

Communication Guidelines

Ten guidelines for making conversations with emotional charge productive

Speak for yourself

Avoid making statements like “I am sure we would all agree.” Inevitably there will be someone who does not agree with you who will be offended by your assumption.

Do not interrupt

Allow people to fully share their perspectives by not interrupting.

Be concise

Be mindful to express your opinion, interest, or position in a manner that is clear and concise. Saying too much without coming to a point can harm people’s ability to listen to you.

Really listen

Listen completely to what is being said. Listening is compromised when you are mentally focused on your rebuttal instead of the speaker’s comments.

Acknowledge what has been said

Letting a person know you understand their perspective, does not mean that you agree. It is simply a sign of respect-not a show of agreement.

Agree where you can

Highlighting the areas in which you do agree makes the places where you differ less difficult.

Be courteous

Avoid labels like “that is stupid” or “he’s an idiot.” These types of labels of person or position inflame emotion and conflict and reduce productivity.

Give and receive olive branches

Admit your mistakes or misunderstandings and outwardly acknowledge such admissions from others.

Keep an open mind

Conversations about topics where people have differing opinions and positions have the greatest possibility of teaching something new. Allow yourself to be open to the possibility that your perspective may change through participation.

Express gratitude and growth

Share the ways your connection with others helps you feel grateful and grow in your life.