

8 "PEOPLE" COMMUNICATION

PURPOSE

Good communication is important to a young worker's success and safety on the job. Some young workers may not have experience communicating in a professional setting and others may need a refresher. This lesson highlights the importance of clear communication and its role in conflict resolution.

ACTIVITY TIME

Approximately 15 minutes

PREPARATION

- The PEOPLE Cards can be found at:
www.promotingusafetyhealth.com
- Click on "Start the Conversation Activities," then find the "PEOPLE Communication" activity and click on the "Handout" link OR photocopy the cards from the back of the book on pages 131–133. Print the downloaded PEOPLE Cards, letter size, four pages per sheet, double-sided, then trim cards along the lines.
- Print PUSH Cards.

DIRECTIONS

Supervisor reads out loud

Supervisor reads out loud

SUPERVISOR READS QUESTION

✘ *Do not read out loud*



**OREGON HEALTHY
WORKFORCE CENTER**

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BACKGROUND

When we are hanging out with our friends, we talk differently than we would to our boss, coworker or customers.

We all know that we communicate by the words we say, but what are other ways we communicate?

✘ *Call on staff to answer.*

Good ideas everyone.

The main ways we communicate are:

- ⊖ Verbal (sounds, language, and tone of voice)
- ⊖ Non-verbal (facial expressions, body language, and posture)
- ⊖ Written (notes, emails, blogs, and text messages)
- ⊖ Visual (signs, symbols and pictures)

On the job, it's important to be professional. Can anyone tell me some aspects of professional communication?

✘ *Call on two or three staff. Possible answers are included in a table on the next page.*

Good, those are some examples of good communication.

To make these skills easy to remember, the next time you're preparing to talk to someone at work, think of the word, "PEOPLE."

P is for Posture: Good posture is important. Avoid slouching, leaning or sitting casually when you're trying to make a serious point.

E is for Eye Contact: Making eye contact shows people you are engaged and actively participating. Try to make eye contact when you are listening.

O is for Orientation: Make sure you are oriented toward or facing the person you are communicating with.

P is for Presentation: Think before you speak. Pause to collect your thoughts if you need to. Approach a conversation with a positive attitude and an appropriate tone.

L is for Listen: Be attentive. Allow others to finish their thoughts before you begin speaking. Make sure you are actively thinking about what the other person is saying to you.

E is for Environment: Take into consideration where and when you are having the conversation.

For example, if your boss asks you to do something that you haven't been trained how to do, shouting "NO, WAY MAN!" in front of customers would not be appropriate. Instead, it would be more professional to have the conversation privately, using an appropriate tone with specific reasons why you feel that you can't perform the task safely.

✘ *This scenario is an optional discussion about professional conflict resolution.*

For the first part of today's lesson, I am going to read a story, and then we will discuss the story as a group.

Mike is 16 years old and works in an auto shop. His boss asks him to drive the cars across the lot where customers pick up their finished cars. Even though the lot is close by and Mike has a driver's license, crossing the busy intersection in traffic is dangerous and Mike knows he is not legally allowed to drive for work until he is 18. Mike wants to talk to his boss about this problem, but he is afraid his boss will get mad or think he is being lazy.

DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR MIKE?

✘ *Call on staff.*

These are all good ideas. Let's consider the steps that Mike should take to solve this problem. Mike should:

DEFINE THE PROBLEM CLEARLY: WHAT IS THE PROBLEM IN THIS SCENARIO?

✘ *Call on staff.*

GET ADVICE FROM A PARENT, TEACHER, OR COWORKER: WHO WOULD YOU ASK FOR HELP IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS?

✘ *Call on staff.*

IDENTIFY GOALS FOR THE DISCUSSION, AND MAYBE A POSSIBLE SOLUTION. WHAT IS THE RESOLUTION THAT MIKE WANTS IN THIS SCENARIO? ANYONE HAVE AN IDEA OF WHAT A SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM COULD BE?

✘ *Call on staff.*

Let's find out what Mike decided to do:

First, Mike asked an experienced co-worker, Mark, for help. Mark had worked at the auto shop for 6 years, and agreed that Mike shouldn't be asked to drive the cars to the lot. He suggested that Mike talk to his supervisor after his lunch, when he is always in a good mood.

Mike thought about his goals in talking with his supervisor; he wanted someone else to drive the cars to the lot so he wouldn't have to.

With advice from his coworker, and a plan for the discussion, Mike approached his boss after lunch and asked to have a meeting. When Mike explained the problem to his boss, at first it seemed he was mad because his face turned beet red. It turns out his boss was just embarrassed! He thought Mike was 18 the whole time, not 16! He agreed that Mark or another staff member would drive cars to the lot, and thanked Mike for letting him know about the problem in such a professional manner. He told Mike that he would have been in big trouble if there was an accident when he was driving the cars to the pick-up lot.

ACTIVITY

Now that we've reviewed the six rules of "PEOPLE," we're ready to practice good communication skills.

I'm handing out cards to everyone; don't show your card to anyone else because you will need to use it for the activity.

✘ *Hand out PEOPLE cards.*

We are going to play Communication Charades. We will be getting into groups of three. Find two people who have cards of colors different from yours.

✘ *Wait for everyone to get into groups.*

There are one phrase and two emotions on your card. Do not show them to anyone else.

One at a time, each person on the team will say the phrase while demonstrating emotions listed on the card.

Your team will try to guess the emotions you were given on your card.

You will have a few minutes to complete this activity.

When you are done, sit down so I know you're done.

✘ *Give staff several minutes.*

Time is up. How did you do? Remember that you are not only communicating through your words, but also your tone of voice and body language. Professional communication is important to being heard on the job. Remember "PEOPLE" to help you communicate effectively.

If you have tried to speak up for yourself and your boss does not adequately address your safety concerns, remember that you can contact the Occupational Health & Safety Administration (OSHA) or the appropriate state or county officials. The law protects you from being retaliated against or punished for reporting safety concerns or discrimination.

PUSH FORWARD

✘ *Pass out PUSH cards.*

On your card is a link to the Promoting U through Safety and Health page (www.promotingusafetyhealth.com). If you follow this page you can learn about other ways to stay safe at home and at work.

8 "PEOPLE" COMMUNICATION CARDS

