GENERAL 03

Communication and presentation techniques

To better understand communication processes

Start course >

GENERAL MODULE 3

Communication and presentation techniques

This module will help you to better understand communication processes. It will show you how important it is to understand the needs and wishes of your target group. And it will help you to find effective ways to deal with conflict situations. This will make it easier for you to communicate your ideas in the best possible way.

Hands-on SHAFE

What will you learn in this module

1 | You will get to know the central concepts of communication.

2 | You will learn to communicate in a group-oriented way.

3 | You will learn to avoid conflict in communication.

4 | You will explore the concepts of plain and non-discriminatory language.
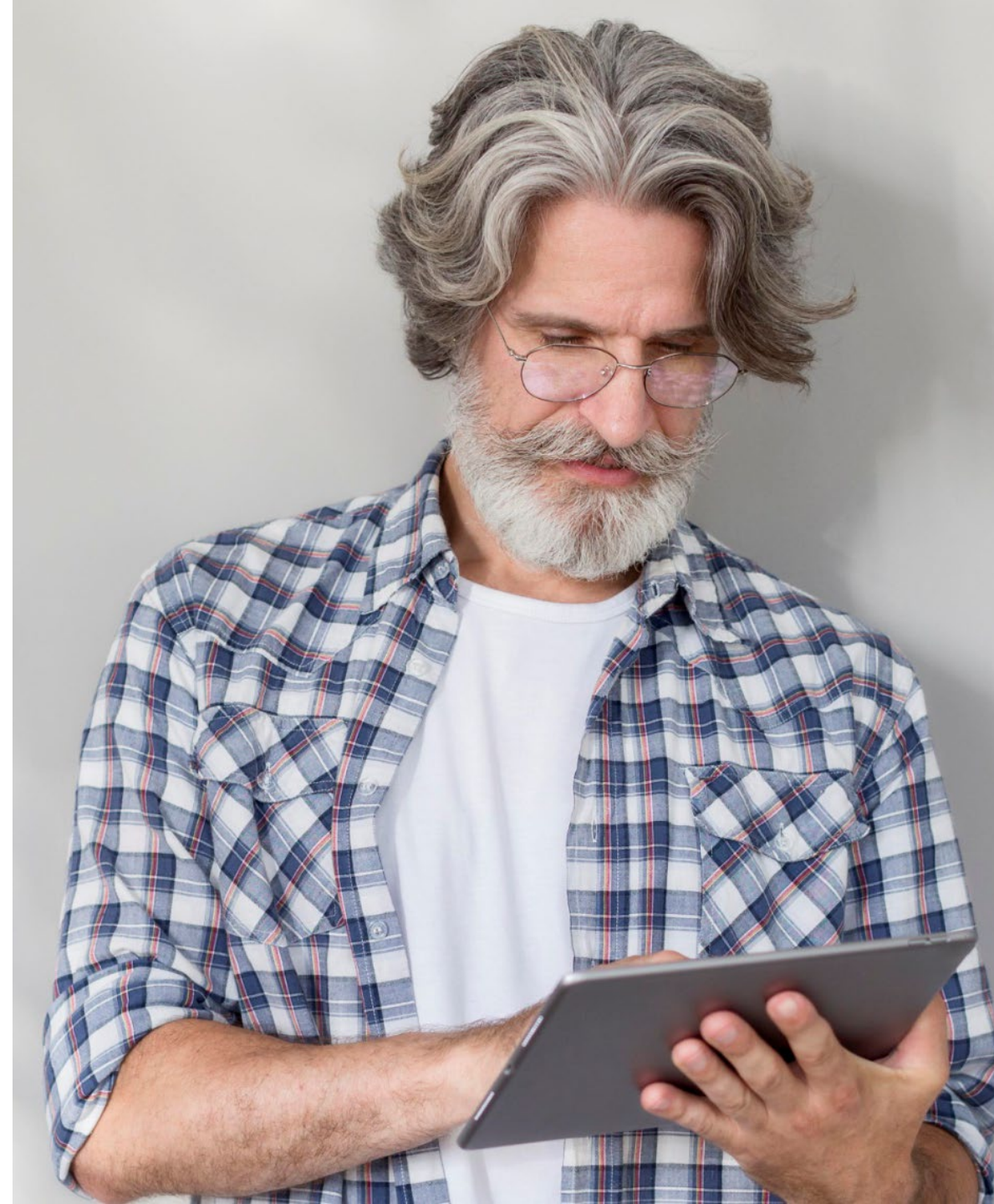
Chapter summary

1	What is communication and why do conflicts occur?
2	How can we deal with conflicts?
3	How can we use language consciously?
4	Some helpful communication techniques

What is communication and why do conflicts occur?

We communicate regularly every day, both verbally and non-verbally. We are even communicating when we think that we are not. So it is important to understand how communication works. In this chapter we will explore communication, conflicts and the language we use. We will find solutions for dealing with conflicts and will learn to use plain and non-discriminatory language.

What will you learn in this chapter

1 | You will get to know the central concepts of communication.

2 |

What is communication?

When hearing the word communication, most people first think of a conversation. That is, two or more people talking to each other.

Spoken language is an important way to communicate. But this is only one possible way to communicate. Humans can also communicate via signs. For example, through gestures and facial expressions. Or via written signs.

The definition of communication is therefore very broad.

*"**Communication**, the exchange of meanings between individuals through a common system of symbols." (***Encyclopedia Britannica)**

Some other definitions of communication

"Sharing of experiences on the basis of commonness." (**Wilbur Lang Schramm**)

"Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions, or emotions by two or more persons." (**Newman & Summer)**
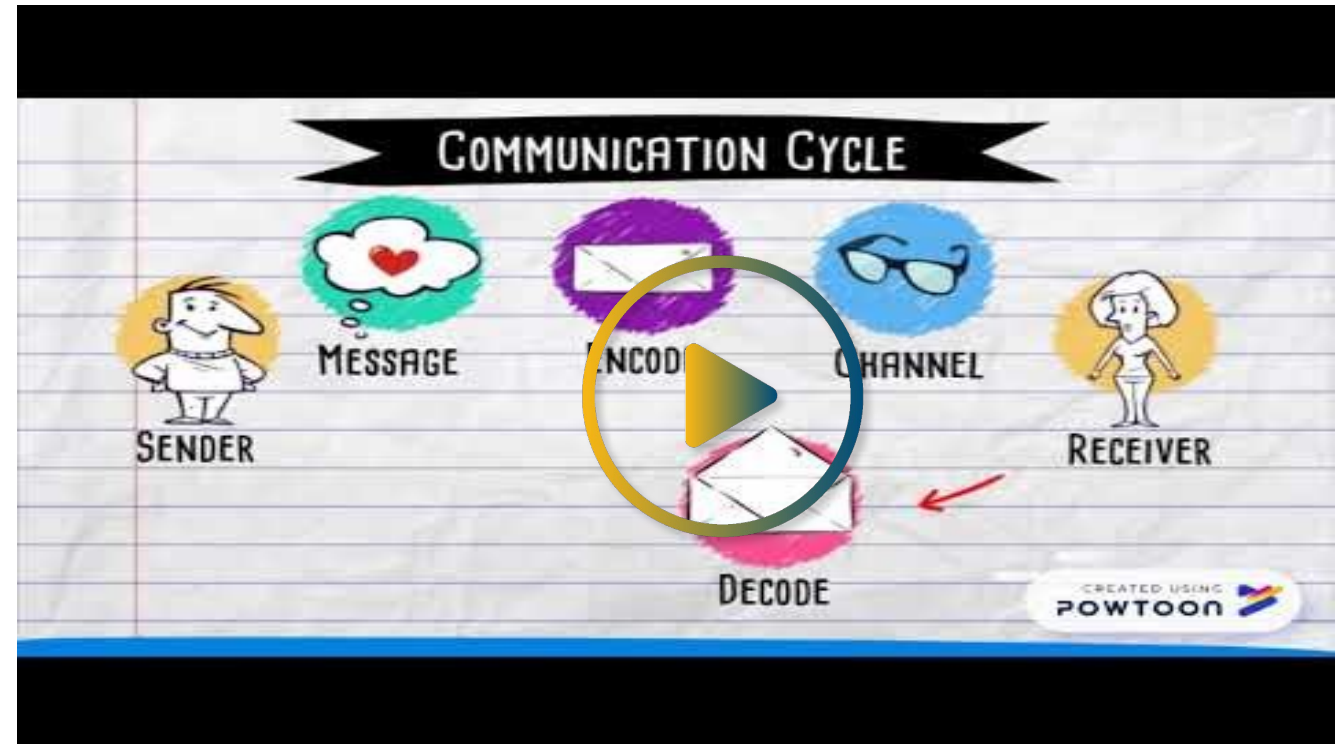
"It is the exchange of information and transmission of meanings." (**Katz & Khan)**

Process of communication

Communication involves two or more people exchanging information. This can happen in different ways. To better understand this process, we can use a model to illustrate it. In this model, we differentiate between the **sender** and the **receiver**. Let's have a look at how the process works.

Challenges in communication

As we saw in the video, communication can be understood as the exchange of information between two people. The message is encrypted by the sender and must be decrypted by the receiver. However, this decryption can only take place correctly if both use the same characters. And both have the same understanding of these characters. To point out these problems, we will often talk about **barriers**. But more on this later.
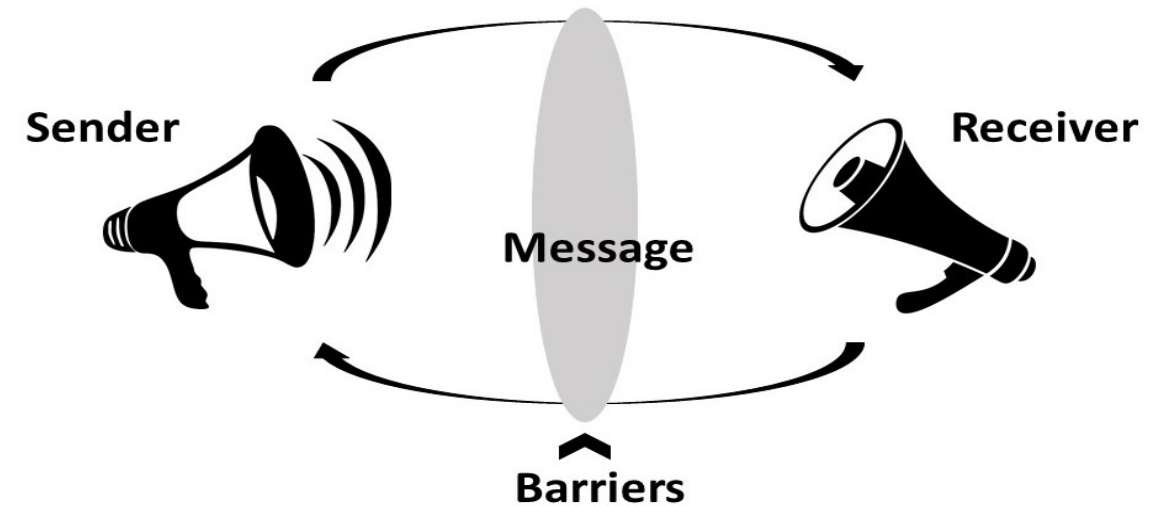
Example case

Teresa (83) gets a visit from her granddaughter. She helps her with the new smartphone every time she calls around. Teresa uses the smartphone to watch the pictures her children and grandchildren send her.

Teresa's granddaughter says, "Look, it's very simple. Swipe left, go to the app, scroll down and then you can reply! I can do it really quickly!"

What barriers and problems could there be with this interaction? First think for yourself. Then continue with the example on the next page.

If you are interested in learning more about working with technology, please look at the ==SMART modules==*.*

In particular, Teresa and her granddaughter may together use SMART_01, SMART_02 and SMART_03 to learn about and practice using a smartphone for managing calls and communicating by text and mail.

Hands-on SHAFE

GENERAL | **MODULE 3** | **CHAPTER 1**   What is communication and why do conflicts occur?

Types of communication

Now we will have a more detailed look at the different types of communication. We will also see that every type has some advantages and some disadvantages.

Spoken Communication

Written Communication

Nonverbal Communication

Spoken communication

Spoken communication includes face-to-face conversations, speeches, telephone conversations, videos, radio, television. In spoken communication the message is influenced by tone of voice, volume, speed and clarity of speaking.

➕ Advantages

- It is time-saving and brings quick feedback.

- In a face-to-face conversation, by reading facial expression and body language one can assess whether what's being said can be trusted or not.

- It is cost effective as you need no paper or computer etc.

➖ Disadvantages

- Fear of distortion of message

- No permanent records

- Unsuitable for lengthy communication, emotional barriers;

- Spontaneous responses.

Written communication

In written communication, signs or symbols are used. A written message may be printed or handwritten. A message can be transmitted via email, letter, report, memo, etc. In written communication, the message is influenced by the vocabulary and grammar used, writing style, and the precision and clarity of the language.

