

Respectful communication

- ✓ Do no harm - pay attention to the words and intentions you have during the communication.
- ✓ Treat the person as an individual - respect that the person has their own life experiences, experiences of the day and their own opinions and goals.
- ✓ Suspend critical judgment - neither judge or condone because you are not the judge of their experience. This does not mean you are naïve or a doormat.
- ✓ Be “for” your coworker - this does not mean taking their side but it means taking the person’s interests seriously. Remind yourself you are a team working towards the same goals.
- ✓ Be available during the conversation - Place other things aside and focus on what is being communicated.
- ✓ Understand and communicate understanding - one of the best ways of showing respect is by working to understand the other person during the conversation. People generally believe people respect them if they spend time and effort trying to understand them or the situation.
- ✓ Refrain from benign and malignant forms of interrupting: cutting someone off in mid thought because you have something important to say is malignant interrupting. Interrupting that promotes problem management dialogue is benign, for example: “you’ve made several important points; I want to make sure I’ve understood them”.

Sometimes we feel the need to tell someone a difficult truth. While at times, this can be good for communication; however, there are times it can be harmful. Ask yourself these three questions when evaluating whether or not to tell someone the hard truth:

Is it kind?

Is it true?

Is it necessary?