



Communication Competencies

Active Listening: open body language, good eye contact, listening to understand not listening to respond. Paraphrase what you think you have heard to check for understanding. Remember, we speak far slower than our capacity to listen so draw your attention back to what the speaker is saying when you find your attention wandering.

Allow for silence: silence allows the other person with the chance to think and respond thoughtfully to what you have said. Resist having to fill all of the air time up with conversation.

Observing the non-verbal behaviors, paying attention to tone: Most of what we communicate is in our body language and our tone of voice. Use these cues to recognize what is not being said.

Providing Feedback: Effective feedback is behavioral feedback; what a person was saying or doing. Once you have stated your message, wait and listen carefully to the response. If you encounter defensiveness, restate your feedback message to insure the other person understands.

Asking Good Questions: Questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no" rarely provide a rich source of information. Ask probing questions of your Mentor or Mentee that require additional thought and can result in richer dialogue and information. Mentors, encourage your Mentee to discover how best to achieve his or her goals through effective questioning.

Identifying Feelings: Facts don't speak for themselves. The capacity to detect feelings is critical to a successful mentoring relationship. There are four basic feelings that have wide ranges of intensity: fear, anger, grief, and joy. Your skills at asking good questions can help identify those feelings that can help or hinder a mentoring relationship.