

Communication Skills



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Overview

This module is of very broad and general interest to all who are studying or working.

It will focus specifically on helping you to understand the art of sending clear messages, the art of listening actively and how to overcome barriers to communication. The module shows how important communication skills are to working in a group or team and finally, it demonstrates how solving inter-personal conflicts can be largely about communication.

Effective communication is all about getting your messages to other people clearly and about receiving information that others are sending to you, with as little distortion as possible.

Working in community organizations and projects, your communication skills will be important in your dealings with your colleagues and also your dealings with the community.

This module focuses on your skills, but it does also emphasise that in many cases, **becoming an active listener**, yourself, is half the battle to improving the sending and receiving skills of those you are talking to. When they see your willingness to listen, it encourages them to make the effort to communicate with you and both by sending you messages and also by listening to yours.

1. Defining Communication

Communication is the ability to share information with people and to understand what information and feelings are being conveyed by others.

Communication is, 'a two way process'. For real communication to take place, there must be at least two people involved, and information must be sent from one person to the other, or others, successfully

There are many reasons why people communicate with each other, and you are probably familiar with some or all of the following:

to give information	to receive information
to tell others that you feel good about something	to tell others that you feel bad about something
to show that you care about someone	to show that you are angry with someone
to show that you are interested in someone else's message	to ask questions
to give answers	to have fun
and many more!	

Non-verbal Communication

Inter-personal communication can take many forms including gestures, facial expressions, signs, vocalisations (including pitch and tone), in addition to speech and written communication.

All people frequently use non-verbal methods to communicate. For example students often non-verbally show lack of interest by avoiding eye contact or sitting back in their chairs, with their arms folded across their chests during instruction.

Similarly, office staff members may say to a client that they have time to talk but they may indicate unwillingness to actually do it by (non-verbally) burying themselves in paperwork or busying themselves with other things while you are trying to talk to them.

A smile usually indicates that the listener is interested in what we are saying and encourages us to continue, but a frown suggests that we and our message are unwelcome.



Cultural aspects of communication

Effective communication involves non-verbal as well as verbal communication. Just as different people use different languages, non-verbal communication, the language of gestures and body posture and movement, varies from culture to culture. Different backgrounds, experiences, values, cultures, religions and other factors can affect the way non-verbal communication works. For example, in some cultures the concept of 'personal space' is very important. In a discussion situation, in a western situation, it might be culturally acceptable for a man to touch a woman on the shoulder while making a point. For some other cultures this would be highly inappropriate. An awareness of what is culturally acceptable in various cultures will help you become a more effective communicator.

The way people understand words and gestures and therefore the way they interpret other people's gestures them is decided by where they have 'come from', that is, their life experience to that point. Influences that can affect our understanding include:

- where we are born - Myanmar, overseas, city, village
- our cultural background - Shan, Mon, Burman, European, Chinese etc
- our religious background - Buddhist, Muslim, Animist, Christian, etc
- our family situation - single, married, parent, child, family
- our neighbourhood location
- our education
- our employment or unemployment experience.

The importance of communication for people working with the community

Community workers are likely to interact with many different people while doing their work and the ability to work effectively with all depend on their communication skills. Communication is essential for:

- understanding tasks,
- planning and carrying out activities,
- coordinating various people's activities
- providing information on project progress and
- building a positive relationship with clients, community members and other staff.

Without effective communication, misunderstanding can occur and this will be damaging for the community worker and for the community.

Remember, for effective communication, communication needs to be sent effectively and received effectively. Obstacles can occur at the sending end and the receiving end. The message of a 'good communicator', for example someone who prides themselves on speaking clearly, may not be received effectively by the receiver, because the receiver creates a protective barrier. They may appear to listen but not hear. The good communicator then, must not only give clear messages, but open the channels of communication between the community worker and the community. If effective communication is to take place, the community worker must be able 'disarm' the listener, so that the listener removes the protective barrier.

There are also a number of techniques and skills that can be learned to open channels to help achieve effective communication.