➕ Advantages

- Messages can be edited and revised many times before they are actually sent.

- It can be used to provide a record of every message sent (and received) and can be saved for later reading.

- A written message is recorded permanently so there is less possibility of distortion and alteration of the information.

➖ Disadvantages

- Messages don't bring instant feedback. They take more time and are costly.

- Written messages don't easily convey emotion or context.

Nonverbal communication

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Nonverbal communication is the sending or receiving of wordless messages, such as gestures, body language, posture, tone of voice or facial expressions. Nonverbal communication is all about the body language of the speaker, and it helps the receiver in interpreting a verbal message. Nonverbal communication refers to appearance, clothing, cosmetics, environment, room size, decoration, body language, gestures, facial expressions, sounds, volume of speech and much more.

➕ Advantages

- Emotions can be easily detected

- Good addition to spoken communication, helps to appreciate irony, jokes and emotions

➖ Disadvantages

- Our perception of others is often strongly influenced by prejudices.

- What is perceived as sympathetic is very individual.

✱ Did you know?

When you give a presentation, only 35% is spoken content. About 65% of your presentation is non-verbal communication!

Conflicts

Now we will talk about conflicts. Conflicts are a very common occurrence in communication. And if we think about the types of communication covered above, we can imagine very well why there are so many conflicts.
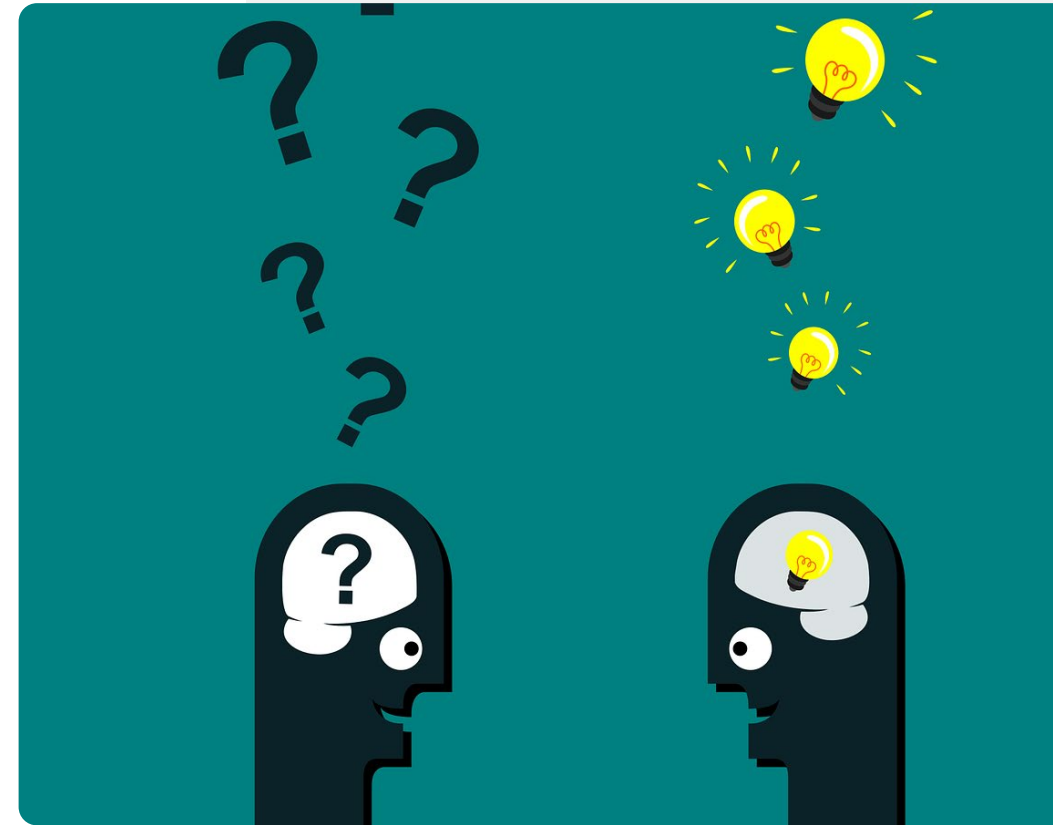
Barriers

Sometimes - despite our best intentions - what we try to communicate gets lost in translation between two people. We say/write one thing but the other person hears/reads something else. And, as a result, misunderstanding and conflicts may arise. Fortunately, you can learn how to communicate more clearly and effectively to avoid conflicts.

To be more successful in communication, we must be aware that barriers to communication are aspects or conditions that interfere with our exchange of information. Let's have a look at these barriers.

Physical barriers

Environmental barriers

There are several environmental and natural conditions that act as barriers between the sender and receiver. For example, street noise or phone calls can literally disturb communication.

But this could also happen due to bad handwriting/typing or late arrivals in a meeting which disturbs a speaker or cause people to miss information. You can imagine that there are many ways of disturbing communication.

Distance

One important barrier is geographical distance. Communication over long distances becomes more and more normal. The sender and the receiver must involve machines as a medium.

Technical problems can arise here. It also happens that too much information is conveyed at one time and the technical tools are not suitable for transporting it. Then the receiver often interprets the information incorrectly.
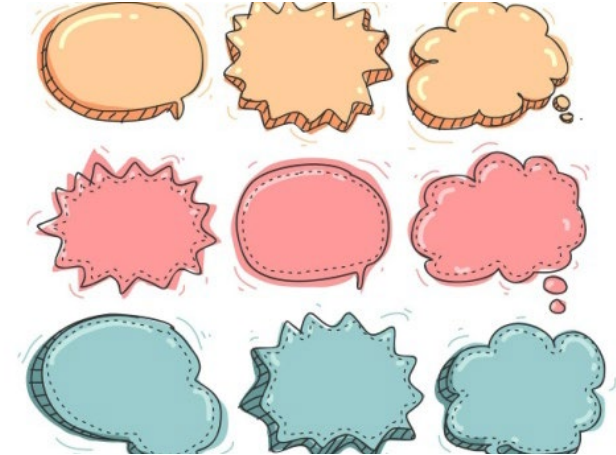
More communication barriers

Semantic and language barriers

Similar sounding words, multiple pronunciations, multiple meanings, different languages, no clarity in speech, using jargon, not being specific.

Socio-psychological barriers

Different attitudes and opinions, emotions, stress, fields of experience, group identification, distrust.

Cross-cultural barriers

Different languages, values, social relations, gestures or habits.

