Effective communication Skills
Soft Skills Training

MESSAGE

S → R

FEEDBACK

Sender   Reciever

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Disclaimer

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Course overview and purpose

Course description

The communication course

Communication is a soft skill essential for succeeding personally, socially, and professionally. Communications skills are used in every interpersonal interaction and effective communication leads to honest and successful relationships. Sending and receiving messages is not as easy as it sounds as barriers may block the transmission of the message and misinterpretations may occur. Learning about the basics about communication such as its process, purpose and principles gives you the foundation for building your communication skills and sub-skills. Identifying the appropriate channel to convey information or recognizing the barriers that disrupt a conversation helps in improve your communications. Finally, learning how to interpret non-verbal cues and how to correctly use verbal ones is very important as discussions take place everywhere, all the time. Learning how to communicate effectively is a tool that benefits you in every aspect of your life.

Course structure:

The structure of the course contains five modules; What is communication, Channels and Barriers of Communication, Purpose and Principle of Communication, Communication sub-skills, Tips and Advice for a good communicator.

Course purpose:

The purpose of the course is to enable trainees to develop strong communication skills.

Target audience:

The target audience of this course is are boys and girls (16-19 years old) who have not developed their communication skills yet and are intended to become seafarers.

1.2. Statement of the training methodology

Training methodology: The training will include a combination of theoretical lessons, practical exercises, and questionnaires to measure the level of understanding.

Teaching medium: The course documentation is written in English.

Certificate: In order to be awarded a certificate of completion for this course, the student will be required to pass the online assessment comprising of thirty multiple choice questions.

1.3. Course aims, objectives and competencies

Learning goals

Trainees will be able to:

- To understand the process and types of communication

- To choose between communication channels in regards to the intended message

- To gain knowledge about communication barriers as well as to identify barriers in his/her own communications

- To identify the purpose of communication in his/her own life

- To get familiar with the principles of communication and identify if they are followed in his/her own communications

- To learn how to be an active listener

- To interpret non-verbal cues derived from body language

- To show the appropriate behaviors when communicating

- To learn and practice effective communication skills

Learning Goals	Topics	Instructional strategy/Activity	Assessment
To understand the process and types of communication	Definition and process of communication Types of communication	Textbook Lecture Discussion	Multiple-choice questions
To choose between communication channels in regards to the intended message	Communication channels	Textbook Lecture Discussion	Multiple-choice questions

|			
To gain knowledge about communication barriers as well as to identify barriers in his/her own communications	Communication barriers	Textbook Lecture Practical exercise: The ship sailed	Multiple-choice questions
To identify the purpose of communication in his/her own life	Purpose of communication	Textbook Lecture Practical exercise: What does it mean?	Multiple-choice questions
To get familiar with the principles of communication and identify if they are followed in his/her own communications	Principles of communication	Textbook Lecture Practical exercise: What does it mean?	Multiple-choice questions
To learn how to be an active listener	Communication sub-skills Active listening	Textbook Lecture Practical exercise: Back to back	Multiple-choice questions
To interpret nonverbal cues derived from body language	Communication sub-skills Non-verbal cues	Textbook Lecture Practical exercises: Guess the emotion, Back to Back	Multiple-choice questions
To show the appropriate behaviors when communicating	Communication sub-skills	Textbook Lecture Practical exercise: Putting emphasis	Multiple-choice questions
To learn and practice effective communication skills	Tips and advice	Textbook Lectures All practical exercises	Multiple-choice questions

2. Training modules

2.1. Module 1 – What is communication

By the completion of this module the trainee should be able to:

- To understand the process of communication
- To gain knowledge about two communication models and their weaknesses
- To learn to identify the different types of communication

1.1 Definition

Communication is the ability of humans to share their opinions, ideas, information, and emotions to each other. It is the process of sending and receiving information and messages either in face-to-face interaction or electronically. Through communication interpersonal relationships with colleagues, friends or family members are established and modified.
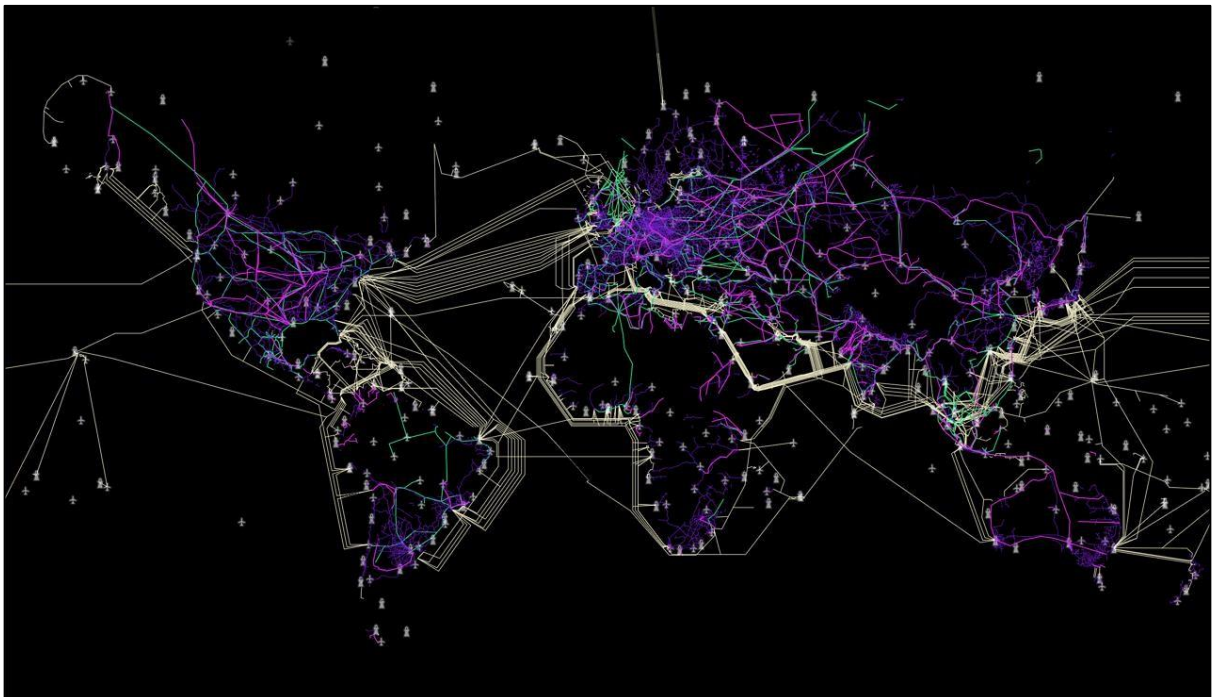
**Picture 1.** Connectivity Atlas: All human made transportation, communication, and energy infrastructure

1.2 Process of communication

There are several elements included in the communication process. First, there is the sender who forms a verbal or non-verbal message. This message could be an idea, a thought, an opinion, or a feeling. The message is transmitted through a medium (channel) to the receiver.

Communication channels can be face-to-face conversations, phone calls, email, social media, etc. The receiver who gets the message gives meaning to it, and he/she provides feedback to it. During the communication process barriers may be encountered such as noise, distance, language, etc.
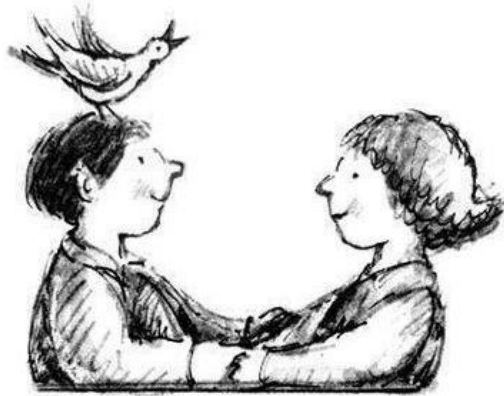
People

Some people talk and talk
and never say a thing.
Some people look at you
and birds begin to sing.

Some people laugh and laugh
and yet you want to cry.
Some people touch your hand
and music fills the sky.

Charlotte Zolotow

Picture 2.