Self testing activity 1.1

Why do you think effective communication does not only depend on giving clear messages?

Opening Channels of Communication

Probably the most important way to open the communication channels, is for the Community workers need to show respect for the community And the best way to do this is to demonstrate willingness and ability to listen, i.e. to receive not only to send messages.

Time must be made available so that the community worker and the community can communicate with each other. The community worker may want to discuss the goals and proposed activities, but the community members may have a thousand concerns about what is being proposed. By setting aside a time to meet community members, the worker and the community can open channels of communication which hopefully then allow for two way effective communication.

Self testing activity 1.2



In terms of communication, why do you think a community organisation or project worker must make the time to meet and talk with community members?

Sending skills

- The sender has an idea;
- They want to send it to a receiver.
- So that the sender can transmit their idea, they have to convert it in their head to some kind of code that the receiver can understand.
- The most common code we use is language, so the sender converts their message or idea into words.
- If the communication is face to face, the 'coding' will also include non-verbal 'body language'.
- Even if it is not face to face, e.g. over the telephone, it is not only the words used, but the tone and the speed which are part of the coding.
- It's not always what you say; it's sometimes the way that you say it.

So sending messages effectively means getting the coding right.

If the receiver is able to decode the message correctly, then they will receive the idea that the sender wanted to share. If the coding is inappropriate, the receiver does not receive the 'idea' correctly.

Sending skills need to be thought of as coding skills. Effective sending requires 'guessing' what the de-coding ability of the receiver is and working out how overcome decoding obstacles. If you don't speak the same language, obviously speaking clearly will not solve the problem.

Ten points for getting the message across

1. You should know what it is that you want to say
2. You should decide on an appropriate time to say it
3. Decide what the best way to say it is
4. Take trouble to make the meaning clear to the
5. Keep the message simple
6. Speak clearly
7. Monitor the other person's
8. Use appropriate language
9. Make sure your non-verbal message matches your verbal message
10. Summarise your message periodically, check that the receiver has understood.

Receiving Skills

Just as 'sending' skills are important, listening or receiving skills are also needed for effective communication.

To receive messages effectively, you should concentrate on the sender.

People generally speak at 150-160 words per minute. However, we are capable of thinking at up to 600 words a minute. You can see that there is a lot of extra 'brain power' which is free to wander from the message and think about what's for lunch, or where am I going tonight. The result may be that part of the message is lost. To focus that needed extra 'receiving' power, we need to concentrate hard when attempting to receive a message effectively.



Use active listening

Listening is different from **hearing**. Hearing is a physical reaction to sound hitting our ear drums. Listening is a conscious choice as to what we choose to allow to 'get through'. 'Active listening' involves concentrating hard on listening and showing the sender that you are listening. Usually we do this by nodding or moving our head, or saying things like 'Yes', 'Right' or 'Okay' or asking interested questions while the person is speaking.

The words and also the feelings behind them

Just as the sender must be conscious of the way s/he is saying something, the listener Also should pay attention not only to the words that are being used, but the way they are said and the expression the sender uses when saying them.

Did I pick up the message correctly?

It is important to ask questions, repeat parts of what you think is the message, asking the sender for confirmation that you got it right. For example, 'So what you are saying is...' or 'what I heard then was...' This will give you and the sender an opportunity to clear up any misunderstandings as you go along.

Listen for themes and essential facts

People often use coding that hides what they really want to express behind statements which say something a little different. For example, an 8th grade student might say something like, 'I've had enough! I really hate school now, I want to leave'. Perhaps what they really want to express is, 'I am finding 8th grade really difficult and I am not sure I will be able to pass'. An active listener should be able to 'decode' this, but without careful listening, the listener simply accepts this child wants to leave school. By listening for tones of frustration or anxiety the alert receiver will pick up on the true message.

Listen positively. Look for the positive content of a message. If a member of the community tells you about a mistake you have made, you can look for the opportunity in it. It might be the chance to learn something which interests you, or for you to clarify what you were trying to do.