Chapter summary

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1   You have learned the central concepts of communication.

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2   You have learned how conflicts arise when communicating.

Chapter completed!

Congratulations! You have successfully completed this chapter!

Summary of acquired skills

1 You have learnt the central concepts of communication.

2 You have learnt how conflicts arise when communicating.

Hands-on
SHAFE

What is next?

In the next chapter you can continue learning more about communication.

Restart   Next

How can we deal with conflicts?

We are constantly engaged in communication. We communicate verbally and non-verbally. We are even communicating when we think that we are not. So, it is important to understand how communication works. In this chapter we will explore communication, conflicts and the language we use. We will find solutions for dealing with conflicts and will learn to use plain and non-discriminatory language.

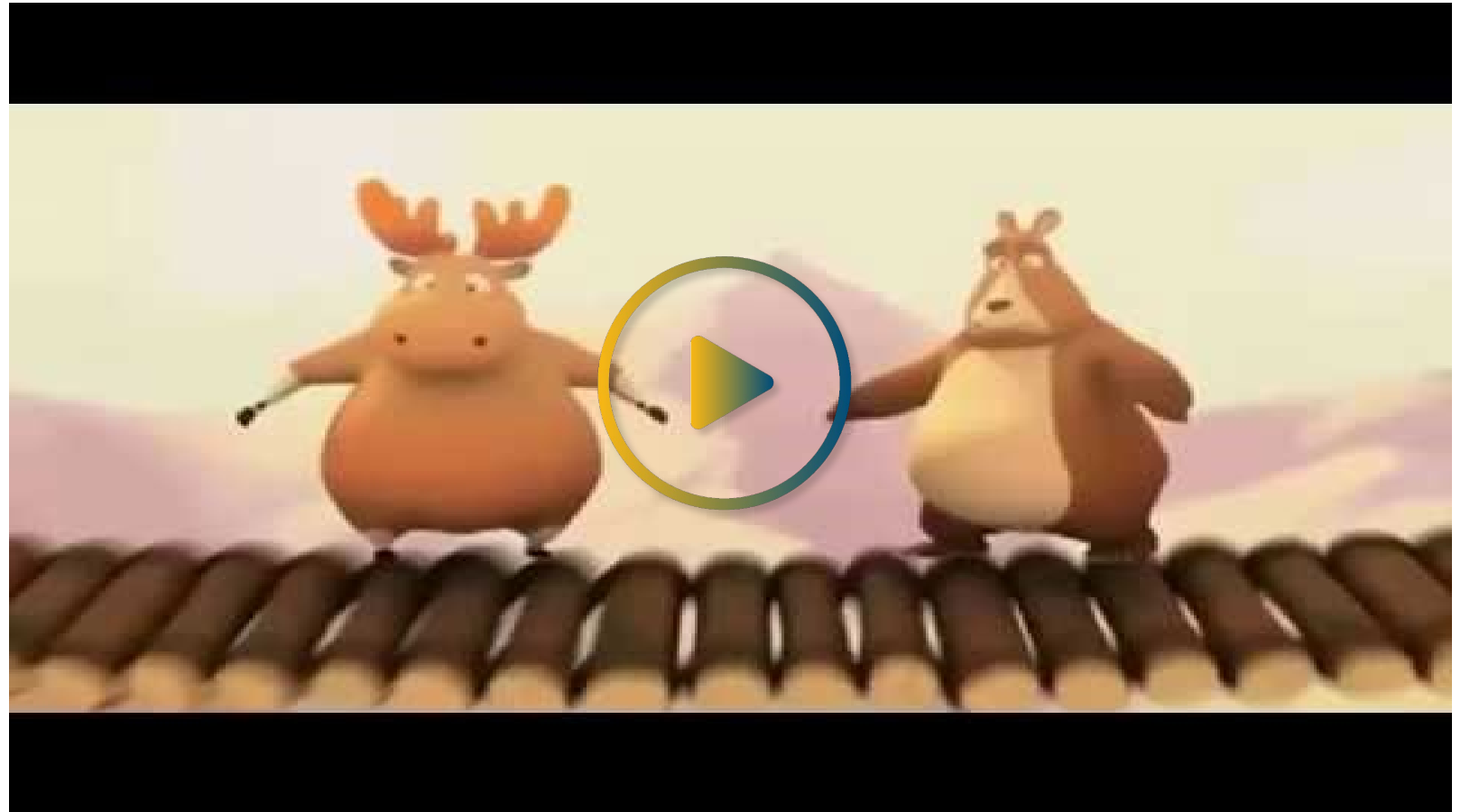# What will you learn in this chapter

1 | You will learn concepts to avoid conflicts in communication.

Conflict management

We can see that there are a lot of barriers and potential conflicts in our communication. But what can we do to avoid this conflict and create a pleasant communication environment?

Successful conflict management

When dealing with conflicts in communication, we can choose between different approaches. The most important and our favorite way is to avoid conflicts before they arise. It is often enough to act in an emphatic and group-oriented way and keep some basic information in mind. We will show you some examples.
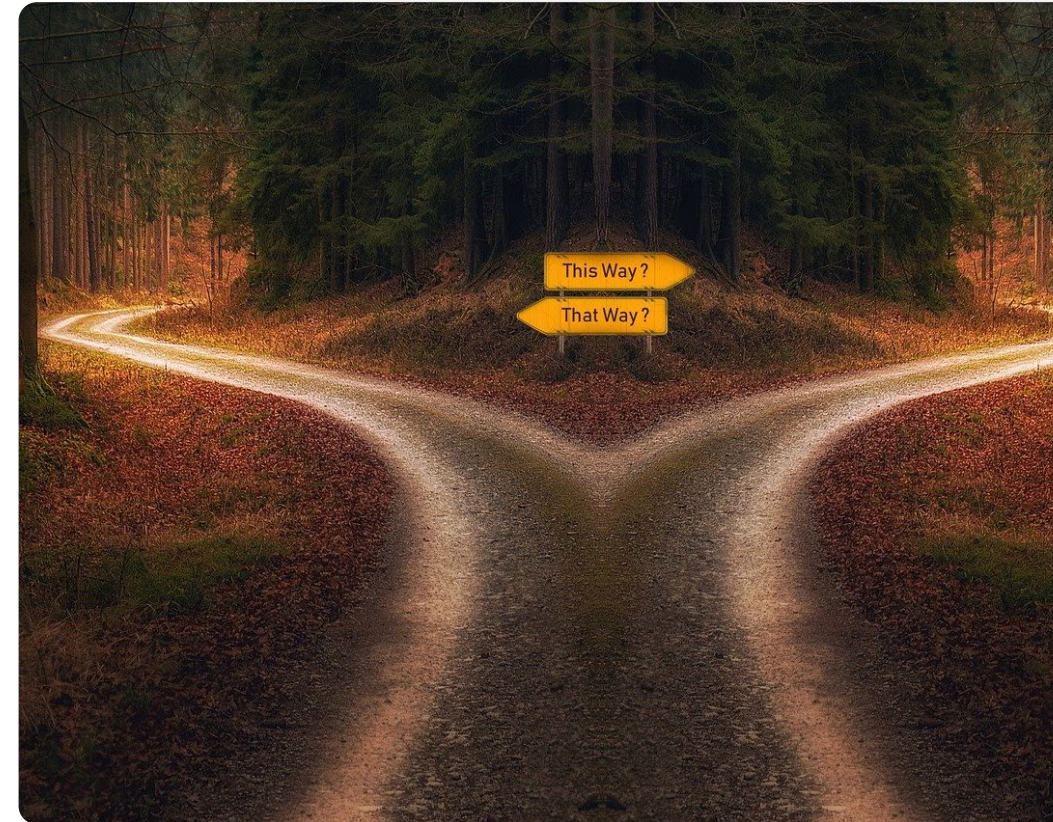