1.3 Communication models

The basic flow of communication is depicted in the diagram below (Picture 3) showing that the sender has an idea which is transmitted as an encoded message to the receiver who is asked to decode the message and give meaning to it. Then, the sender and the receiver share feedback on the communication process. The models of communication are important because they show how communication works from the sending of the message to its interpretation and understanding.
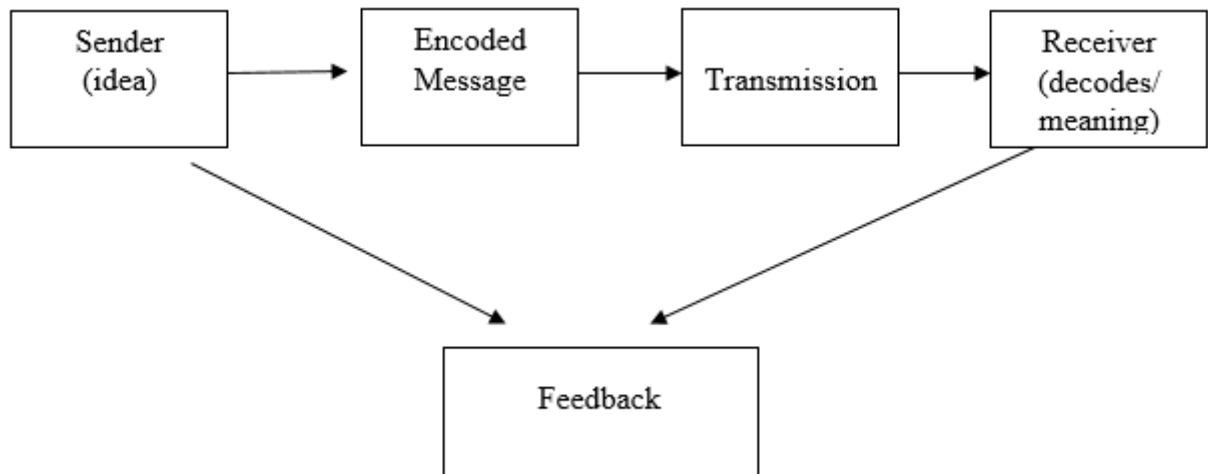
Picture 3. The flow of communication

Shannon Weaver model of Communication

Shannon Weaver model of communication was introduced in 1948 by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, and is considered a foundation for most of the communication models that were created afterwards. In this model the information source refers to the sender who sends the encoded message through a technological channel. The transmitter is the encoder or machine which converts the message into signals. The channel is the medium that is used to send the message. The receiver receives the message and is asked to decode it, understand its meaning and to give feedback to the sender. Between the encoded and decoded message there is noise which means the physical barriers that may be encountered while the message is being transmitted. Noise can affect the message in a way that it does not reach the receiver in its intended form. The model is shown in Picture 4.
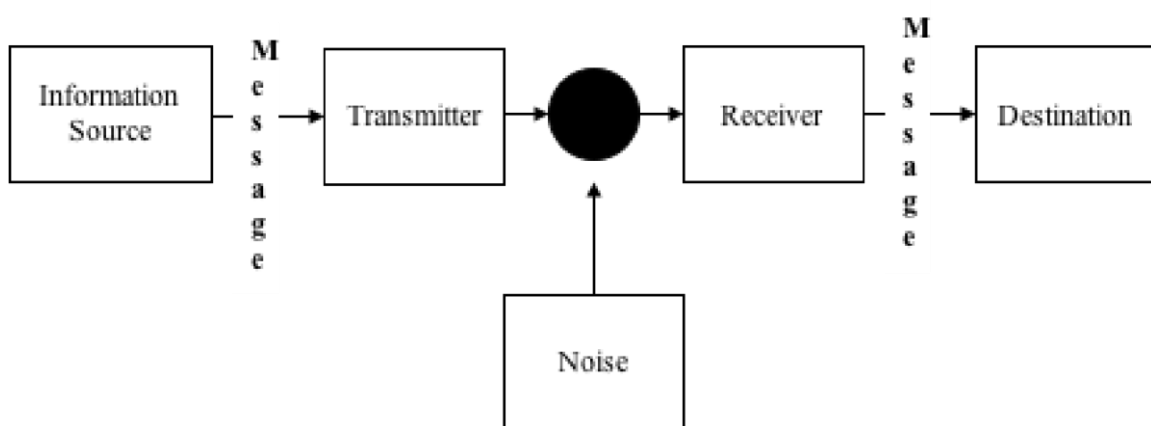
Picture 4. Shannon Weaver model of Communication

Criticism

• More applicable to interpersonal than group or mass communication

• Receiver plays a passive role while the primary role is played by the sender who sends all the messages

• Messages sent by the sender appear more important than feedback.

Berlo's SMCR model of Communication

David Berlo created his Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver (SMCR) model in 1960 influenced by Shannon Weaver model of communication which was previously discussed. It is a revised version which focuses on the factors that affect the individual components of communication. The model is shown in Picture 5. This model has four components, sender, message, channels, and receiver and each one of those has each own sub-contents. This model focuses on the encoding that takes place before the sender sends the message and on the decoding before the receiver receives it. This model supports that in order for the message to be appropriately encoded and decoded both the sender and the receiver should have great communication skills. Otherwise misunderstandings and misinterpretations may occur.
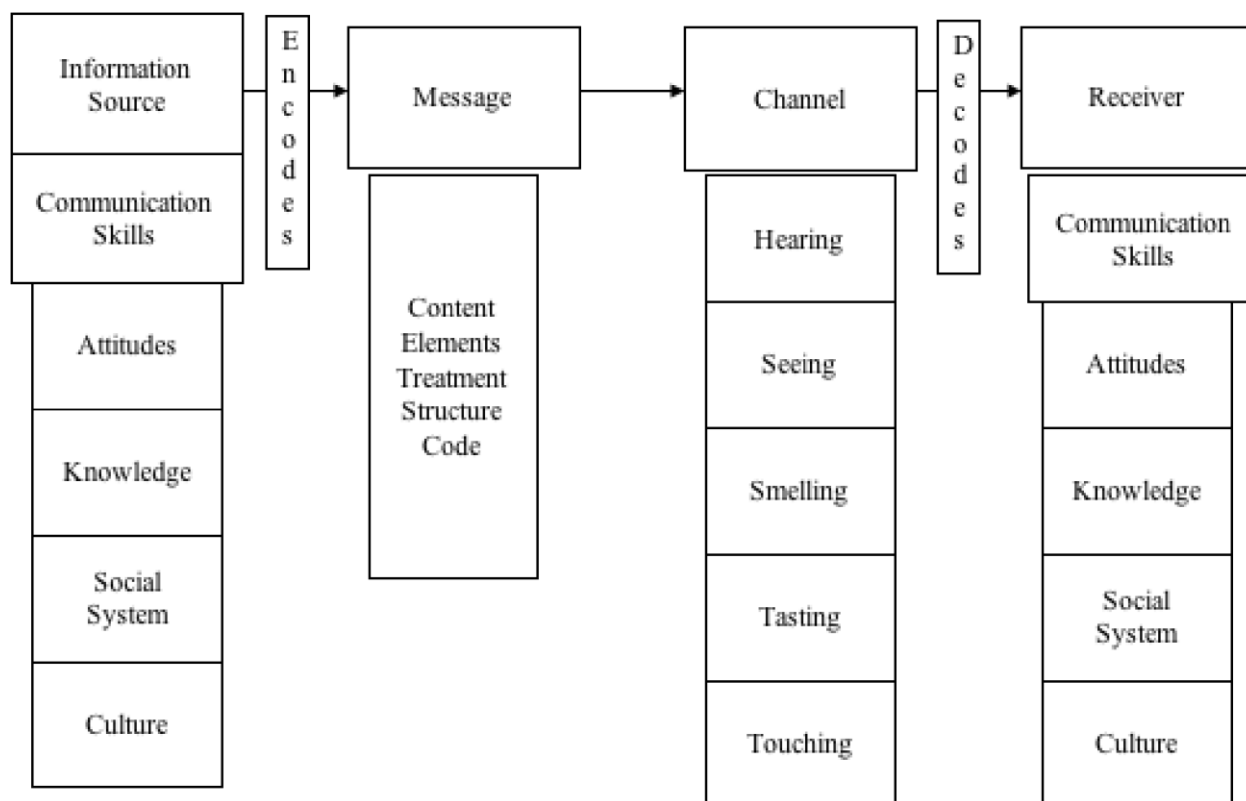
Picture 5. SMCR model of Communication

Criticism

• Feedback does not exist as a concept so it is not taken into account.

• There is no concept of noise or communication barriers

• Both the sender and the receiver must carry the same characteristics in order for successful communication to occur.

Picture 6. Communication in World War II

1.4 Types of communication

There are two types of communication; verbal communication and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication includes the use of words in either oral or written form. Oral communication is the spoken word and takes place through discussions, conversations, video conferences etc. Oral communication is a fast and easy way to share thoughts and ideas. The effectiveness of oral communication depends both on the verbal skills of person such as clarity of speech, voice volume, tone, choice of words, and on nonverbal communication such as body language.

Another form of verbal communication is the written form. Written communication is conveyed through written symbols such as language. It takes place in the use of letters, emails, text messages, documents etc. The effectiveness of written communication also depends on verbal skills such as the writing style, grammar, vocabulary etc.