Avoid prejudices

Be aware of any prejudices you might hold about the sender or about the content of the message. Talking to a superior, you might be thinking, 'Typical! S/he will never understand. S/he's got no idea what it's like for us staff. This might be true, but the boss might be really trying hard to understand, but cannot unless you provide the necessary information.

Give feedback at the end of the message

There are several ways of doing this: you can paraphrase (summarize) the message or you can repeat it back in your own words to show **your** understanding of the message. You can be sure you got the message right if your feedback is confirmed. Don't forget to wait for the sender's confirmation that that you have got it right!



Self testing activity 1.3

Explain in your own words the difference between hearing, listening and 'active listening'.

2. Promoting communication

Stumbling blocks to Communication

According to Thomas Gordon, author of *'Effective Communication Training'* there are thousands of barriers to communication with others that are created by **how** we communicate with them.

Dr. Thomas Gordon (11 March 1918 - 26 August 2002) was an American clinical psychologist, student and later colleague of Carl Rogers (with Abraham Maslow founder of the humanistic psychology). He was mainly known for his Gordon-Method, primarily a method to improve relationships between parents and children that was later developed into a general communication method to improve all relationships.

Many people are unaware that they fail to communicate because of the way they communicate, unintentionally sending a message that says I don't want to spend time talking to you.

Accepting Language

Thomas Gordon proposes the technique of 'active listening' to promote communication. As discussed in topic 1 communication has several channels that can get crossed if the speaker does not give the message clearly or the listener decodes it incorrectly. When we, the listener use our own words to repeat back what we think the sender has just communicated, we are clarifying their message.

This kind of "feedback" is a part of **active listening**.



For example:

Worker: *I don't like this organisation as much as my old one. People are not very nice."*

If you are the listener, your 'active listening' strategy could be:

Listener (feedback): *"You are unhappy at this job?"*

Worker: *"Yes. I haven't made any good friends. No one includes me".*

Listener (feedback): *"You feel left out here?"*

Worker: *"Yes. I wish I knew more people".*

The listener is verbalising what s/he thinks the worker is saying. This lets the worker know whether the listener has understood and provides an opportunity to affirm that

what the listener said was correct or if they had not understood, to explain their meaning in a different way.

Don't underestimate the importance of active listening, because active listening is a very powerful tool which helps you to communicate more productively with others. Active listening helps you to more fully understand what the other person is saying and also helps you articulate their concerns. The time spent to learn and use active listening will repay you with a number of benefits.

Active Listening

- Helps people deal with and "defuse" strong feelings.
- Helps people understand their own emotions.
- Facilitates problem solving for both persons.
- Makes people more willing to listen to others.
- Promotes a closer, more meaningful relationship between people.

Factors Blocking Listening

Being aware of the different factors involved in listening will aid in the process of communication. Listening is an important part of effective communication. We need to exhibit good listening behaviours and strategies and encourage others to learn them. .

Listening is a process that involves **actively** hearing what another person is communicating and attending to that communication. Listening is how we receive the verbal portion of a person's message. By listening, we can show concern and interest in understanding both the person and the situation.

Listening can be affected by:

- personal bias,
- environmental factors,
- short attention span,
- rehearsing a response,
- daydreaming,
- hot words, or
- through the use of filtering.

We will discuss all of these below.

Barriers to active listening:

a. Personal bias

It can take on many forms. Personal prejudice can affect how well we listen and how we perceive what the speaker is saying. Anger can also cause distortion of the message. As good communicators, personal prejudice and anger must be put aside in order to actively listen and 'decode' the message. Be willing to listen to new ideas.

Use non-verbal communication such as nodding your head or smiling, to show that you are interested. Even if you do not agree with the speaker's message, showing acceptance will let the speaker know that you are at least willing to receive their message.



