



# Communicating in Different Situations: Part II



## Consider the method of our communication

Each method of communication has advantages and disadvantages. If we are able to choose, pick the method that would be most effective for our audience. Otherwise, work within its existing structure.

- During meetings, participate by sharing ideas, but also take the time to listen. Do not monopolize the discussion.
- When engaging on social media, we can be more relaxed. Communication often occurs in one or two sentence segments. Be casual, but concise.
- Email and text messaging require a conscious choice of words. Be direct. Express tone through our words or the use of emoticons (smiley faces).

## Watch our words

Be intentional with the language we use. Words can help us quickly connect with someone, but they may also offend them.

- Choose words based on the age, education, and literacy level of the person(s) we are talking with. Use words they understand and can connect with.
- Use technical words only if we are communicating with people who know what they mean. If we must use jargon, take the time to explain what it means.

## Be intentional with our body language

Body language can be interpreted differently in different situations. Adapt our nonverbal communication to the situation at hand.

- Eye contact is generally a good way to connect with the person we are talking with. However, if it is an extremely sensitive situation, sitting side-by-side with someone can remove the pressure of having to look someone in the eyes and thus make the other person more comfortable.
- Personal space varies both by culture, by individual, and by relationship. With our significant other, we may sit close enough that our legs or shoulders are touching. However, when we sit near a supervisor/supervisee or complete stranger, we want to leave some distance between us.

## Pay attention to the other person's feedback

Some people may offer verbal feedback by asking questions. We can also watch their nonverbal communication -- crossing their arms, looking away, yawning, nodding -- to see how they are responding to what we are saying.

- If they seem nervous, make sure we are in a place where they feel comfortable. Engage them in small talk to help them calm down. Ask questions to get to know them better.
- If they seem confused, explain it again in different words. Ask them what part confuses them. Find visuals, metaphors, or illustrations to demonstrate our point clearly.
- If they seem upset, listen to them and try to understand why. Wait to voice our own thoughts or attempt to persuade them differently.

\*\*\*\*\**Communication is Key to Building any Relationship*\*\*\*\*\*

*If you are interested in receiving more information on communication or other relevant and useful information, remember that MyEAP is here to help. Contact us at [eap@familiesinaction.net](mailto:eap@familiesinaction.net)*