

Feature Article

Recognizing and Overcoming Communication Barriers

Learning the barriers to effective communication will not only help improve your communication, but also your overall quality of life. Below are some common communication barriers to learn and avoid:

Preconceived Notions

These are the preconceived ideas, feelings, motives, and prejudices that we bring into a conversation. Due to the complex nature of our opinions, these preconceived ideas can actually affect what you hear. For instance, if you realize that the way a person speaks reminds you of an irritating acquaintance, be on guard for reacting to that person the way you would react to the acquaintance.

You don't have to try to completely rid yourself of these preconceived issues; what you want to do is recognize them when they come up, and then do your best to set them aside and listen and connect with the person in the conversation.

Bringing Expectations to a Conversation

When we bring expectations into a conversation we set ourselves up for disappointment. These expectations can include how the person will respond to us or how the conversation will transpire. By focusing on what we expect to hear or encounter, we cast a shadow over the conversation and convolute what is actually said. Further, by going into a conversation with preconceived expectations, you close yourself off to any new and interesting information. If you focus on keeping an open mind and reducing expectations for an interaction, you can fully engage in and learn from what is really being said:

When listening, try not to judge how well the person conforms to your standards or other expectations. Listen with an open ear. You may be in situations where you think you have already heard what's going to be said. This may or may not be so. The only way you will be able to tell is if you drop your expectations and listen.

Do you think the speaker is going to take a particular stance on a subject before the person opens his or her mouth? This can inhibit you from listening effectively; chances are you can't completely predict how a person will respond.

Physical Barriers to the Other Person

Body language can often speak louder than words. It's important when communicating with another person, that you take note of the physical characteristics of effective communication. For the best

communication, follow the tips below and make sure:

- You can see the other person.
- You both engage in eye contact. Wearing dark glasses or not making eye contact can prohibit active listening.
- You sit at a reasonable distance to the other person. When listening to a speaker, try to be in an area where you can see his or her body language.
- You remove objects between you. Sitting behind a desk and communicating with a person isn't always best. Try to sit next to the person when chatting.
- You talk to the person in-person. E-mailing and phoning can be barriers to effective communication, as through these two means, you'll miss the body language of the other person. Tone of voice, enunciation, facial expressions, and other physical keys all give indications of what is really being said.

Busy Settings

Try to speak with others in a quiet place. Noise, activity, and other people may all cause enough distraction to make conversation ineffective. By being in a quiet, safe, and non-distractive setting, you can better focus on the person and his or her words and body language.

Written by Dr. Delvina Miremadi-Baldino © 2020





This Month's Webinar: How to Have a Professional and Respectful Workplace

In any work setting, unprofessional, disrespectful and disruptive behavior creates a milieu of negativity at the workplace which impacts morale, productivity and job satisfaction. Everyone must establish professional respectful relationships with colleagues and supervisors. In this webinar, we will focus on what it means to be a professional and address negative behaviors. We will discuss how to respectfully communicate with one another.

Watch this webinar any time throughout the month of March when you log in to IMPACT on the Web at www.MyImpactSolution.com.

Monthly Highlights



National Awareness

Topic: Nutrition Month

About 500,000 Americans die from cancer each year.

Many of these deaths

could be prevented if people changed their diets and started eating with cancer prevention in mind. Log on to the Impact website to view healthy recipes.



Tess: A Mental Health Chatbot

NEW 24/7 mental health chatbot that coaches people through

tough times to build resilience, by having text message conversations – similar to texting with a friend or coach. Research findings show that Tess is proven to reduce depression by 28% and anxiety by 18%.

Visit www.MyImpactSolution.com

Forgot your login information?

Give us a call at 800-227-6007.

Eldercare Spotlight

Life Doesn't Always Have to be This Hard: Solutions for Millennial Caregivers

In many situations, it is easy to identify problems, but far more difficult to identify possible solutions. What can millennial caregivers actually do to ease their daily burden?

1. Play to your strengths: Think about how to capitalize on the values and strengths of your generation, such as collaboration, connection and self-care.
2. Recognize that you are not alone: No one is fully prepared for caregiving. Connecting with others to build a caregiving community, whether in-person or online, can help ease the loneliness.
3. Structure your time: Talk with your supervisor or HR manager about conflicting demands on your time. Recognize that it is important to create time for yourself, too.
4. Stop striving for elusive “balance”: Let go of the pressure to be “perfect” so that you can focus instead on a strategy that works for you.
5. Embrace planning: Planning can ease the sense of crisis, improve good decision-making and reduce caregiver stress. Take advantage of employee benefits like BRI Care Consultation™ to connect to programs and services that fit your needs.

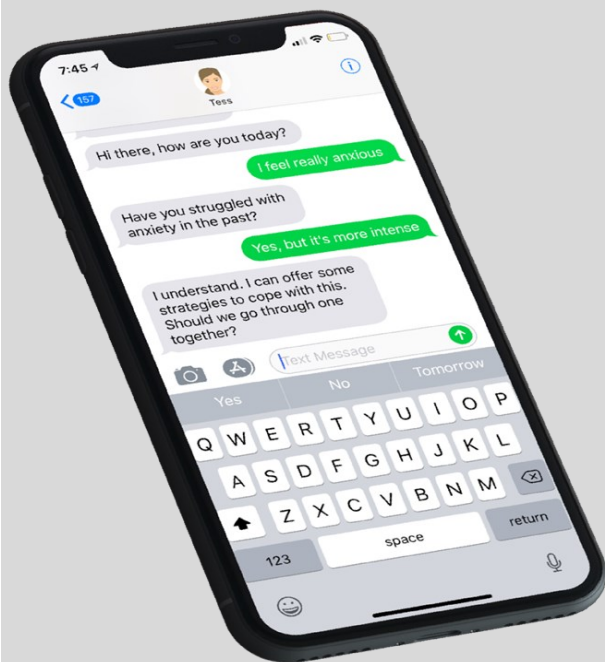
Contributed By: Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging

Information in IMPACT on Wellness is for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional.

You can contact IMPACT Solutions for professional counseling and guidance 24 hours a day at 800-227-6007.

IMPACT EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Tess - IMPACT's Mental Health Chatbot



Tess—Mental Health Support Using Artificial Intelligence

1. SAY Hi

Start chatting with Tess by texting “Hi” to +1 (415) 360-0023
Start Code: *your IMPACT Username*

2. Tess ASKS

Like a coach, Tess works to understand your needs by asking “How are you?”

3. Tess HELPS

Tess delivers coping strategies based on the emotions you express

Did You Know... IMPACT offers Tess, a NEW 24/7 mental health chatbot that coaches people through tough times to build resilience, by having text message conversations – similar to texting with a friend or coach.

Tess simulates how a human would behave as a conversational partner while providing clinically proven coping skills and strategies based on expressed emotion, similar to a self-help book. Research findings show that Tess is proven to reduce depression by 28% and anxiety by 18%. If at any time during a chat session with Tess you wish to speak to, or schedule an appointment with a counselor, Tess will provide the IMPACT phone number and/or emergency response services depending on your need.

- **Tess is completely confidential.** You can stop a conversation whenever you are ready by simply texting “stop” and/or ask Tess to delete your conversation at any time - It’s that easy!
- **Tess is a great resource for teens, college students and adults** who prefer technology as a communication tool or method for learning.
- **Tess is a great way to supplement counseling** and gain access to strategies and techniques that can help you manage stress in the moment.

Watch an informative video testimonial to learn more about Tess by logging on to your IMPACT website at www.MyImpactSolution.com and click on the Tess Tile.

Questions? Forgot your username? Give us a call at 800-227-6007.