The other type of communication is non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication includes the body language that we use which also conveys messages. The bodily movements such as gestures, smiling, and especially eye-contact reveal the feelings and give context to the words spoken.

Picture 7.

2.2   Module 2 – Channels and Barriers of Communication

By the completion of this module the trainee should be able to:

- To choose between communication channels in regards to the intended message
- To gain knowledge about communication barriers as well as to identify barriers in his/her own communications
- To learn what is the most beneficial way to resolve conflict

Picture 8.

2.1 Communication channels

A communication channel is the medium that is selected to transmit the message in the process of communication. It is important that the channel matches the goal of the message and is adapted to the intended audience. An inappropriate communication channel can affect the accuracy of the message. Most if not all of the communication channels transmit verbal information. However, non-verbal information is conveyed by some communication channels while the amount of non-verbal cues each channel carries varies from channel to channel. For example, when you have a face-to-face, telephone or videoconferencing conversation, high amounts of non-verbal information is conveyed such as your body language, tone and volume of voice etc. When you write an emails, letter, or a blog, a medium amount of non-verbal information is transmitted since these communication channels convey mainly words, pictures, and photos. Also, when you write a formal written letter or compose an important document a low amount of non-verbal information is transmitted since they should be written in a strict and standardized style. The following table (Table 1) show the amount of non-verbal information each communication channel conveys.

Table 1. The amount of non-verbal cues each communication channel transmits

Communication Channel	Amount of non-verbal cues
Face-to-face conversation	High
Telephone conversation	High
Videoconferencing	High
Email/text message	Medium
Blogs/Forums	Medium
Written letters	Medium
Formal written letters/documents	Low
Spreadsheet/catalogue	Low

2.2 Communication barriers

Sometimes the process of communication may not be successful due to certain barriers that may affect the transmitted message from the sender to the receiver. In that case the message is not transmitted in the way the sender intended that is why it is important to always ask for

feedback from the receiver. In your everyday interactions with people, barriers are easily identified. The noise that does not let you hear the person at the end of the line, or the reading of a scientific article whose terminology you are not familiar with. There are so many barriers which affect communication that it is helpful if they are allocated into categories according to their characteristics:

❖ Language barriers

Language barriers such as arriving at a foreign country, whose language you are not familiar with, will make your communication efforts challenging. Also, the use of jargon or terminology may cause misunderstanding or confusion to the sender. Moreover, some regional expressions may be perceived as offensive by the receiver.
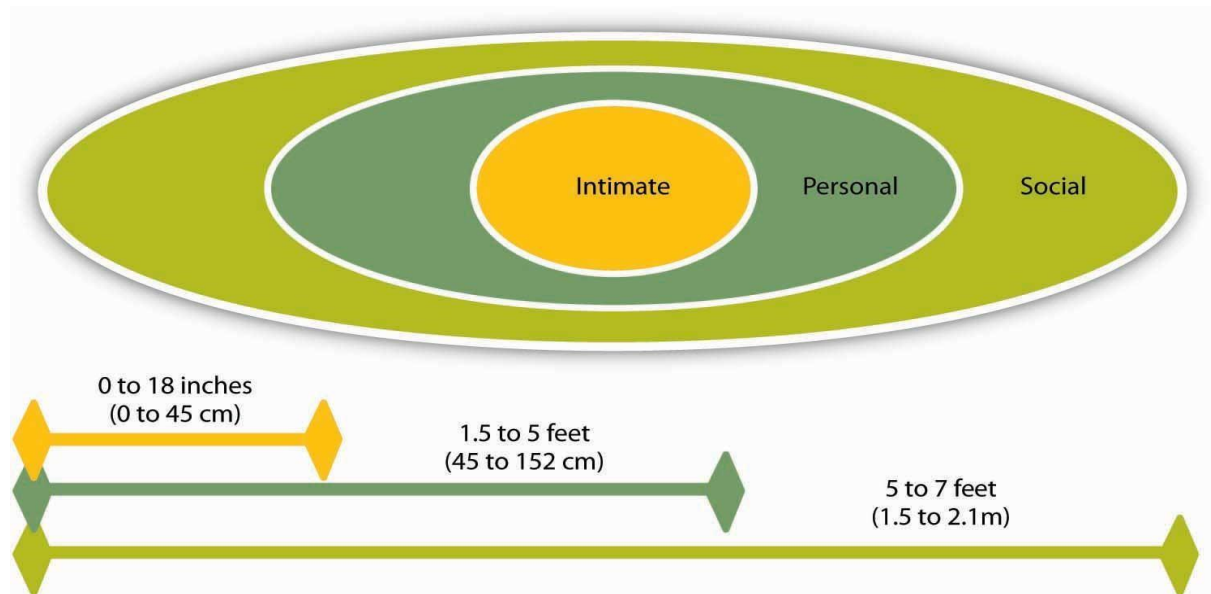

Picture 9.

❖ Physical barriers

One example of physical barrier is geographic distance. If you are travelling a lot, communicating with your family and friends would be difficult. This barrier can be eliminated with the use of technology if the appropriate communication channels are available (phone

call, emails, etc). Another physical barrier is related to the concept of proxemics which is about the physical space that exists between people. The distance between you and another person is called personal space.

Different people have different preferences in regards to their personal space. Picture 10 depicts the appropriate centimeters of distance in social, personal, and intimate relationships.

Picture 10. Appropriate centimeters in proxemics

❖ Psychological and attitudinal barriers

☐ Conflict resolution: Conflict is a common barrier in communication as problems often occur in interpersonal relationships. It can cause negative emotions to all the participants so it is best if it is handled efficiently and beneficially for all. You will learn more about how to resolve conflict later in this module.

☐ Accusation: When you accuse or blame someone, the person receives negativity which blocks the information flow in communication. In a work environment, accusing and blaming should not take place.

☐ Judgment: When you judge someone the communication process is disrupted and the other person is not encouraged to open up and feel safe around you as he/she feels inferior.

☐ Insult: Insulting someone is a huge blocker in communication. When you insult someone, you are perceived as rude and the other person is offended. Insulting does not provide anything useful to communication.

☐ Threats or orders: When you threat or order someone, it shows that you are not willing to understand them or collaborate with them.

 Stress: When feeling stressed during a conversation, you seem preoccupied and approaching you is difficult. Stress is a major barrier in communication so try to stay optimistic and remain calm. Complain only when it is absolutely necessary.

 Anger: Feeling angry in communication may cause behaviors conveying negative feelings and blocking of ideas such as insults and threats. Letting your anger flow in communication will provoke behaviors that you may regret afterwards.

 Low self-esteem: Persevering low self-esteem in communication may cause misunderstanding and misinterpretations of the messages received and can lead to negative assumptions.

 Poor listening: Poor listening, poor retention and information overload will not help in the communication process as they can cause confusion and misinterpretations.

 Interruptions and distractions: Interrupting someone when sharing his/her thoughts and ideas can be perceived as rude from the person who speaks. If you interrupt someone to express your own views and opinions, it shows that you are not interested in listening to or making an effort to understand what the other person is saying. Distractions such as noise can

 Assumptions: Making assumptions and being strong-minded will not allow you to collect the correct information from your communication with the other person. When you assume or expect what a person is saying, misinterpretations often occur.

 Globalizations: Words like "never" or "always" may make the other party feel uncomfortable. These generalizations do not focus on the issue in hand .

create difficulties.
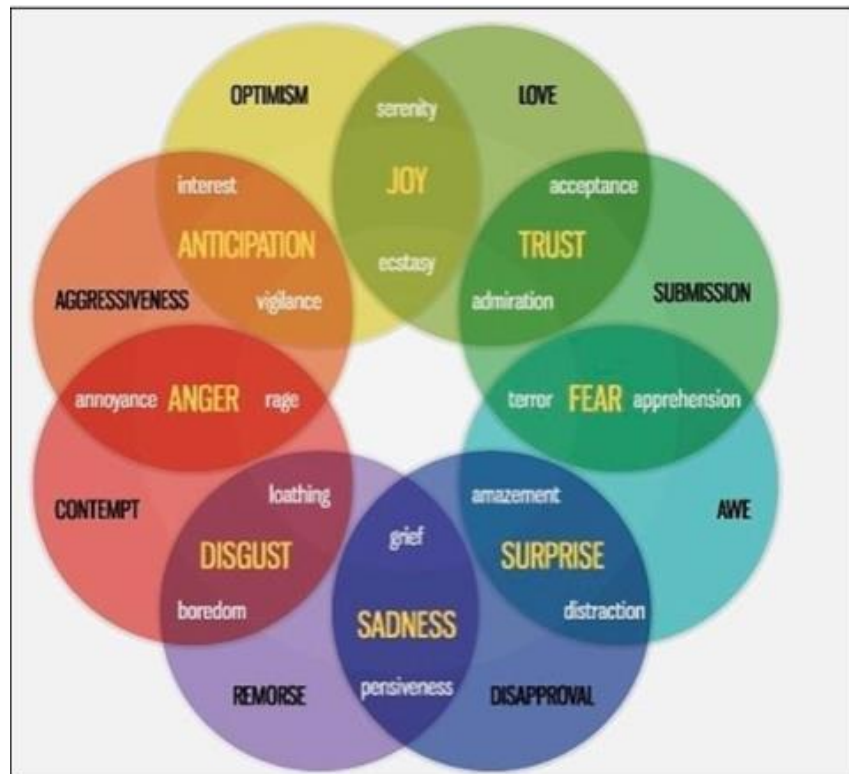
Picture 11.