Self testing activity 2.1

Try to explain in your own words what is meant by bias. Give an example.

b. Environmental factors

Factors such as noise, temperature and uncomfortable seating can cause us to focus our attention on those factors rather than what the speaker is saying. Try moving to a quiet place to continue the conversation, a more comfortable seat, a cooler place. . It is hard to actively listen when we are distracted by outside 'environmental' forces.

c. Short attention span

As we receive a message, we must actively attend to it or we will lose it. Some people have trouble remembering points to discuss later and at the same time listen to the speaker. Try taking notes as the speaker talks, it sometimes helps to keep you focused, and try writing down just a key word to help you remember what it is you want to say in response.

If you find your attention wandering, try 'engaging' by asking questions to clarify and to become involved in the conversation. Unfortunately, modern media have 'taught' us all to respond to rapidly changing images, rather than to pay attention to someone. Concentration is something that you can learn and practice and helps you receive accurate information and indicates that you are interested in what the speaker is saying.



d. Rehearsing a response:

Sometimes, we jump to the conclusion that we already know what the person is saying and are immediately busy rehearsing a response. This may cause us actually to miss parts or even the essence of the message. Other times we may be so busy preparing for what **we want to say** that we entirely miss what the speaker has said.

e. Daydreaming:

Our brain is capable of receiving and processing information more rapidly than a speaker can deliver it. This causes us to have spare time to think or daydream at the same time, but if we don't concentrate on the message being delivered, we may find ourselves more absorbed in the daydreaming than in the message being delivered.

f. Hot Words:

There are certain words that cause each of us to react like to a pin prick e.g. plans cancelled, price rise, punishment. Sometimes when a speaker uses a hot word in her/his message we will respond only on the significance of the hot word, or its implications for us and fail to listen to the overall message of the speaker.

g. Filtering:

Many times we experience attending a seminar or class in which we have little or no interest in the topic overall but have come to hear the discussion of just one item. We call that filtering. As listeners, we often tend to listen just for our 'item' and filter out the rest (possibly the main part) of the message.

Barriers to communication

We already know that one of the major barriers to communication is our failure to listen actively. Other barriers might be as simple as not being able to hear someone properly who is speaking very quietly.

Let's think about some of the barriers to communication...

a. Words mean different things to different people

This is one of the most obvious barriers to communication. How you understand certain words will depend for example on where you were born, how old you are, whether the language used is your first language or not, and what level of education you have received. Many people in Myanmar speak Myanmar, but for many, it is not their first language. If you speak any language as a second language, it is likely that your understanding of words will not be the same as the

understanding of the native speaker and it may confuse your understanding of what is said.

We all know the joke about the Australian who tells people in Myanmar what they hear as 'I came here to die' when actually what he thought he said was 'I came here today'.

b. Badly expressed (badly sent) messages

Most of us have had the experience of listening to someone who has not taken the time, or not had the time, to prepare what they want to say. They get 'off the point' and use a lot of 'ums and ahs' so that it is very difficult to work out what it is they are trying to say.



Example

The school principal who is asked the question, 'What is your plan to increase school attendance?' who then says something like: "Well, um, the previous principal used to, um, etc" but does not say what he or she plans to do about increasing attendance in their school.

c. Losses by transmission and retention

Messages usually lose some of their meaning (and sometimes accidentally gain some!) during transmission.

For example:

You know the children's game, known as 'whispers'? A line is formed and the person at one end of the line whispers something to the next person, who passes on what they hear to the next person and so on down the line. What is heard and spoken out loud by the last person on the line is usually hilariously different from what was said at the beginning of the line.

d. The message is not appropriate in level or content for the listener

Community organization and project workers need to be aware that although they may have a good understanding of their organization or project, its goals and operations, the person they are talking to may not. You need to be aware of each person's level of knowledge and understanding of the topic and work out how to transmit the idea that you want them to understand.



Example

A young part-time cleaner asks whether their job will still be there next year. The listener responds by telling them how the organisation has been funded over the last 20 years. This is meaningless to the cleaner who just needed to know if they need to look for a new job at the end of the year or not.

e. Hearing what we expect to hear

We know that what we hear or understand when someone speaks to us is largely based on our own experience and background. Instead of hearing what people actually say we may hear what our minds **expect** to hear. Sometimes these are the same, but often they are not. An extreme form of hearing what we expect to hear occurs with stereotyping.



