

## Communication Skills

The goal of using communication skills is to be able to get your message across to another person to help you get what you want. Using these communication skills should enable people to compromise or agree on a solution to a problem. When everyone agrees on a solution, compliance by both sides and contentment with the solution are more likely. It is important to stay positive during the communication skills training and avoid blaming.

**Understanding statement.** The goal of the understanding statement is to open up communication and show that you are aware of another person's thoughts on a problem. That is:

- **Come from the other person's perspective.**  
Example: "I understand you would like the kitchen cleaned because it is a real mess, and you would like the house to be clean when friends/guest come over."
- **Come from your perspective.**  
Example: "But Joe is having a cookout at his house, and I haven't seen him for a while, so I would really like to go."
- **Make a request (a request should be brief, positive, and specific).**  
Example: "Would it be ok with you if I go to the cookout this afternoon, and then clean the kitchen and do the dishes later tonight when I get home, maybe around 8 p.m.?"

**Partial responsibility.** The goal of the statement of partial responsibility is to avoid blaming the other person. Remember to state how you or the other person see yourselves fitting into the problem or solution. That is:

- **How do you fit into the problem?**  
Example: "I know I made a real mess by making pancakes this morning, and I haven't always followed through with cleaning kitchen, and I'm sorry about that."
- **Repeat the request (optional).**  
Example: "But I would really appreciate if I could clean the kitchen around 8 p.m. tonight after I get home from Joe's cookout."

**Offer to help.** The offer to help is used to show that you are willing to work on a solution that works for everyone and that you would like input from others on possible solutions. That is:

- **Offer several possible solutions.**  
Example: "If there is anything I can do to help make that happen—help out with another chore around the house, take out the trash, or just do a quick 10-minute cleaning for now and do the rest later—I would really appreciate it."
- **State your openness to listen to and consider the other person's ideas.**  
Example: "Or if there is anything that you can think of, I would be willing to listen."

Following the offer to help, the other person may try to compromise on a solution or do some problem solving. It may be necessary to go through the communication skills again to state your point.