❖ Cultural and ideological barriers

☐ Language and regional dialect: Many languages consist of idioms and regional dialects that may confuse people who are not familiar with it.

☐ Proxemics: This is because there are cultural differences and there is a specific amount of distance suggested as acceptable in each culture.

☐ Touch: as there are different norms between cultures indicating what is acceptable.

Picture 12.

Conflict resolution is an important theory which contributes to effective communication. Conflict is a very often phenomenon in interpersonal communication. You may encounter conflict when you disagree with your colleague at work, your parents, even your best friend. The conflict resolution theory suggests that disagreements should be resolved sooner rather than later, peacefully and effectively to decrease stress levels. There are five strategies for dealing with conflict.

1. Compete or Fight

In is a situation where one wins and the other loses the conflict. When this strategy is used, the person should be aware that a loser will be created and if his/her concerns are not expressed properly, negative feelings will occur.

2. Collaboration

This is the ideal outcome creating a win-win situation. This strategy requires all participants of the conflict to take time and work on the difficulties so that they agree to a solution that pleases them all.

3. Compromise or Negotiation

This strategy brings better results than Compete or Fight but not as effective as Collaboration. All conflict participants are required to lose something in order for a unanimous solution. It takes less time than Collaboration however the participants are less committed to the outcome
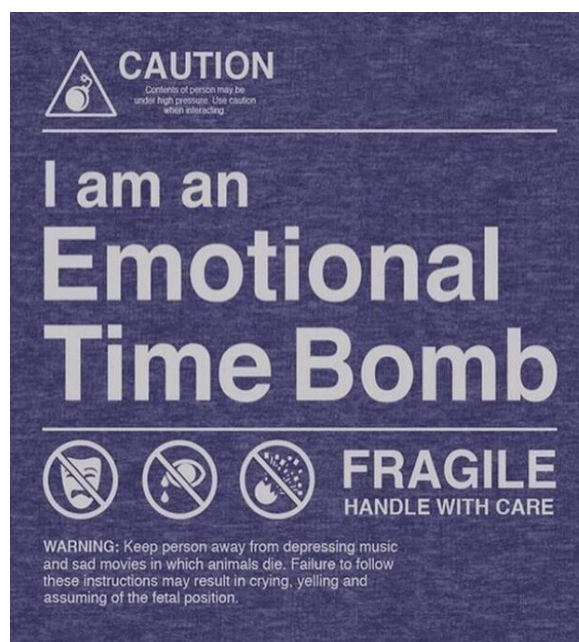
Picture 13.

4. Denial or Avoidance

In this strategy all participants pretend that there is no problem that needs to be solved. It is useful if the participants need time to regulate their emotions or if the problem is not important. However, it could harmful for all participants creating lose-lose situation with negative feelings if the problem exists and is not handled.

5. Smoothing over the problem

In this strategy harmony is maintained on the surface, while there is still conflict underneath. In this situation one participant agrees with the smoothing of the problem while the other remains in conflict. This strategy can work if the relationship of the participants is more important than the conflict itself. However, if one of the participants in conflict still feels the need to find a solution to the problem, this strategy is not useful.

The following graph shows the five strategies and their relations with the amount of concern for self and concern for others.
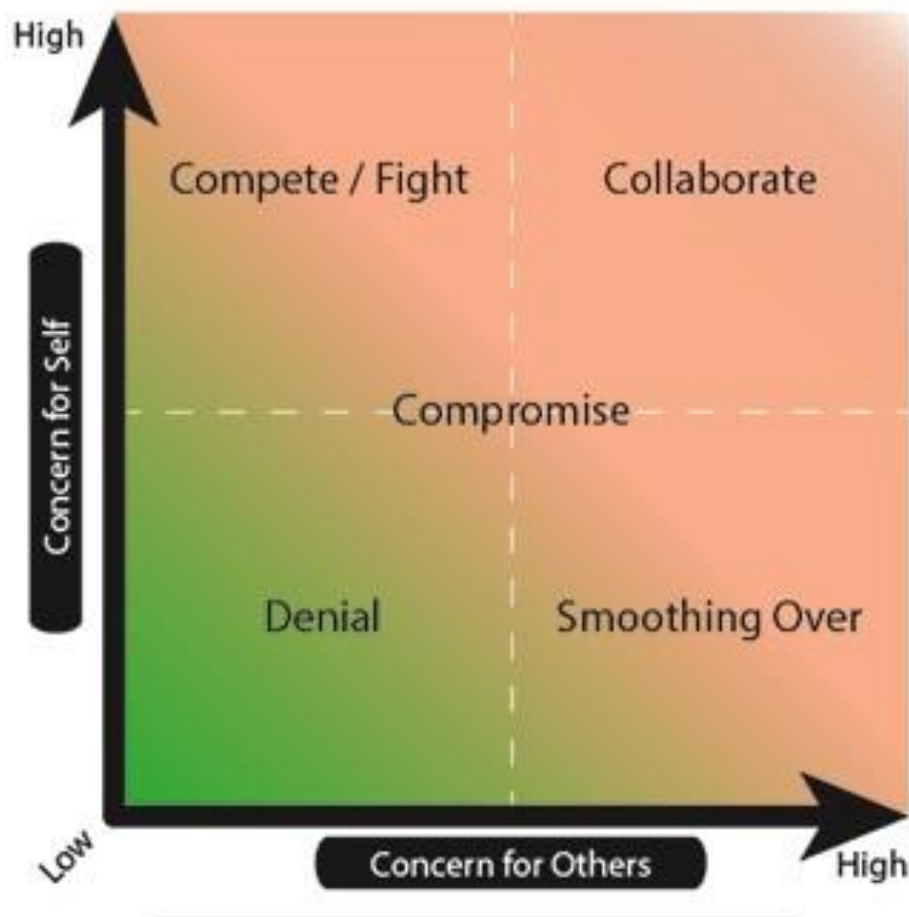
Picture 14. Placement of concern in conflict resolution

2.3   Module 3 – Purpose and Principles of Communication

By the completion of this module the trainee should be able to:

- To identify the purpose of communication in his/her own life
- To get familiar with the principle of communication and identify if they are followed in his/her own communications

Picture 15.

3.1 Purpose of Communication

In their 2016 Survey, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) concluded that verbal communication skills are ranked first among job candidate's must-have skills and qualities. As it was mentioned at the beginning of the paper communication is the process of sharing thoughts and ideas as well as deriving their meaning and understanding. Having good communications skills facilitate your life. It supports your presence in professional as well as social gatherings, and improves your quality of life. It gives you the ability to speak

appropriately with a wide variety of people using the appropriate verbal and non-verbal elements.

Through communication you make sense of the world, yourself, and others. You learn how to express your needs, beliefs and opinions, your style and interests. In the same way you learn to understand others. With the help of communication, human relationships are created and maintained at the same time that they become more enjoyable and responsive. You collect information about the ideas, opinions, and attitudes of others. You understand the needs of others and you are capable of giving and receiving emotional support. Communication skills improve socialization because the more you communicate with people either verbally or nonverbally the more confident and comfortable you feel around them.

Moreover, communication broadens your horizon and intellectuality by learning new ideas and concepts. It cultivates thinking processes and imagination as you learn new ways to approach subjects by exchanging ideas with others. For the same reason, communication helps you in shaping your values and debating your opinions. Communication can help finding solutions to current problems as good communication skills allow for clearer expression of your thoughts and concerns. Several conflicts can be solved via communication such as work- or family-related problems. Except from ideas and opinions, good communication reveals emotions. This helps in overcoming grievance, fears, and concerns. It gives you the opportunity to understand the emotions other people feel when they talk to you, or work with you.

In conclusion, having good communication skills facilitates your relationship with others and improves your life.