Example

We might grow up believing, say, that all westerners are overweight. A westerner visiting comes to me and says: "I think Monday I will start for Dawei". Instead I may only hear: "I think Monday I will start my diet".

3. Communicating with Colleagues and communication among work groups and teams

Part 1. Communicating with Colleagues

It is important that when we talk with colleagues we are engaging communication skills that facilitate openness and acceptance.

Accepting Language

In topic 1 we discussed the importance of 'accepting' language and in topic 2 we talked about 'active listening'. Communicating acceptance of each other is an important factor in fostering a relationship where each person can grow and actualise their full potential. There is a danger that people become what others around them continuously tell them they are. If they are hearing negative messages about themselves, they may become negative.

A language of acceptance can encourage a person to open up, be positive and make them feel more at ease. When they know we will accept them no matter what they tell us, we are helping them to grow. When we communicate in an accepting way, we are using a tool that can facilitate positive effects in people.

Information-seeking questions

Often we ask questions of other people on a daily basis. As with any form of communication, the way the question is asked will affect the quality and type of answer we will receive. The purpose of asking questions is often to gain information from others. **These are called information seeking questions.** There are two ways of asking an information seeking question: the open question and the closed question.

A **closed** question, is one that is seeking a yes or no answer. For Example "Did you remember to buy the rice today?"

An **open** question is inviting an open answer, i.e. one that gives more than a yes or no answer.

Open questions may be used to encourage thought and opinions, they are open ended questions and usually invite the other person to express a whole range of thoughts, e.g. 'What do you think about the way the TV covered the big football match?' (rather than 'Did you see the match on TV?')

In order to effectively ask questions, the following suggestions are listed.

1. **Pause effectively before and after asking a question**

Pausing before you ask a question gives you time to phrase your question. Pausing after you ask your question allows the other person to think about their response. (In other words don't ask the question then go straight on to talk about something else (if you seriously want an answer!))

2. **Monitor your own questioning interactions**

What types of questions do you ask? Do you often ask closed questions when what you really wanted was for the other person to express a range of thoughts in his or her answer?

3. **Meaningful questions**

Monitor how many questions you ask, and the types of questions. Do you think you could make your questioning more effective if you asked fewer questions? more questions? or different types of questions?

4. **Check for Understanding**

It is important that we monitor the other person's understanding. If we are giving directions, to check if a person understands what was communicated, we can ask them to repeat the directions. E.g. can you repeat the directions back to me, so I know you understand them and won't get lost?

It is also important to pay attention on the other person's face, to see if he/she seems to understand.

Similarly, in some cases, when we ask a question, we may want to ask them to repeat the question, to show they have understood it.

By becoming a more effective questioner, you are providing opportunities for others to more openly respond and relay their thoughts. This promotes people to be more reflective and provides situations for them to become actively by communicating about what is occurring. By learning more about your style of questioning you will become more effective when asking questions.

Part 2. Communicating among groups and teams

People working in community organisations and projects are usually working as a group or team.



Working in a group or team situation requires frequent and open communication. The more communication skills that the members of the group have, the better will be the communication between them and the more capable the group/team will be.

Building group and team trust through communication

Effective communication is the cornerstone of a good group or team. The members of the group or team, however, will all have different working and communication styles. So how do we achieve effective group communication?

1. First of all, team members who are committed to working as a team should demonstrate **mutual respect** and the willingness and ability to not only talk to each other, but to listen to each other. That is the beginning of effective team communication.
2. **Feedback** is important in team efforts. Feedback allows us to let others know how they are doing, and it lets us know information about our own performance. Removing barriers to feedback increases the level of shared information within the group and in turn the level of the performance capability of the group.
3. Establishing a **common vocabulary** is another key to effective communication among the group or team. Sometimes technical language can be an obstacle; it can exclude members of the group not familiar with the technical language from joining in the discussion. Knowledge of this technical language may be necessary and useful, and if that is the case, it is necessary for all the members of the team to become familiar with the technical language. Then all share this 'common vocabulary'.

