

Communicating Effectively and Accurately: Three Checklists

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The following checklists were utilized during this Conference workshop on communications. The first two are from an upcoming book by Kathleen McCleskey, *Tracking Volunteers Through a Maze of Management*. The third was adapted from material developed by the United States Navy.

CHECKLIST 1 COMMUNICATING IN AN ORGANIZATION

PLANNING: DO . . .

- . . . You spend time with paid staff members and volunteer staff members planning the programs that affect them?
- . . . You allow volunteers to actively become involved in decisions regarding their programs?
- . . . All staff members know the goals and objectives of the agency?

STAFFING: DO . . .

- . . . All paid staff members and volunteer staff members have copies of their job descriptions?
- . . . All staff members have written copies of operating procedures for their area?
- . . . All staff members have a handbook concerning the agency?
- . . . All volunteer staff members have a handbook related directly to them and their function in the agency?
- . . . All volunteer staff members understand confidentiality and professionalism while volunteering and sign an agreement?

INITIATION: DO . . .

- . . . You send welcome letters to all new volunteers?
- . . . You after 20 hours ask the new volunteer to assess his or her training and job assignment?
- . . . You inquire if a volunteer has not come to work for several weeks?

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TRAINING: DO . . .

- . . . You have an initial orientation for all new volunteer staff members?
- . . . You have the new paid staff members attend this orientation?
- . . . You invite all staff members to agency training sessions?
- . . . You keep all staff members informed about local, state, regional, and national training sessions concerning your agency's field and on volunteerism?

MEETINGS: DO . . .

- . . . You keep volunteer staff members informed about information discussed at paid staff meetings?
- . . . The volunteer staff members keep you informed about information discussed at volunteer staff meetings?
- . . . Each of you attend the others' staff meetings?
- . . . You send out agendas before each meeting?
- . . . You post the minutes from all meetings?
- . . . You have a way for other members of the staff to bring up questions before meetings?

KEEPING IN TOUCH OR WE CARE: DO . . .

- . . . You subscribe to current information on volunteerism and have it available to all staff members?
- . . . You have a bulletin board for all staff members with updated information concerning your agency?
- . . . You have a brag board with articles about the agency and all its staff members?
- . . . You have a regular newsletter?
- . . . You acknowledge all staff members' birthdays?
- . . . You have regularly scheduled awards and recognition ceremonies for outstanding work by paid staff and volunteer staff members?

EVALUATION: DO . . .

- . . . You regularly check the climate in your agency?
- . . . You evaluate training sessions, client satisfaction, volunteer staff satisfaction, paid staff satisfaction, and the overall program performance?

CHECKLIST 2 LISTENING IN AN ORGANIZATION

DO YOU . . .

- . . . Acknowledge the presence of the other individual?
- . . . Set aside all other duties when listening?
- . . . Have the ability to block out distractions such as office noise when you are listening?

- . . . Sit close to the individual with no desk or other barriers between you?
- . . . Keep your values, assumptions, biases, and other barriers from interfering with what is being said?
- . . . Ask questions to clarify what you think you heard is what the speaker said?
- . . . Request feedback and give appropriate and timely feedback?
- . . . Notice the verbal and non-verbal cues the speaker is giving you?
- . . . Use verbal and non-verbal cues while listening?
- . . . Listen with empathy and not get on the sympathy bandwagon?
- . . . Check for the meaning of slang words in the conversation?
- . . . At the end of the conversation summarize what has been said in order to avoid any misunderstanding?
- . . . Avoid cross-examining for clarification?
- . . . Understand the aggressive and defensive behavior is lessened if a person feels s/he is understood?
- . . . Understand that more is learned through listening than through talking?

CHECKLIST 3

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS INVENTORY

This inventory offers you an opportunity to make an objective study of the degree and patterns of communications in your interpersonal relationships. It will enable you to better understand how you present and use yourself in communicating with people.

DIRECTIONS

The questions refer to persons other than your family members or relatives. Please answer each question as quickly as you can according to the way you feel at the moment and not the way you usually feel or felt last week. Put Y for usually, N for seldom, and S for sometimes in the blank in front of each question.

- ___ 1. Do your words come out the way you would like them to in conversation?
- ___ 2. When you are asked a question that is not clear, do you ask the person to explain what s/he means?
- ___ 3. When you are trying to explain something, do other persons have a tendency to put words in your mouth?
- ___ 4. Do you merely assume the other person knows what you are trying to say without your explaining what you really mean?
- ___ 5. Do you ever ask the other person to tell you how s/he feels about the point you may be trying to make?
- ___ 6. Is it difficult for you to talk with other people?
- ___ 7. In conversation, do you talk about things which are of interest to both you and the other person?
- ___ 8. Do you find it difficult to express your ideas when they differ from those around you?
- ___ 9. In conversation, do you try to put yourself in the other person's shoes?

- ___10. In conversation, do you have a tendency to do more talking than the other person?
- ___11. Are you aware of how your tone of voice affects others?
- ___12. Do you refrain from saying something that you know will only hurt others or make matters worse?
- ___13. Is it difficult to accept constructive criticism from others?
- ___14. When someone has hurt your feelings do you discuss this with her or him?
- ___15. Do you later apologize to someone whose feelings you may have hurt?
- ___16. Does it upset you a great deal when someone disagrees with you?
- ___17. Do you find it difficult to think clearly when you are angry with someone?
- ___18. Do you fail to disagree with others because you are afraid they will get angry?
- ___19. When a problem arises between you and another person, can you discuss it without getting angry?
- ___20. Are you satisfied with the way you settle your differences with others?
- ___21. Do you pout and sulk for a long time when someone upsets you?
- ___22. Do you become very uneasy when someone pays you a compliment?
- ___23. Generally, are you able to trust other individuals?
- ___24. Do you find it difficult to compliment and praise others?
- ___25. Do you deliberately try to conceal your faults from others?
- ___26. Do you help others to understand you by saying how you think, feel, and believe?
- ___27. Is it difficult for you to confide in people?
- ___28. Do you have a tendency to change the subject when your feelings enter into a discussion?
- ___29. In conversation, do you let the other person finish talking before reacting to what was said?
- ___30. Do you find yourself not paying attention while in conversation with others?
- ___31. Do you ever try to listen for meaning when someone is talking?
- ___32. Do others seem to be listening when you are talking?
- ___33. In a discussion is it difficult for you to see things from the other person's point of view?
- ___34. Do you pretend you are listening when you are talking?
- ___35. In conversation, can you tell the difference between what a person is saying and what he or she may be feeling?
- ___36. While speaking, are you aware of how others are reacting to what you are saying?
- ___37. Do you feel that other people wish you were a different kind of person?
- ___38. Do other people understand your feelings?
- ___39. Do others remark that you always seem to think you are right?
- ___40. Do you admit that you are wrong when you know that you are wrong about something?