3.2 Principles of interpersonal communication

In interpersonal communication we pick up signals from others including both verbal and non-verbal cues and we make an effort to interpret them correctly. This interpretation depends on how strong our communication skills are. In order for you to understand communication and obtain communication skills, you should be familiar with its principles.
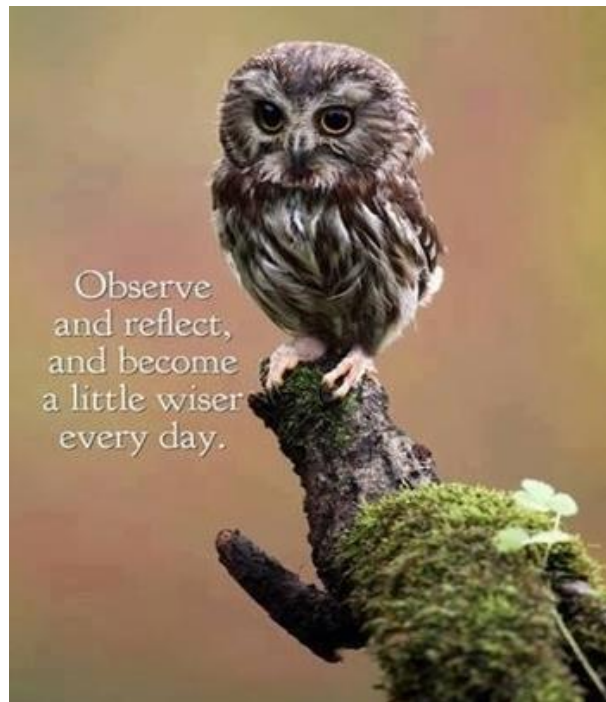
Picture 16.

Once you say it, you cannot take it back.

Communication skills are learnt and the way we communicate is based on our previous experiences. It is possible that we have certain expectations based on our preconceptions and ideas about the outcome of a conversation. These preconceptions can lead to misconceptions which bring generalisations and stereotyping may occur. Often this behaviour turns out to be inappropriate and is followed by misunderstanding. Thus, it is quite important to actively listen to the other person, not holding expectations and being careful about what you are saying, so that it is less likely to say things you might regret later.

Picture 17.

There is no such thing as zero communication

Even when you are not communicating, you are communicating something. By not communicating you show to other people that you may be shy, or angry, or too busy. Ignoring someone is also communication indicating that you may have been annoyed by their behaviour or that you simply have homework to do. The way ignorance is communicated and its meaning is hiding in the non-verbal cues, such as body language.

Picture 18.

Diferențe individuale

When communicating, it is important to remember that people hold different perceptions of the world and that means that they interpret their relationships and goals in different ways. Except for different perceptions, it is important to remember that different words have different meaning to different people in different contexts. It is possible that we communicate the same message to different individuals but each person gives its own interpretation and meaning of the message. The misunderstanding that may occur will affect the nature of the message so it is essential to convey it as clearly and directly as possible.

Between what is said and not meant,
and what is meant and not said,
most of love is lost.

Khalil Gibran
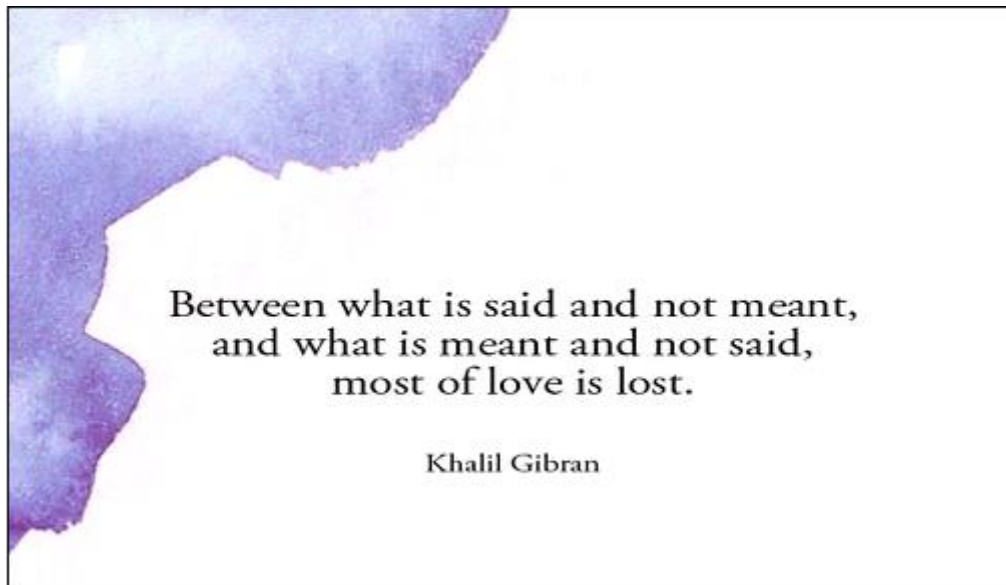
Picture 19.

The context of communication

The context each communication takes place is important when it comes to the validity and credibility of communication. The context includes the topic, timing, and location of the communication. In a communication it is important that all participants know the reason it is happening and what the topic is about. The timing of communication also plays a crucial role as it is wise not to begin talking about a serious matter when there is limited time. This is applicable to any communication, as we should make sure that we have enough time to cover the topic so that unfinished conversations and matters are avoided. Finally, location is also important while communicating. A place with distractions, noise and a lack of privacy does not promote clear, sincere, and focused communication.

Picture 20.

2.4.   Module 4 – Communication sub-skills

By the completion of this module the trainee should be able to:

- To learn how to be an active listener
- To interpret non-verbal cues derived from body language
- To put emphasis on the correct word when announcing a statement
- To show the appropriate behaviors when communicating

Picture 21.

4. Communication sub-skills

The soft skill of communication can be broken down into several sub-skills. By working on these sub-skills, the communication process improves. These sub-kills are active listening, non-verbal communication, clarity and concision, friendliness, confidence, empathy, openmindedness, respect, feedback, and picking the right medium.

4.1 Active Listening

Active listening involves paying close attention to what a person is saying, making clarifying questions and rephrasing what is being said to ensure understanding. Active listening

facilitates understanding and responding accurately. It is called "active" listening because there is the active element of drawing out attention and building rapport with the speaker.
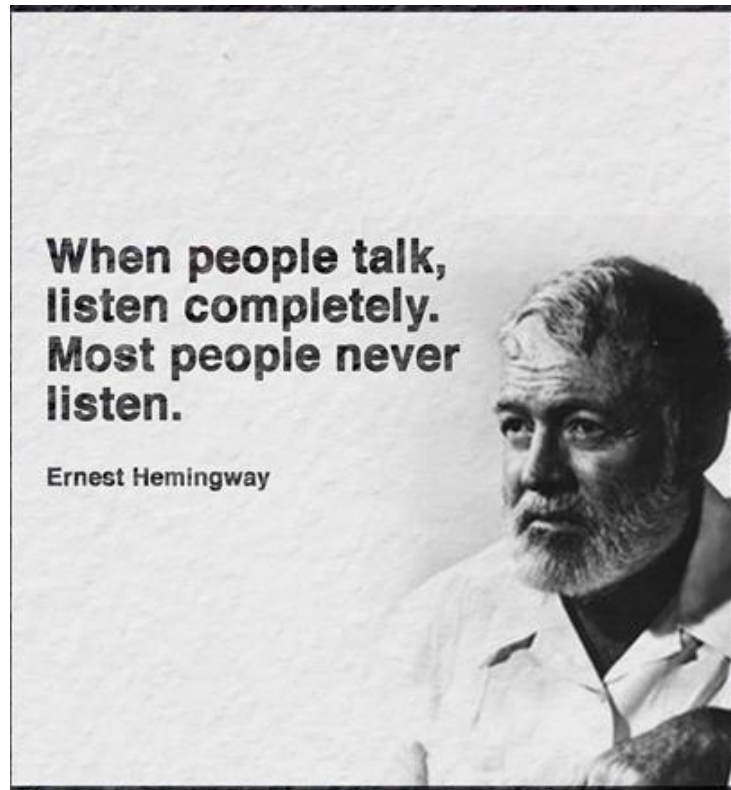
Picture 22.

Employers think highly of active listening and they perceive it as a high quality. This is because through active listening you place your focus on the discussion at hand which shows that you are interested, able to solve problems and a team player. There are some techniques involved in active listening which make the person appear thoughtful, analytical, and desirable. The techniques are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Active listening techniques and examples

Active listening techniques	Examples
To build trust	"Tell me what I can do to help"
To establish rapport	"I was really impressed to read on..."
To show concern	"I would like to help you; I know you are going through a difficult period"
To paraphrase	"So you are saying that…"
To give brief verbal affirmations	"Thank you for your time. I really enjoy speaking with you"

To ask open-ended questions	"What part of the presentation did you find confusing?"
To ask specific questions	"How much time did you devote to…"
To not interrupt when disclosing your opinion	"Can you please provide more…"
To disclose similar situations	"I was very upset about…"
To use non-verbal cues	Nodding, eye-contact, leaning forward

The Listening Process

In a work context the process of listening is important as you obtain information and insight about the needs, demands, and preferences of your boss, colleagues, clients etc. In order for you to be a good active listener, you have to be an attentive and reflective listener. Attentive listening means making eye-contact, having a lean-forward posture, making friendly facial expressions and gestures, as well as showing a genuine interest in what the speaker is saying. Reflective listening involves repeating and paraphrasing what has been heard, showing the speaker that you understand what has been said. People can be categorized into good and bad listeners. The characteristics of the two types of listeners are listed in the table below.