Prevention

Avoid conflicts before they arise.

How can we deal with conflicts?

Let's start with some tips on prevention. On the next pages you will find tips on overcoming communication barriers. These tips will help you to avoid the occurrence of conflict and help you act in a smart way and with self-confidence.

Tips for overcoming communication barriers:

1

2

3

On an individual level

- Select the most appropriate channel for the message.

- Make a special effort to understand the other person`s perspective.

- Pay attention to nonverbal signs - your own and other speakers.

- Be an engaged listener.

Tips for overcoming communication barriers:

1

2

3

For physical barriers

- Arrange for appropriate seating.

- Ensure visibility and audibility.

- Provide a comfortable environment

- Minimise visual / oral distractions.

Tips for overcoming communication barriers:

1

2

3

For semantic barriers

- Use simple language, non-discriminatory language

- Use symbols and charts to visualise the message.

- Be an active listener and give constructive feedback.

Tips for overcoming communication barriers:

4

5

For socio-psychological barriers

- Call for attention and raise motivation.

- Provide assistance and empathy

- Manage your emotions.

Tips for overcoming communication barriers:

4

5

For cross cultural barriers:

- Promote an understanding of other traditions and customs

- Provide intercultural training

- Avoid jokes or sarcasm

- Be careful with translation of body language - ask questions if you don`t understand.

Prevention tips

If you have read the last few pages carefully, you hopefully already know that the key to successful communication is empathy. Empathy means being sensitive to the needs and habits of your communication partners. Reflecting on your own position helps you to show the right appearance and attitude and gives you the chance to act in an empathic way.

Avoiding discrimination will help you to include everyone in your audience and create a comfortable atmosphere. On the next pages we will take a closer look at some techniques to achieve this.
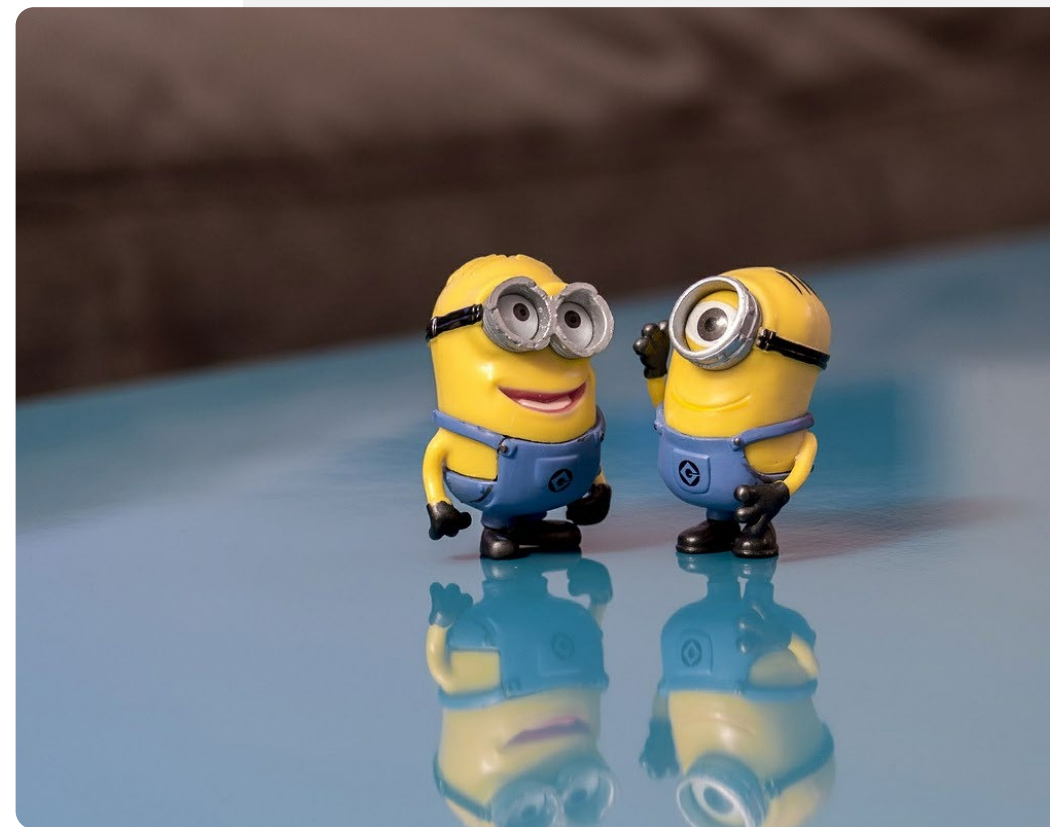
Chapter summary