4. *Shared trust* between team members can be built up by using accepting language and active listening. The result will be that team members are not afraid to give feedback and not afraid to ask questions. This is a way to establish positive cooperation.



Self testing Activity 3.1 (case-study)

Sen received a written report from Ming. A few days later, Sen wants to meet him to comment the report, and provide a feedback. Here are 2 kinds of responses that Sen could say:

- a. Hello Ming, I read your report. I am happy that this time you gave me on time. I think you described well the project and its progress. Next time, it would be better if you also include the list of participants, do you understand what I mean ?
- b. Hello Ming, I read your report. I am surprised: do you think it is useless to write the list of participants? Now I need to write it by myself because you have to take the train. I am quite busy, so I hope I can finish it today...

In which case Sen provides a **feedback** encouraging performance, **information sharing** and **trust**? Explain why.

4. Avoiding and Resolving Conflicts

Communication and Conflict

This module is about communication not about conflict resolution, but it is useful to understand that effective communication will be an important factor in helping to avoid conflict, and when conflict does occur, in helping to resolve it. Therefore, dealing with conflict is an example of the application of communication skills.

How do you respond to conflict?

In order to evaluate how you respond to conflict, list the people with whom you occasionally have conflict. Then use the form below by placing a check mark by the description of the conflict strategy you use when dealing with each of the people you have listed (persons A, B, C etc).

	Conflict person	A	B	C	D
1.	Avoid the person.				
2.	Change the subject.				
3.	Admit that you are wrong, even if you are not.				
4.	Give in.				
5.	Pretend you agree.				
6.	Whine or complain until you get your way.				
7.	Play the martyr. Give in, but let the other person know how much you are suffering.				
8.	Try to reach a compromise.				
9.	Try to understand the other person's point of view.				
10.	Try to find a new solution both of you will find acceptable.				
11.	Be persistent. Wear down the opposition.				
12.	Use your authority. Order the other person to obey you.				
13.	Use sarcasm or ridicule.				
14.	Defend your position.				
15.	Use your power to win your position.				
16.	Acknowledge the conflict and work for consensus.				
17.	Other:				

What is a problem?

We should define what it is we are discussing when we talk about a problem. From our life experiences, we tend to think of a problem as something that has gone wrong. This is not necessarily so.

A problem has been defined as 'something for which we do not have a ready response'. So, let's say that a problem is something that happens, which requires a solution to be worked out and acted on.



Self testing activity 4.1

Write down in your own words what is meant by a 'problem'.

Problem solving

We rarely think about it, but we spend a lot of time problem solving every day, at home, at work or at study. Many of the issues we deal with are so much a part of our lives that we no longer think about them as problems, but while working in community organizations and projects it is useful to look at how we deal with problems, and what is our problem-solving method.

For example:

It can be as simple as getting dressed in the morning. The problem is what do I wear today? We think about:

- what the weather is like
- where we are going on the day in question
- what we will be doing on that day
- what is clean and ready to wear
- how we feel.

Having considered all of this, we may be led to put on the only thing that fits all requirements, or to choose between two or three possibilities.

What we have done is to use a problem solving model. We have considered the factors involved, reached a possible solution or solutions and would then take action to put on the outfit of choice.

Problem solving model applied to conflict

Let's take a closer look at this procedure. When a conflict arises, we can recognise it as a problem that requires a problem-solving model. The following model is built on communication skills. It is designed to allow the person to solve problems in a non-confrontational manner by utilising appropriate communication skills. The model utilises five steps in which participants in the conflict **communicate** ideas, personal preferences, alternatives, and solutions to one another.

1. Step One:

Identify the Problem - Put the problem into your own words. Try to use an "I message" to communicate your feelings. Now use active listening and allow the other person the opportunity to communicate their feelings through an "I" message as well.