Table 3. Good listener vs. Bad listener

Good listener vs. Bad listener	
Making an effort to understand no matter how unclear the message	Responding with a statement that does not answer the question asked
Interpreting non-verbal cues	Talking too much without maintaining balance
Informing others that they have been heard and encouraging them to continue sharing	Monopolizing the conversation
Listening before responding	Talking before the other person finishes
Not interrupting	Interrupting
Taking a few moments before forming a response	Not giving the others the opportunity to share

4.2 Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication shows how messages are communicated. It can show if you are honest or feeling uncomfortable. It indicates whether the tone of your voice supports your words or you are all talk and no substance. Through non-verbal communication credibility and trust can be built. The stance of your body plays an important role as it will either encourage or discourage others to speak to you. An open stance with open arms and relaxed legs as well as a friendly tone will make you appear more approachable. In addition, eyecontact is crucial in non-verbal communication as looking a person in the eye shows that you are focused on him/her and the conversation. Since non-verbal cues convey feelings or covert behaviors it is essential to pay attention to your own body language as well as to others'.

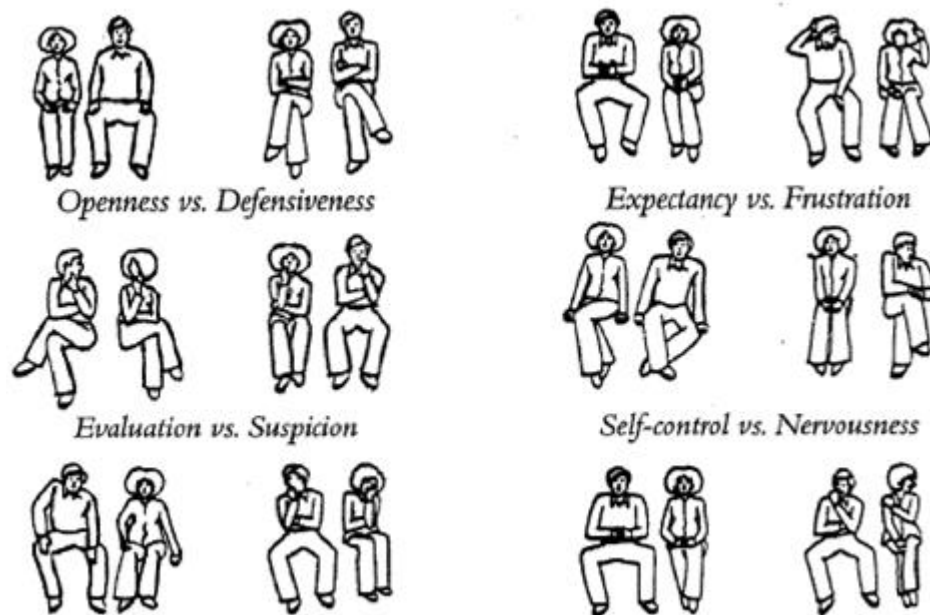**Picture 23.**

Body Language

Body language conveys non-verbal cues and it is also a means of communication. Eyecontact, facial expressions, and posture send silent messages in communication. For example, the human face creates thousands of expressions which reveal hundreds of different emotional states. Several behaviors and emotions as well as the non-verbal cues that convey them are listed below:

- Trustworthiness
  □ Looking someone in the eye

- Happiness
  □ Upturned mouth, slightly closed eyes

- Fear
  □ Open mouth, wide-eyed stare

- Lack of trust
  □ Shifty eyes, pursed lips

- Upright character
  □ Head back, back straight

- Good listener
  □ Repetition of the other person's posture

- Confident

  □ Solid eye-contact, smiling, standing tall, shoulders back, slow and clear speech, moderate to low tone of voice.

Picture 24.

- Defensive
  □ Little eye-contact or downcast, minimal facial expressions, arms crossed in front of the body, body posture turned away

- Uninterested
  □ Eyes glazed or glazing elsewhere, hands picking at something/fiddling, head down

- Interested and engaged
  - ☐ Eyes look away and engaged contact when responding, finger stroking on chin, hand to cheek
- Lying
  - ☐ Little or no eye-contact/rapid eye-movements with pupils constricted, hands/fingers in front of mouth when speaking, body posture turned away, breathing rate increases, complexion changes (red face/neck), perspiration increases, voice changes in pitch, throat clearing.

Picture 25. Acid sulfuric pentru ochii bărbaților care mint

4.3 Verbal communication

Following non-verbal communication, the importance of verbal communication skills should be addressed. Verbal communication skills are responsible for the way you deliver the message as well as how you receive it. For an effective communication, you say what you want clearly and directly either in person, on the phone or via email. It is good when messages are conveyed in as few words as possible because if you ramble on, the listener will stop paying attention and will not understand what you want to say. This is why it is important to take a few minutes and think before you speak, as excessive talking leads to confusion.

Picture 26.

Employers highly appreciate good verbal communication skills. Good verbal communication skills improve relationships between individuals and groups in the workplace. Also, effective verbal skills allow the individual to make presentations, to participate in group meetings and face-to-face conversations. Moreover, verbal skills contribute to success in interviews, training sessions, and sales-pitching. Employees who make correct deliverance and interpretations of messages tend to excel on their job.

 Having good verbal communication skills means that you use clear and audible diction and make clear sentences when you speak. Also, you follow logical thought processes which contribute to the flow of the conversation. It is essential that your speech suits your audience in terms of language and formality. Your word choice and tone of voice should change regarding the situation. The following table includes the same statement seven times, each time putting emphasis on a different word. When the tone of the voice changes, the meaning of the statement changes.

Table 4. Putting emphasis in a statement

Tone of voice (emphasis)	Meaning
I did not tell Mary you were absent.	Someone else told Mary you were absent.
I did **not** tell Mary you were absent.	This did not happen.
I did not **tell** Mary you were absent.	I may have implied it.

I did not tell **Mary** you were absent.	I told somebody else.
I did not tell Mary **you** were absent.	I was talking about someone else.
I did not tell Mary you **were** absent.	I told her you still are absent.
I did not tell Mary you were **absent**.	I told her that you were having an interview.

4.4 Friendliness

Friendliness is a necessary sub-skill of communication and it should be demonstrated both in verbal and non-verbal communication, oral or written. As it was mentioned previously a friendly tone and a smile encourage others to engage in honest communication with you. It is important to smile and be polite in face-to-face conversations, while personalizing an email will make the recipient feel appreciated. The use of humor is also recommended in communication. This is because laughing is found to release chemicals in the brain called endorphins which relieve stress and anxiety.

Picture 27.

4.5 Open-mindedness

An effective communication occurs when the individuals involved are flexible and openminded. Holding strong beliefs and being rigid will not allow you to identify the emotions of the other person and incorrect interpretations of the message conveyed will occur. When you are just getting your message across, this is not communication. Entering into a dialogue and exchanging ideas is communication. Even when you disagree with someone, you should make productive conversations listening to what the other person has to say.
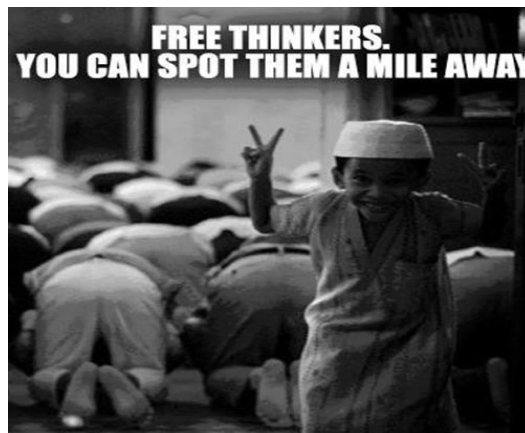
Picture 28.