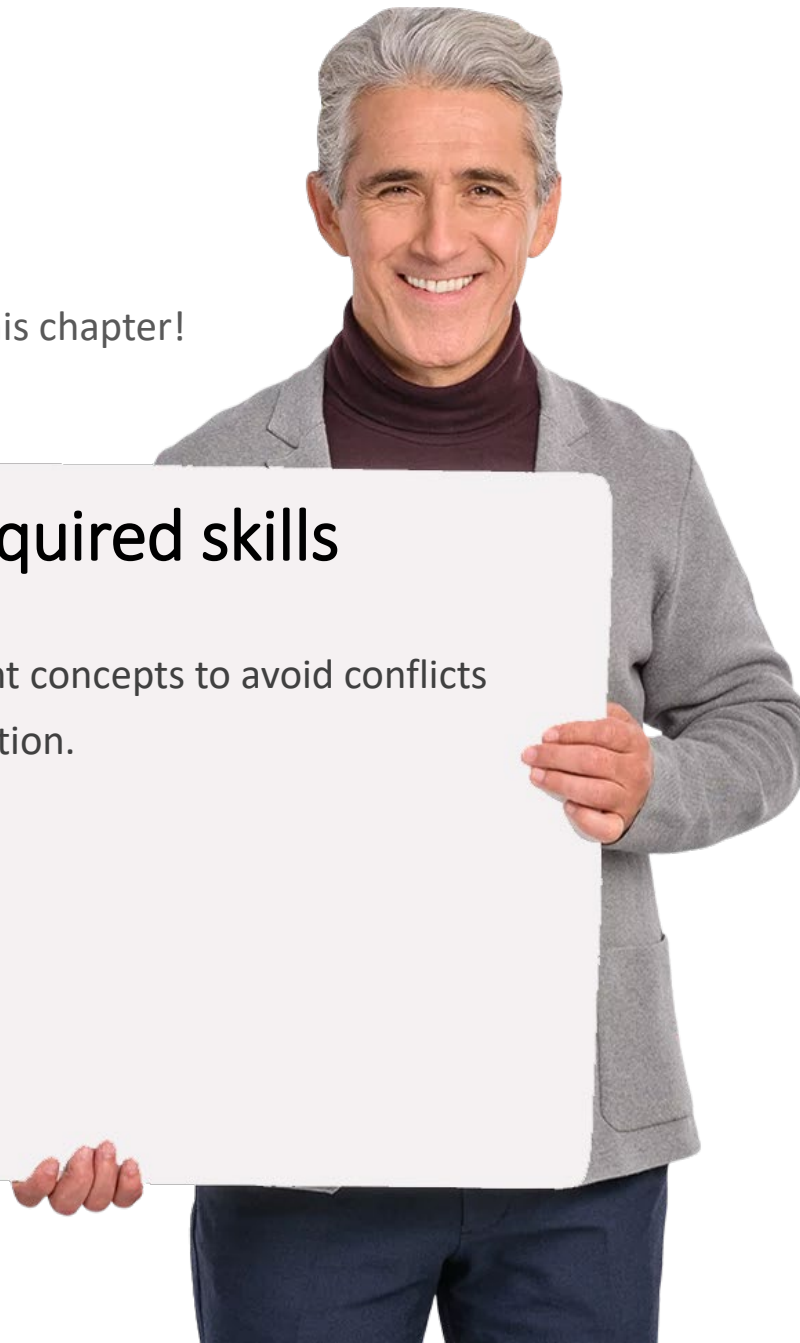**1**   You have learnt concepts to avoid conflicts in communication.

Chapter completed!

Congratulations! You have successfully completed this chapter!

Summary of acquired skills

1 You have learnt concepts to avoid conflicts in communication.

What is next?

In the next chapter you can continue learning more about communication.

Restart   Next

Hands-on
SHAFE

How can we use language consciously?

We use language so naturally that we often don't think about what words actually mean. There are many terms that exclude or discriminate against people even though we have no intention of doing so. In the following chapter we will introduce you to the concept of plain language and non-discriminatory language.

What will you learn in this chapter

1 | You will explore the concepts of plain language.

2 |

What is plain language?

When we write or speak, we often use technical terms or slang. And especially when we write, we pack a lot of information into one sentence. This makes it difficult for many people to find the important information or to understand us. In this chapter we will therefore introduce the concept of Plain Language.

Discrimination

Let us first clarify the term "discrimination". As we can see in the definition on the right, discrimination is based on unequal action or speech.

Discrimination can be a result of ideologies such as racism, sexism, ageism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, classism, ableism and many more.

People are seen as part of a large group and no longer as individual human beings.

Ignoring special needs can also lead to discrimination and exclusion.

*"**Discrimination,** the intended or accomplished differential treatment of persons or social groups for reasons of certain generalized traits**."***
*(***Encyclopedia Britannica)**

Plain language

Semantic barriers

People, newspapers or books are often hard to understand. Unusual, academic words or long sentences with many statements are overwhelming for many.

Plain language

Use simple language. Ask yourself if you can choose shorter sentences or simpler words. This also helps people who are not native speakers.

Key elements of plain language

These are key elements for using plain language. It is helpful to think about what the really important message is.

- Ask yourself what is really needed.

- Explain what your audience can expect.

- Use short sentences and paragraphs.

- Use common and everyday words.

- Use active language, not passive.

- Use "you" and other pronouns.

Quote

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"It is not baby talk, nor is it a simplified version of the English language. Writers of plain English let their audience concentrate on the message instead of being distracted by complicated language."

Robert Eagleson

What is
non-discriminatory language?

Language is not neutral because it mirrors our social conditions. Thus, language can also be hurtful or exclusionary. But our language also changes again and again. In this chapter we will look at the concept of non-discriminatory language.
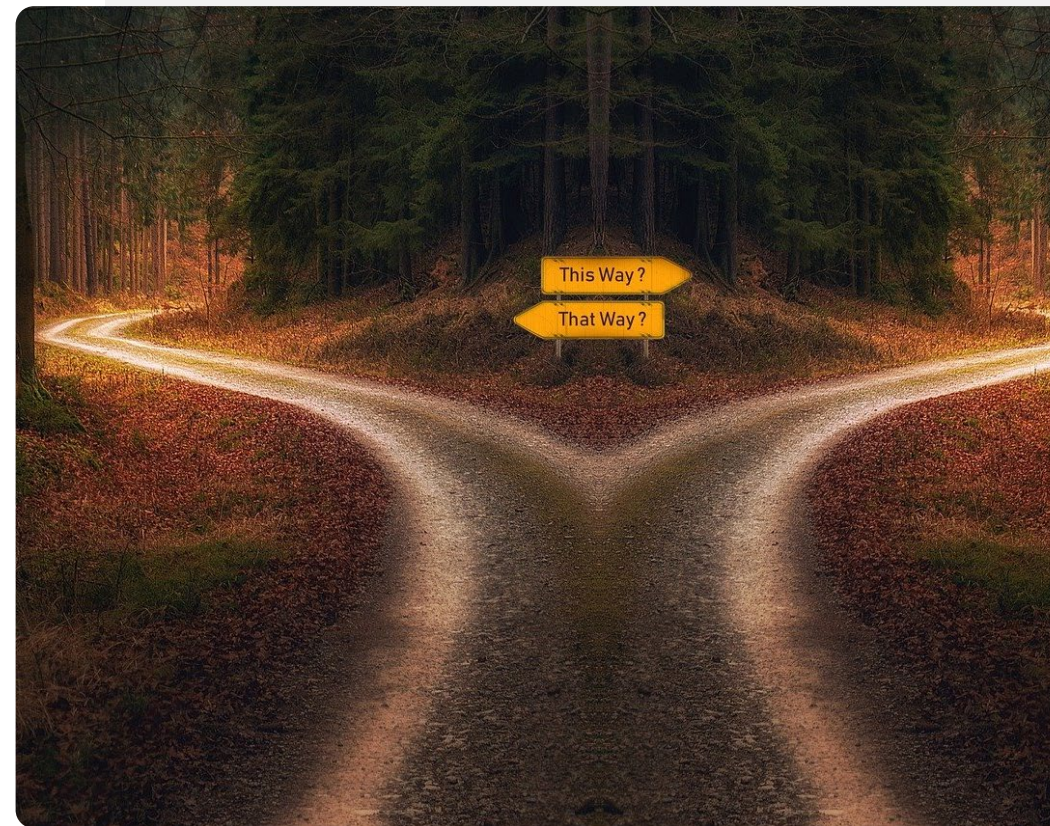
Non-discriminatory language

