

Michigan Alliance for Families

Youth Self-Determination Series

Series 2-Session 1: Self-Determination, Self-Advocacy, Communication Handout

Self-Determination

- Being in control of you
- Making your own decisions and getting needed supports
 - (Supported Decision Making)
- Ability to problem solve, and make decisions and choices
- Knowing your strengths and areas of need



Self-Advocacy

- Important part of self-determination and gaining independence
- Know what you want and what is possible for you
- Understand you are at the center of planning for your life
- Have more control of you
- Make life decisions and know who can help you (supported decision making)
- Understand your disability, your strengths, your challenges
- Know what you need (not just what you want) and are willing to be flexible and compromise
- Know you have legal rights
- Are able to communicate (speak-up) for yourself and make decisions about your life

Communication

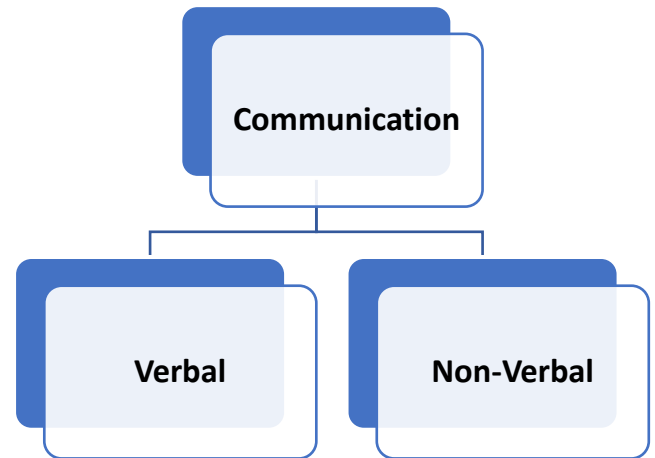
Communication is...

- Getting and sending messages to other people
- Verbal, non-verbal, both
- 2-way: between 2 or more people

- Communicate our thoughts and ideas to understand each other

How People Communicate

- Verbally
- Non-Verbally



Verbal Communication

- Using words or sounds
- Relaying how we feel or think
- Transfer our words between people (conversations)
- What and how we say things out loud
- Takes place in person, by phone, through the computer or television, radio

2-Way Communication

- Communication is like a **volleyball game**, it goes back-and-forth
- One is talking or communicating, one is listening
- You take a turn, I take a turn
- Someone communicates something, and someone else responds with text or visuals
- Applies the same to people who do not use words as their way of communication



Problem with 1-Way Communication

- Listener does not get a chance to talk-they are not included
- They get bored
- They leave the conversation
- May think the other person does not care

Communication Partner

- Who you are communicating with or talking to, and who is listening or responding
 - Talking to your mom (your mom is your communication partner)

- Talking to your boss (your boss is your communication partner)
- Talking to your friend (your friend is your communication partner)

Topics

- Something you are talking about
- Stay on topic when talking
- Common interests
- Examples: weather, hobbies, interests, work, etc.

Questions and Comments

2-way communication includes:

- Comments: a **statement** related the topic
- Questions: **asking** for information related to the topic
- Make 2-3 comments **ABOUT THE TOPIC**, then ask a question **ABOUT THE TOPIC**

Question Starters

- Who...
- What...
- Where...
- When...
- Why...
- How...
- Did
- Do



Communication Builders

How we have good conversations

Try to:

- Trade information:
 - Have 2-way communication or conversations
 - Ask questions make comments
 - Learn more about each other
- Find common interests:



- Find something you both enjoy communicating about
- May find something you can do together
- Listen to the person:
 - Look at, face, and talk to/communicate with the communication partner
 - Make short comments to show you are listening (oh, uh-huh, wow, etc.)
- Watch body language
 - Is the communication partner facing me? Looking at me? Talking or communicating with me? Are they giving me the cold shoulder?
 - Watch YOUR body language—are you looking at, facing, talking to or communicating with them?
- Match the mood
 - Try to match the mood of your conversation partner
 - If they are happy, talk in a happy voice
 - If they are sad, talk in a quieter voice
 - If they are excited, be a little more excited
 - Example:
 - Joey is excited to go to Cedar Point and says “I get to go to Cedar Point Saturday!”
 - Joey’s friend Cole says: “That is so cool, I have never been there!”
- Use good volume
 - Not too loud or soft—In the middle
 - Watch your communication partner’s body language, can they hear you? (are they leaning in)?
 - Are you talking too loud (are they backing away or squinting?)
- Use good body boundaries
 - About an arm’s length away
- Look toward the person
 - Look at their forehead if you cannot look at their eyes
 - Look every 3-5 seconds
 - Be careful not to stare!