4.6 Confidence

Feeling confident and comfortable in what you are saying shows to others that you believe in your words and statements. However, you should be confident at a level where you do not appear as arrogant or aggressive. No matter how you follow through your words, you should always listen to the other person and show empathy.
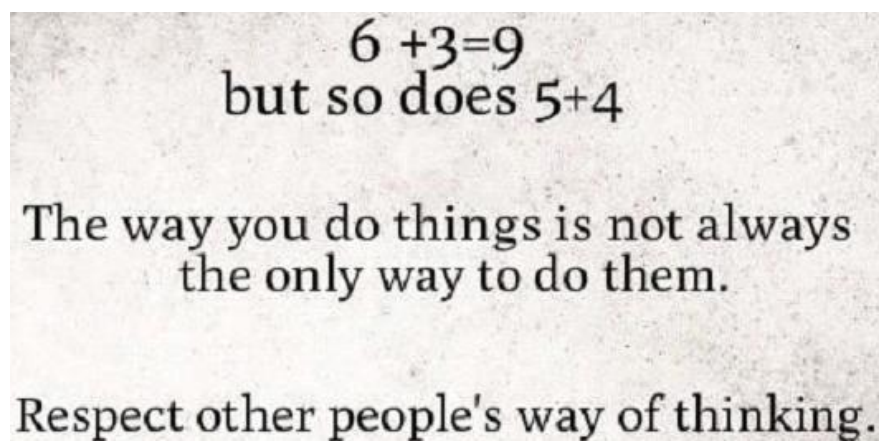

Picture 29.

4.7 Empathy

Empathy is when you put yourself in other people's shoes. It is when you understand the emotions of others and act upon it. It is clear that empathy is very important in communication as you listen to what other people say and you respond showing understanding and respect for their point of view.

THE WAY TO FEEL BETTER IS TO FEEL **HEARD**, BUT TO FEEL HEARD, YOU HAVE TO FIRST BE WILLING TO **LISTEN**.

— BRYANT MCGILL

Picture 30.

4.8 Respect

During communication, it is crucial that you show respect to the other person so that he/she feel heard and appreciated. Showing respect means using the other person's name, making eye-contact, and actively listening. This is not only applicable to face-to-face or verbal communication, but also to emails and phone calls. It is important not to hurry while writing an email as you appear as indifferent to the other person. Also, distractions on the phone can lead the recipient to believe that you do not show enough interested in them to be focused on conversation.

6 +3=9 but so does 5+4

The way you do things is not always the only way to do them.

Respect other people's way of thinking.

Picture 31.

4.9 Feedback

Although feedback can be considered a part of the communication process, people sometimes forget its importance. It is essential that, during communication, feedback is both given and received. When you give positive feedback such as "Good job", "thanks for…", it encourages and motivates other people. When you receive feedback, either positive or negative, you should always accept it, listen to it carefully, make clarifying questions if needed, and make efforts to implement it successfully.

Picture 32.

4.10 Picking the right medium

Communication channels have been described in detail in previous chapter. However, it is important to know what type of medium to use in each communication situation. You should always think about the other person while choosing your medium. When you want to convey a serious message, it would be more appropriate to do it in person. If the recipient of the message you want to convey is busy, you should better do it via email. If you are thoughtful about the channels you use in communication, the other person will appreciate it and it will be more likely to respond positively to you.

Picture 33.

## 2.5.   Module 5 – Tips and advice for good communicators

By the completion of this module the trainee should be able to:

• To learn and practice effective communication skills

5. Tips and advice

In this module, recommendations about good communication skills are made. Making good use of the communication sub-skills while following communication principles will make the way you communicate more effective. Tips and advice categorized according to their characteristics are listed below. Frequent and focused practice of these skills will make you a great communicator.

- Listen actively
  - □ To build trust
  - □ To establish rapport
  - □ To show concern
  - □ To paraphrase
  - □ To give brief verbal affirmations
  - □ To ask open-ended questions
  - □ To ask specific questions
  - □ To not interrupt when disclosing your opinion
  - □ To disclose similar situations
  - □ To use non-verbal cues
- Non-verbal tips
  - □ Have a relaxed open stance
  - □ Make eye-contact
  - □ Smile and be polite
  - □ Pay attention to others' non-verbal cues/body language
- Verbal tips
  - □ Do not say too little or talk too much
  - □ Be clear, concise, and direct
  - □ Do not mumble
  - □ Think before you speak
  - □ Avoid distractions
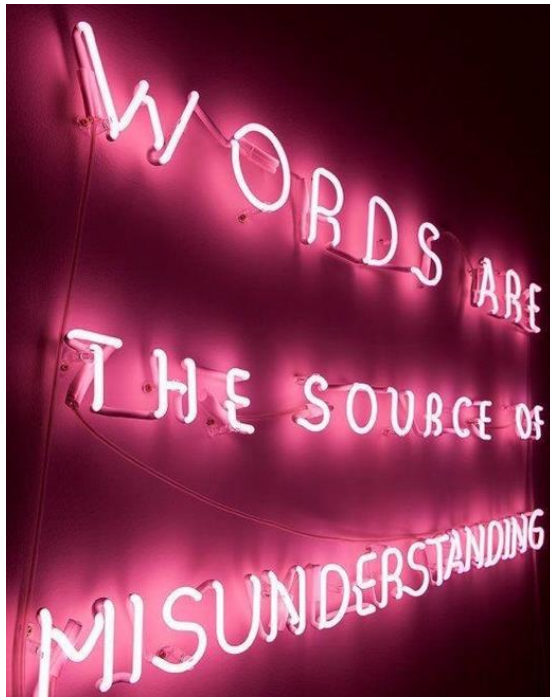
Picture 34.

- Attitudinal tips
  - ☐ Be confident
  - ☐ Be flexible
  - ☐ Be open-minded
  - ☐ Show empathy
  - ☐ Show respect

- Behavioral tips
  - ☐ Give feedback
  - ☐ Receive and accept feedback
  - ☐ Avoid criticism
  - ☐ Do not hurry
  - ☐ Use humor when appropriate
  - ☐ Do not send mixed messages
  - ☐ Adapt to your audience

- Emotional tips
  - ☐ Resolve conflict
  - ☐ Minimize stress

Picture 35.

3. Exercises

3.1   Exercise 1 – The ship sailed

By the completion of the exercise, the trainee should be able to:

☐ To identify assumptions and expectations as potential barriers to communication

Description: A brief story is read to the students who are then asked to answer a questions regarding to content of the story..

Procedure:

1. Tell the students that you are about to read to them a story about the cruise of a ship. Inform the students that they will be asked to answer a question about the content of the story. Tell them that they are allowed to write down notes if they want.

2. Read the following story to the participants:

The ship Queen Mary sails from the port of Greenwich, London with 4 passengers and stops at Amsterdam where 10 more passengers get on. It next stops at Kiel Canal and 3 more passengers get on the ship. The next stop is the port of Copenhagen where 2 passengers get off the ship and 20 passengers get on board. Queen Mary sails in the sea until it reaches Helsinki where 10 passengers get off. The ship's next stop is St. Petersburg's port where 5 passengers get off and 23 passengers get on board. The ship continues until it reaches Tallinn where it stops and 3 passengers get on board. Queen Mary reaches the end of the cruise at Stockholm where everyone gets off.

3. After you have completed the story, ask the following question to the students: How many stops did the ship Queen Mary make?

4. It is possible that the students would have focused on the number of passengers getting on board and off the ship instead of the number of stops it made. Ask students how many were focused on the passengers instead of the stops.

5. Ask the students if anyone can answer how many stops Queen Mary made. Also ask if anyone can answer how many passengers were on board when the ship reached Stockholm.

6.   The answer to the question concerning how many stops the ship made is 7, including its final destination.

7.   There were 46 passengers on board Queen Mary when it arrived at Stockholm.

8.   Discuss why participants gave emphasis to the wrong criteria while listening to the story. The students assumed that the question would be how many passengers were left when the ship reaches its final destination. At this point emphasize to the students that making assumptions is dangerous during communication. Assuming which aspects are the most important and critical can lead to incorrect focus of attention. Thus it is important to always keep an open mind and not be selective in the gathering of information.

3.2   Exercise 2 – Putting emphasis

By the completion of the exercise, the trainee should be able to:

☐ To realize how the alternations in the tone of voice and the placement of the emphasis affect the meaning of a message

Description: The students listen to the same statement read five times. Each time the statement is read, different tone of voice is used emphasizing different words, conveying different meanings to the statement.

Procedure:

1.   Distribute Handout 1a (Appendix 1) to each student.

2.   Explain to the students that it is going to be a listening exercise where they have to listen carefully to the five times the statement is read as the alternations in the tone of voice convey different meanings to it.

3.   Ask the students to identify the meaning of the statement each time you read it by writing the number next to its meaning in Handout 1a.

4.   Look the Handout 1b to see how to read the statement each time. The first time you read it, you should read it to mean: "The cargo is not arriving today". This will correspond to the third statement meaning that that the cargo is arriving tomorrow. Students should place number 1 in the space provided next to the third statement. You may give this as an example to ensure that the students have understood the instructions.

