

Communication Rules

1. **Both parties state their problem.** Each must clearly define his/her position and interest.
2. **Let them talk while you listen.** Use active listening skills to gain understanding of the situation.
3. **Ask clarifying questions.** Get specifics and make sure you have the full picture.
4. **Stay in the present and the future, not the past.** This will help you to avoid generalizations.
5. **Stick to the topic at hand.** Pulling in other issues will only escalate the conflict.
6. **Look for areas of agreement.** Identify common ground.
7. **If the discussion escalates, withdraw, but not before scheduling the next discussion.** Recommend a “cooling off” period for a specified amount of time.
8. **Use mutual restating.** Paraphrase what the other is saying.
9. **All requests for change should be stated in behavioral terms.** Resist personal attacks by using “action” words.
10. **Body language rules.** Make certain non-verbal communication matches verbal statements.