



Module II: Effective Communication Techniques & Overcoming Fear and Guilt

1. Difference between assertive, passive, and aggressive communication

- Assertive – the ability to express yourself honestly and openly while respecting and valuing the opinions of others. Clear honest statements about your beliefs, needs, emotions without being aggressive or passive.
- Passive – avoiding saying what you think and feel. Often ignoring your needs and not standing up for yourself.
 - a. Excessively apologetic
 - b. Relying on others for decisions
- Aggressive – Expresses your beliefs, needs and emotions without regard for others often using confrontational or hostile language to control or dominate.
- Passive Aggressive - Using subtext (sarcasm or changing tone of voice or body language)
 - a. Conveying displeasure without saying it out loud, using tone of voice, offensive comments or behaviors instead.
 - b. Techniques of denial, distortion, cruelty and silence.

2. Techniques for assertive communication (tone, body language, clarity)

- Use “I” statements when describing your beliefs and feelings
- Stick to facts during disagreements
- Be aware of your body language and tone
- Learn to say no
- Maintain a calm tone and strong eye contact
- Prioritize respect for self and others
- Be honest, avoid judgement, focus on your feelings.

Reflection: Choose 1 of the above techniques to practice with your breakout buddy.

3. Slowing down communication

Actions and phrases that can help are:

- a. Begin to speak more slowly - This slows down the communication
 - If needed, follow up with “I need to slow down this communication so I can think about what I’m saying.”
- b. Breathe! Intentionally breathing helps you slow down, AND the other person can hear/sense you are breathing so they likely will breathe and slow down as well.
- c. “I’m feeling emotionally flooded. Let’s come back to this in 10 minutes.”
- d. “I’m noticing _____ is going on for me. What is going on for you?”
- e. “Can we have a do-over?”
- f. “What I heard you say is _____. Is that accurate?”
- g. “I’m happy to listen to you when I’m finished speaking.”
- h. Talking stick
- i. If they talk over you.....”You asked me a question, “Do you really want to hear my answer?”

Reflection: Choose 1 of the above techniques to practice with your breakout buddy.

4. Handling Difficult Conversations

BIFF Communication

Brief _____

Informative _____

Friendly _____

Firm _____

5. Dealing with anger or other emotions

Yours - when you react = it’s your work to clear

We often under respond

Theirs

6. Tips for Good Listening techniques

- b. Be fully present in the conversation
- c. Show interest by practicing good eye contact
- d. Notice (and use) non-verbal cues
- e. Ask open-ended questions to encourage further discussion

- f. Paraphrase and reflect what has been said
- g. Listen to understand rather than to respond
- h. Withhold judgement and advice
- i. Halt whatever you are doing and offer your full attention.

7. Dealing with pushback and resistance from others. What if they say no to your boundary?

Reassess the importance of the relationship

1. What's the value of the relationship to:
 - You
 - Them
2. What part of your boundary doesn't work for them?
 - Inquire and get more information
 - Enter negotiations if you feel there is value in the relationship

8. Recognizing Fear and Guilt

Sources of fear and guilt in boundary setting

- From other people – parents, caregivers, teachers, friends, social media, etc.
- Being raised by difficult people, controlling people or just assuming it was accurate because it's what you saw as a child.
- Childhood trauma

How fear and guilt can manifest in behavior

Fear

- Avoidance
- Perfectionism
- Overthinking
- Control

Guilt

- Apologizing excessively
- Self-criticism
- People pleasing
- Self-Sabotage

The impact of fear and guilt on decision-making

- Paralysis by analysis
- Avoidant decision-making
- Decision-making based on others' expectations
- Risk aversion
- Self-doubt
- _____
- _____
- _____

9. Techniques to overcome fear

- a. Mindfulness and stress management techniques like square breathing
- b. Gradual exposure to boundary-setting situations
- c. Cognitive-behavioral strategies to reframe thoughts
- d. Building resilience through small achievable goals

10. Techniques to overcome guilt

- a. Self-Compassion
- b. Reframing past actions
- c. Boundary setting
- d. Making amends if guilt stems from past actions

Awareness:

- What types of communication do you use
- Practice assertive communication
- Experiment with slowing down communication
- Practice BIFF Communication
- Practice Listening techniques
- Look at the importance of your relationships
- Notice where you have fear or guilt setting boundaries