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Hurtful and ignorant behaviour

Discriminatory language is often used. And often we don't recognise it because there are a lot of discriminatory terms and words in our everyday language.

Non-discriminatory language

Reflect on your own position and have an eye for other people's needs and wishes. Non-discriminatory language promotes inclusion.

Key elements of non-discriminatory language

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Non-discriminatory language has a lot to do with empathy. It is a human need not to harm one's communication partner. Even if some expressions are new at first, they will quickly become familiar.

- Keep in mind the wishes and needs of people who are discriminated against.

- Understand that everyday language is sometimes discriminatory .

- Accept that words that are normal for you can be hurtful for others.

- Avoid gender role stereotyping.

- Avoid highlighting minority groups unless it is necessary.

Examples for non-discriminatory language

⊖ Common version

- Each participant is responsible for material on loan to him

- Students include older housewives

- An old man

⊕ Alternative

- Participants are responsible for material they borrow

- Students include older people

- A man

More information

Here you can find more information and examples about non-discriminatory language:

https://www.hr.uwa.edu.au/policies/policies/equity/language

Example case

Teresa (83) attends a lecture at the city hall with her two friends Tom and Maria. A young man talks about technology and digitalisation.

He says: "All old people need help. They don't understand this new technology and besides, they have no interest in dealing with it."

Teresa and her friends are very upset by this statement. Remember the first example with Teresa and her granddaughter. What should the young man do differently?

Chapter summary

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1	You have explored the concepts of plain language.
2	You have learnt the concepts of non-discriminatory language.

Chapter completed!

Congratulations! You have successfully completed this chapter!

Summary of acquired skills

1 You have explored the concepts of plain language.

2 You have learnt the concepts of non-discriminatory language.

What is next?

In the next chapter you can continue learning more about communication.

| Restart | Next |

Some helpful communication techniques

In addition to the conscious use of language, there are various communication techniques and methods. They are designed to help us better understand and communicate content. And they create a better atmosphere and thus make us and our conversation partners feel comfortable. We will introduce you to some techniques in the following.

What will you learn in this chapter

1 | You will explore the concepts of Active Listening.

2 |

3 |

What is Active Listening?

We have shown you some points that will help you to avoid conflicts in communication and to act in an empathic way. The key point is to see the individual person and try to understand their needs.

The next communication technique will help you to understand these needs. It is called Active Listening.

You can perform Active Listening to create a good and productive atmosphere. But you can also use it to moderate conflict situations.

Active Listening

Communication happens at different levels. These are all contained in the message that the sender sends to the receiver. In addition to a factual level (exchange of facts), a message always contains an appeal (What is to be achieved with the message?) and a relationship level (How do the speakers relate to each other?).

Communication also contains many emotions, judgments, assumptions and preferences. So, there is a strong emotional component.

The aim of active listening is to consciously perceive this emotional level.

- This means that attention is focused on the emotional value that the person attaches to an event or occurrence that is actually neutral.

- When listening, the attention is on what is experienced, what is encoded is what is emotional. One must know what is to be encoded in a message, therefore one must focus on what is important.

Active Listening

Active Listening is not about understanding what the person is saying on a factual level, but accepting what they say without judgement and not trying to find a solution to the problems.

The listener's task is first and foremost to get the person to explore their emotional experiences so that they can better understand and thus better accept themselves. It is not a matter of doing the work instead of the person, but of introducing them to the work on tasks and supporting to complete them.

The philosophy of Active Listening is:

- Every human being is unique, perfect, free and individual. Two people in similar situations react to this situation depending on their personality and in their own special way.

- Every person has the necessary resources within themselves to solve their problems as long as they feel understood and accepted.

Active Listening – Prevention and Intervention

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You can use Active Listening in your professional and private life. After having practiced it a little, you will notice how well it works. It helps you to avoid problems in communication and to be sensitive. But you can also use it in difficult situations. The way of Active Listening often creates a space where people can have access to their problems.

Active Listening:

- Helps to identify needs and expectations

- Supports people to discover their own possibilities

- Encourages people to take responsibility

- Helps to recognise emotions

- Helps to create a good communication climate

- Prevents conflicts

- Creates a productive atmosphere to resolve conflicts

Reflecting and Paraphrasing

When we communicate, it is often very important to let our conversation partners know that we understand them. In the following we will show you the conversation technique of reflecting and paraphrasing. Just like Active Listening, these two techniques help you to avoid and resolve conflicts and create a pleasant atmosphere. When negative emotions are involved and people feel misunderstood, it helps to reflect feelings and summarise what has been said. Everyone who is taken seriously is more willing to work on a joint solution.

Reflecting

Reflecting

Reflecting is a listening technique in which the listener reflects the presumed emotional state of the other person to show that they are trying to understand. The focus is on the emotions.

How it helps

Reflection is usually the best and easiest way to stimulate a process of self-knowledge in the other person.

Reflecting - Why is it used?

Reflecting can be used in many conversational situations. Here are some arguments what you can use it for. Remember, it's about being able to recognise and name the emotions.

Reflecting can be used:

- To show understanding of what the other person is trying to tell us.