"I" messages give you a way to deal with conflict. "I" Messages can help you separate the person from the problem and allow you to deal with the situation at hand without being aggressive towards the other person. "I" messages let you explain to another person how their behaviour or actions affect you, without hostility.

The following activity is designed to help you practice using "I" messages as a method of solving problems.

Use of "I" Messages

The formula for the "I" message is as follows:

I feel (description of the feeling) when (objective description of the event) because (how the behavior affects me).

Remember, if after active listening the person confronted does not show an interest in problem solving, you are to give a stronger "I" message.

For the last four days a fellow worker has parked her motorbike so close to your motorbike that you have to struggle to get it out of line.

An example of an "I" message could be:

"I feel frustrated when you park your motorbike so close to mine because I have to struggle to get it out, causing me to hurt my back at times"



Self testing activity 4.2

What do you understand by the term "I" messages?

2. Step Two:

Define and determine the causes of the problem - determine what the real problem is. That may have emerged when the other person gave you their "I" message. For example her "I" message might have been:

"I always seem to be the last one to park my motorcycle because I have to drop my young son at school and it is not close by. It seems that you are to only one who leaves a big space between your bike and the next one. Which is lucky for me because then I can squeeze mine into that space."

Now you are at the heart of the problem. Once you have determined what the problem is, try to determine the cause of the problem. What behaviours or circumstances lead to the problem? Both parties must agree on the problem and its causes before you can move to the next step.

3. Step Three:

Identify potential solutions - Brainstorm as many solutions as you can. Try not to think of pros and cons of the solutions generated. Do not analyse the solutions, just list them.

4. Step Four:

Analyse potential solutions - Evaluate each solution. Will it work and what will it entail? Narrow down the solutions and try to find a few that you can both agree on.

5. Step Five:

Select a solution - Decide on a solution that both parties can agree on. Make sure that both parties have an equal part in the solution. Decide who is going to do what and when. Set a date to meet again to discuss progress.

6. Step Six:

Evaluate the results- Has anything changed? Is another meeting needed?

It is important for you to always address the person with whom you have the problem. Work through the model and try to solve the problem **with** the other person. You are applying your communication skills.

Using communications skills to solve problems

It is important to always address the person with whom you have the problem. Work through the model and try to solve the problem **with** the other person. You are applying your communication skills.

Self-testing Activities Answers

Self testing activity 1.1

Q. Why do you think effective communication does not only depend on giving clear messages?

A. *Because it's a two way process that involves effective receiving as well as effective sending.*

Self-testing Activity 1.2

Q. In terms of communication, why do you think a community organisation or project worker must make the time to meet and talk with community members?

A. *Because the community organization or project workers need to hear what the community have to say and need the community to listen to what they want to say.*

Self-testing Activity 1.3

Q. Explain in your own words the difference between hearing, listening and 'active listening'.

A. Hearing has to do with sounds entering your ears.

Listening has to do with your brain registering that someone is sending a message.

Active listening has to do with positively focusing on receiving and understanding the message.

Self-testing Activity 2.1

Q. Try to explain in your own words what is meant by bias. Give an example.

A. *The answer should be to do with not giving a fair hearing or fair treatment.*

Self-testing Activity 3.1 (Case-study)

- In case a), Sen starts by 2 positive comments, which is good to establish a good communication and get Ming's attention. Then he suggests some improvement for next time, but doesn't say it as a critic. At the end, he also ask Ming if he understood, which is a good way to open for discussion and know Ming idea and feeling.
- In case b), Sen starts to mention the negative comment, and really complains about it. Ming will probably not feel happy, even if he spent many hours to write the report. It doesn't help for a good collaboration in the future, as Ming will certainly be afraid to disappoint Sen.

Self testing activity 4.1

Q. Write down in your own words what is meant by a 'problem'.

A. *A situation that requires a response but where the correct or appropriate response is not immediately clear.*