

Guidelines for Dialogue

- Only one person can speak at a time.
- Begin by talking about where you are with this issue in this moment.
- Operate as friends and listen in a way that takes care of each other.
- Speak from your point of view; listen from the point of view of the group. For example, “What can we as a group do to impact this?”
- Appreciate the silence and consider, reflect, and think before speaking.
- Watch out for:
 -problem-solving
 -disagreeing
 -asking too many questions

Communication Techniques

- Communication is one of the most wonderful and yet frustrating skills in the world. We’ve all experienced difficulty in understanding others and being understood. Below you will find some techniques that may help you start a dialogue between you and the student. These will also ensure that you understand what the student is telling you.

Encouraging Dialogue

- *Invite the student to talk.*
 - “Would you like to talk about it?”
 - “I’ll listen, whenever you want to talk.”
- *Acknowledge student’s feelings.*
 - “You seem (upset, angry) about something.”
 - “You don’t seem to feel well.”
- *Share what you feel.*
 - “I find it hard to know what to say when I first meet someone.”
 - “I’m a little concerned about my (job, family, studies) today.”

If You Feel You Need More Information.

- *Draw out the student.*
 - “How would you do that?”
 - “Can you share why you did that?”
 - “What do you like (most, least) about this?”
 - “Could you tell me more?”
 - “How does that make you feel?”

- *Use Nonverbal Techniques*
 - Establish soft eye contact (direct, but not a glare).
 - Be silent and wait for the student to continue.
 - Nod and smile.
 - Find a quiet place to converse.
 - Face student and lean forward slightly.

Listening Without Giving Approval or Offering Solutions

- *Ask leading questions that encourage the student to talk.*
 - “What would happen if you did that?”
 - “What do you think you could do in this situation?”
 - “What’s the (best, worst) that could happen?”
 - “How would you handle this situation?”
 - “How would you feel?”

- *Respond neutrally. Do not approve or disapprove.*
 - “That’s one way. What’s another?”
 - “How would your (best friend, parents, teacher) react?”
 - “What do you think is the best way to handle this?”

Ensuring That You Understand What is Said or Felt

- *Restate what the student said in your own words.*
 - “Did you mean that...”
 - “What I heard you say...”
 - “Do you think that...”

- *Look for clues. Check:*
 - Tone of voice
 - Facial expressions
 - Body language
 - Gestures

When the Conversation Stops Abruptly.

- *Review your actions. Did you:*
 - Change the subject?
 - Indicate disapproval or dislike by your facial expression or body language?
 - Misread how the student felt?
 - Respond to how the student felt?

- *To restart the dialogue:*
 - Ask if you upset the student.
 - Share a similar situation in your life.
 - Ask if he/she would like to continue the discussion.
 - Express your appreciation of the student's trust.

Feedback

- Feedback is an integral part of the communication process. We must have some indication of our progress (or lack of it). We ask you to provide the student with positive feedback, but also to correct him/her when necessary.

- Praise can make a student feel wonderful, when given in a way that can't be discounted. Find specific occurrences of observable behavior. Don't generalize. For example, "You made an "A" on that English paper. You must really have studied." Focus on what the student can control, not motivations or feelings.

- Corrections should gently instruct, not demean a student. Corrections should include the positive and negative. Give information rather than demand a change in behavior. Put yourself in the student's place. How would you like to be treated in this situation?

- Remember, be generous with praise and sparing with criticism.

Listening for Meaning

- Avoid being judgmental. Concentrate on the message and not the person.

- Don't be insincere in your listening. If you fake attention, it will be evident.

- Listen for ideas and not just facts. Look for the big meaning in what is said.

- Avoid communication killers. Analyze your responses and be sure to avoid any actions or words that will cut off communication.

- Put what you are hearing into words. After you have listened closely, try to put what the other person is saying and feeling into words and see how they react.

- Get agreement. Communication involves knowing when and how to listen as well as how to use words.

Proper Praising Recipe

- Be immediate. Catch them doing something right, right now!
- Be sincere. If you cannot be sincere, say nothing!
- Be specific. Concentrate on specifically what was done, not generalities.
- Show the benefit. How does this effort really help the student?
- State your own reaction. People want to know how you really feel.
- Ask if you can help. Offer your assistance. Don't order it!

... "Praise in Public, Correct in Private"

... "Put Power into your Praise. Proper Praising will Motivate High Performers"

... "Teach the Way You Want to be Taught. Each of us wants Positive, Sincere Praise".