- To enable the person to recognise their immediate emotional experience.

- To create a close connection between the listener and the person.

- To provide help.

Reflecting - How is it used?

Reflecting can be used in many conversational situations. But how we can use this communication techniques?

- To reflect emotional experiences.

- To pay attention not only to the verbal message (what was said in words) but also to the non-verbal message (what was conveyed without being explicitly said).

- To follow the person without trying to question their point of view.

- The purpose of reflecting is to decode.

- Examples: "Do you feel alone?" "Am I frustrating you?" "Are you angry?"

Emotions

We have mentioned emotions a few times now. To better understand what they are and why we have them, here is a video. Emotions do not only make us laugh, cry or get angry. They also help us to recognise wishes and needs.

The video is in English. If you want to select another language, click on the small Wheel, then on Subtitle and then on Automatic translation. Then you can select your preferred language.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a technique with the listener repeating what has been said in other words to show that the speaking person has been understood. This technique focusses on the content.

How it helps

Paraphrasing helps to really understand important content. In this way, many conflicts can be avoided.

Paraphasing - How it is used?

Paraphasing can be used in many conversational situations. It is used to make sure you have understood everything. And to make sure that you understood it correctly. Here are some ideas on how you can use it

How is it used?

- Repeat, in other words, what the other person has said.

- If you are wrong, they will correct you.

Examples:

- You said that ...

- If I have understood correctly ...

- Is it right to say ...

- So, it seems to me that ...

- I think I have understood that ...

Between prevention and intervention

We started this module by looking at communication processes, beginning with basic concepts.

Communication always means engaging with other people and different settings. The concepts we have presented can provide a framework for communicating in a self-confident and group-oriented way.

We believe that the most important keys to better communication are meeting at equal level, respect and knowledge about discrimination.

Checklist

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Finally, here is a checklist that can help you when communicating in groups. We wish you great success!

- Help the other person to describe his or her experiences.

- Help the person to identify and specify a problem.

- Take an interest in what the person is saying (appropriate tone of voice, create a comfortable atmosphere).

- Value the person's needs, capacities and resources.

- Be considerate of the person's values.

- Respect silence.

- Do not try to influence the person.

- Recognise the limits of the other person through listening.

- Ask questions if something is not understood.

Chapter summary

1	You have learnt about the concepts associated with Active Listening.
2	You have learnt about helpful communication techniques.

Chapter completed!

Congratulations! You have successfully completed this chapter!

Summary of acquired skills

| 1 | You have learnt the concepts Active Listening. |

| 2 | You have learnt what helpful communication techniques are. |

What is next?

In the next chapter you can continue learning more about communication.

Restart   **Next**

Module completed!

Congratulations! You have successfully completed this module!
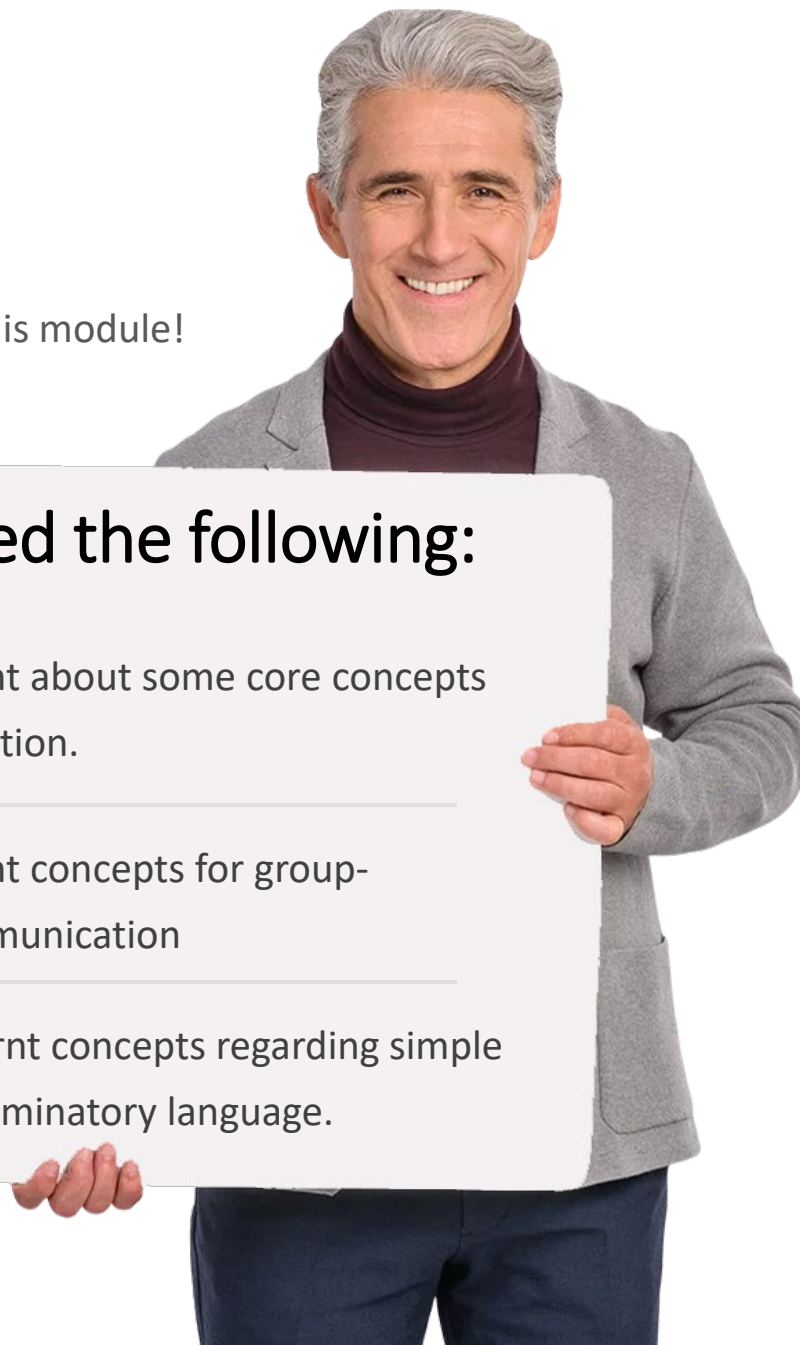
You have learned the following:

1 You have learnt about some core concepts of communication.

2 You have learnt concepts for group-oriented communication

3 They have learnt concepts regarding simple and non-discriminatory language.

What is next?

Now you can either repeat this chapter or follow our study recommendation by clicking on one of the buttons below:

Restart   Next