5.   Continue reading the statements emphasizing the words in bold provided in Handout 1b (Appendix 2).

6.   After the students have completed Handout 1a, distribute Handout 1b, or read the answers to them.

7.   Ask participants how many answers they got right by comparing the numbers they wrote down in Handout 1a with the correct answers.

8.   Discuss with the students how the meaning of a statement changes when it is read in different ways. Emphasize that it is needed to pay close attentions not only to what is being said but also to how it is being said.

3.3.   Exercise 3 – Back to back

By the completion of the exercise, the trainee should be able to:

☐ To understand the importance of listening

☐ To understand the importance of clarifying questions

☐ To understand the importance of visual non-verbal cues

Description: The students are divided in dyads and are asked to sit back to back to each other. One person describes what to draw while the other person draws what is being described. The task is repeated with the students changing positions. The second time the task is implemented the student that draws is allowed to ask questions in order to understand the instructions better.

Procedure:

1.   Split the group of students into teams of two and instruct them to sit in chairs back to back to each other.

2.   Distribute Handout 3a (Appendix 3) one of each pair of students.

3.   Ask the student who is holding Handout 3a to describe the diagram depicted on the handout to his/her partner. The listener must not see the diagram and he/she has to draw it by following only the verbal instructions of his/her partner.

4.   After 10 minutes ask the students to stop and to compare the drawing with the original diagram

5.   Then repeat the exercise with the students switching roles in their dyads. Handout 3b (Appendix 4) will be provided to the student who was previously the listener as he/she is asked to give the instructions now. The second time the task is implemented the student that draws is allowed to ask clarifying questions so that he/she will ensure the understanding of the instructions.

6.   After 10 minutes ask the students to stop and to compare the drawing with the original diagram. Also, ask students to compare the two drawings; the first one which included instructions without questions and the second one where questions were allowed.

7.	Debrief by asking how difficult it was for the first drawer to follow the instructions without asking questions

8.	Emphasize the importance of asking questions to confirm understanding and ensure the accuracy of information.

3.4.   Exercise 4 – Guess the emotion

By the completion of the exercise, the trainee should be able to:

- To identify the different emotions
- To gain deeper understanding of the emotions of self and others and how they are conveyed non-verbally
- To practice non-verbal communication

Description: Students are divided into two teams and are asked to describe an emotion using non-verbal cues to the other team.

Procedure:

1.   Divide the students into two teams.

2.   Place a pile of cards on the table. Each card has an emotion typed to it. The typed emotions will be fear, anger, sadness, joy, disgust, surprise, trust, anticipation, anxiety, embarrassment, and determination.

3.   A student from Group A is asked to take the first card from the pile, read it to her/himself, and place it to the end of the pile. Then he/she describes the typed emotion to his/her team using non-verbal cues (pantomime) for two minutes.

4.   If Group A guessed the emotion correctly, they receive ten points.

5.   Then, a student from Group B is asked to take the next card and repeat the procedure.

6.   When all emotions are covered, the team that has guessed correctly most of the emotions wins.

7.   Debrief by asking the students how difficult it was for them to describe the emotions without using verbal communication. Also, ask the students which were the nonverbal cues that conveyed the greatest amount of information.

3.5.   Exercise 5 – What does it mean?

By the completion of the exercise, the trainee should be able to:

☐   To understand the need for clarity in communication

☐   To point out the individual differences in the interpretation of a message

Description: The students are presented with a statement and are asked to convey its meaning.

Procedure:

1.   Present students with the following statement and ask them what the statement means:

"I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant!" – quote from U.S. government official

2.   Expect students to make differing interpretations of the statement, if any.

3.   There is no correct explanation of the statement. It appears that the person is trying to say something about him/her being misunderstood, however not very clearly.

4.   Reveal the source of this quote to the students and discuss with them the importance of clarity when conveying a message that needs to be understood. Emphasize on the problems that may occur when such unclear statements take place.

4. Explanation of the assessment system

General: The assessment will be accomplished at the end of the course.

Online Assessment: The online assessment is designed to allow the trainee to demonstrate that he/she has a basic comprehension of the theoretical knowledge of leadership.

The online assessment is as follows:

- The online assessment shall be completed in 50 minutes
- 30 questions at a value of 3 points each for a total of 90 points;
- The trainee must score a minimum of 70% to pass.

Completion: On successful completion of the Course and online exam, the trainee will be issued with a Leadership course completion certificate.

Non-completion: If the student fails the online assessment, the course must be repeated.

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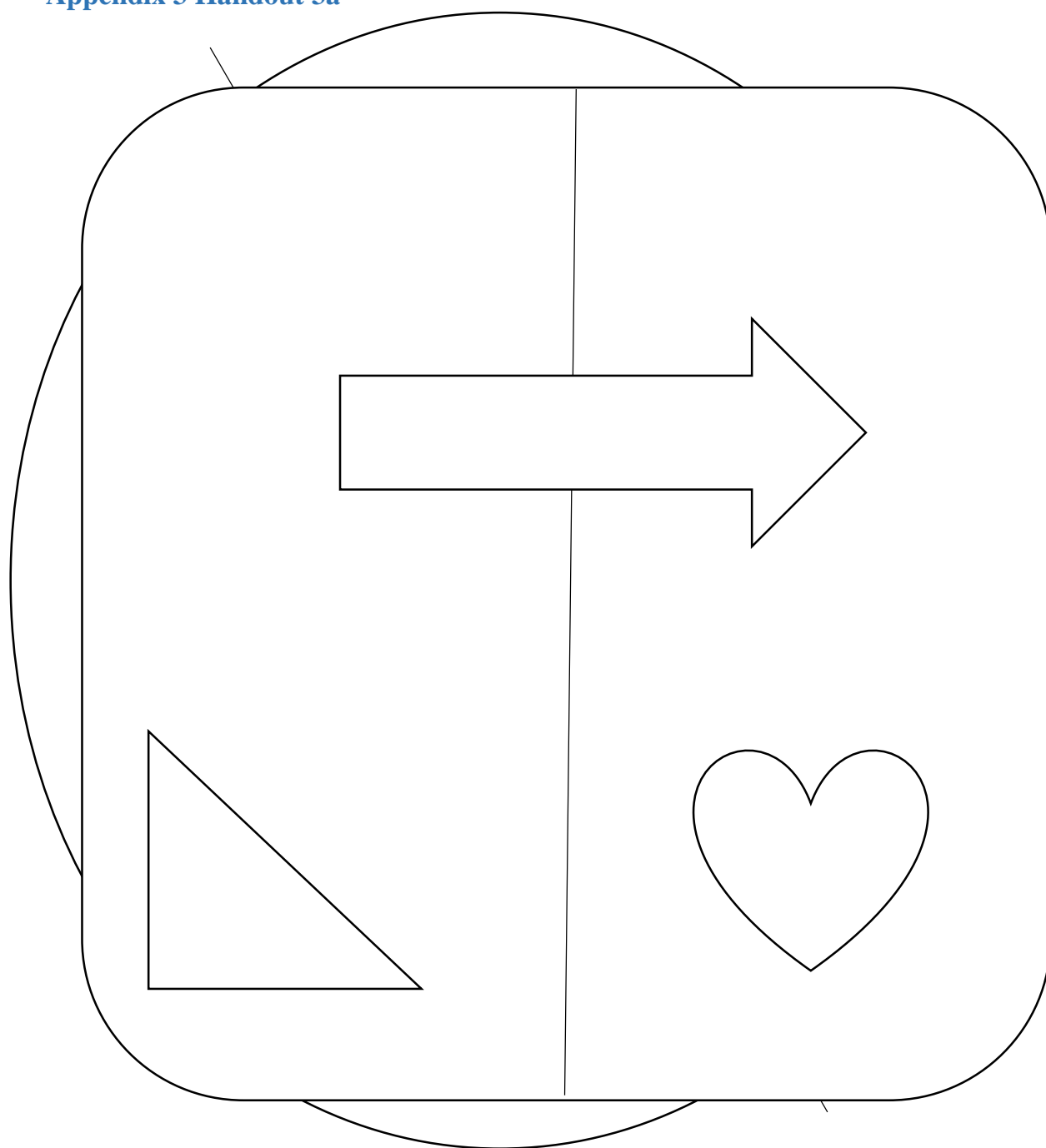
Appendix

Appendix 1 Handout 1a

Meaning of statement	Number
Statement of fact	
Statement indicating that something else is arriving today	
Statement indicating that the cargo is absolutely not arriving today	
Statement indicating that the cargo is being shipped today	
Statement indicating that the cargo is arriving tomorrow	

Appendix 2 Handout 1b

Different emphasis/tone
The cargo is not arriving today.
The **cargo** is not arriving today.
The cargo is **not** arriving today.
The cargo is not **arriving** today.
The cargo is not arriving **today**.

Appendix 3 Handout 3a

Appendix 4 Handout 3b