Verbosity**: long-winded expression can lead to information overload.

- **Arrogance**: can lecture the other person and speak in a patronizing voice

- **Rudeness**: have a tendency to interrupt or talk over the other person

- **Dogmatism**: may try to control and direct the other person as they feel it is their duty to get the other person “to see the light”.

THE REFLECTIVE

• Believes primary purpose of Communication is maintaining / advancing personal relationships
• So is deeply concerned with the **human feelings** in an interaction
• Tends to use empathic responses; self-disclosure; qualifiers [to reduce hostility]
THE REFLECTIVE’S FINE ATTRIBUTES

• **Accuracy**: Active listening techniques encourage others to provide honest information.

• **Patience**: Think before they act, hearing the other person out and avoid making a premature decision.

• **Supportiveness**: Have the ability to make the other person feel good about themselves and reduce defensive behaviour.

• **Openness**: Create an open & safe communication environment.

• **Conciliation**: Ability to help other people to solve their own problems, AND MAY SERVE TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS.

• **Empathy**: Have the ability to tune in to the needs of the other.
THE REFLECTIVE’S POTENTIAL PITFALLS

• **Passiveness:** Can back away from controversial issues, not saying what they think. May lose out on career opportunities and be seen as weak.

• **Vulnerability:** easily verbally attacked due to non-assertiveness, and they will back down.

• **Indecisiveness:** overly concerned with personal feelings and pleasant communication leading to indecisiveness

• **Noncredibility:** may not be viewed as credible communicators because of soft-spoken, non-committal style; a tendency to say what other person wants rather than what they really feel, this can be seen as dishonesty or deviousness
Exercise

You are manager of the creative team in a smallish but successful clothing company. You know that hoodies are the up-and–coming thing, and your team has a new concept: the hoodie with faux fur lining in the hood. Today you must present the concept, with details of manufacture and distribution costs, to 2 senior managers.

**IN GROUPS OF THREE………**

- Present your case for the new-concept hoodie to the 2 managers
- The managers observe closely the speaker’s communication style

**NOW DISCUSS IN YOUR GROUP….**

- Is the speaker’s predominant style noble / socratic / reflective?
- How can you tell?
- How was it for you to listen to the speaker?

**FINALLY…..**

- How would you [the 2 managers] have communicated the presentation differently?
- Is there one communication style that is “better” in this situation?
- Now share with each other the results of the questionnaire you completed. Learn something about yourself….?
Steps to Managing Communication Style

• Understand your own dominant style & its strengths and weaknesses.
• Identify the other person’s dominant style and the corresponding strengths and weaknesses.
• Use these styles of communication to deal with those expectations and accomplish your goals.
• Develop new expectations through adaptive and tolerant communication.
Working with the Noble

- Be direct and simple
- Be concise and orderly
- State your purpose or conclusion first
- Identify you main points and ask if they would like additional information
- Don’t be offended or intimidated
- Tell the Noble if he or she has done or said something that bothers you
- If you want the Noble to do something, give two alternatives from which to choose.
Working with the Socratic

- Allow the Socratic to talk without intolerance
- Don’t complete his or her sentences
- Force yourself to listen and be attentive
- Don’t clean your desk or file papers while they speak
- Provide additional information and detail your responses
- Don’t say “just because” or “because I said so”
- Ask if they need any additional information
- Don’t say: “I already explained that”
- Plan for the interaction to take longer than you think
- Don’t use absolute statements
Working with the Reflective

- Establish a positive interpersonal climate
- Be patient, and don’t put words in their mouth
- Avoid absolute or final statements
- Ask open-ended questions like, “how do you feel about this issue?”
- Force yourself to listen and be attentive
- Control your nonverbal facial gestures
- Plan for the interaction to take more time than you think