Resolving Conflict through Communication



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Time	topic
10:00-10:10	Introductions
10:10-10:25	Defining Communication & Conflict
10:25-10:50	Assessing Conflict
	Communication Skill: Listening
10:50-11:00	Break
11:00-11:20	Expressing Conflicts: Styles
	Communication Skills: I statements
11:2011:45	Resolving Conflicts: Climate
	Communication Skills: Climate
11:45-11:50	Wrap Up/Final Questions

Defining Communication

- Communication is “a systemic process in which people interact with and through symbols in order to achieve shared meaning” – J. Wood
  - Systemic
  - Process
  - Interaction
  - With & through (encode/decode)
  - Symbols
    - Abstract
    - Arbitrary
    - Ambiguous
  - Shared meaning
    - Noise

Communication Principles

- “You cannot not communicate”

- Levels of meaning
  - Content/Topic
    - Process
  - Relationship
  - Identity (self and other)

Defining Conflict

- Conflict is “an expressed struggle between at least 2 interdependent parties who perceive scarce resources, incompatible goals, and interference from the other” – Hocker & Wilmont

  - Expressed
  - Struggle
  - Interdependent
  - Perception
  - Resources, goals, and interference

Conflict Principles

- Conflict is …
  - Natural
  - Pervasive
  - Value Free

Conflict & Communication

- Occur
- Express
- Resolve

Principles of Conflict & Communication

- Effective communication corresponds to effective conflict expression & resolution
- Communication skills are conflict skills

Communication Skills for Resolving Conflict



LISTEN TO ASSESS



REFLECT TO EXPRESS



BUILD TO RESOLVE

1. Listen to Assess

STAGES OF LISTENING

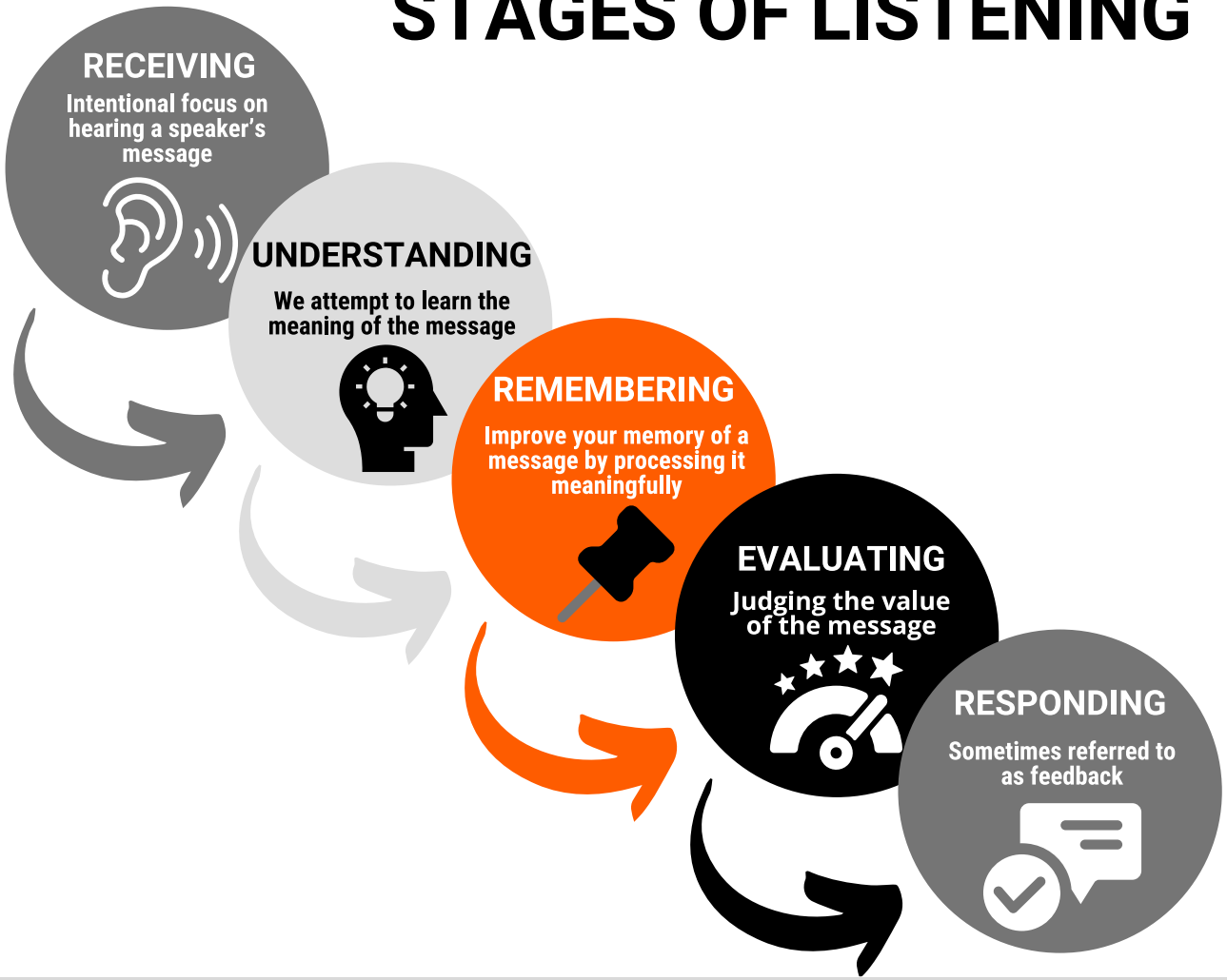


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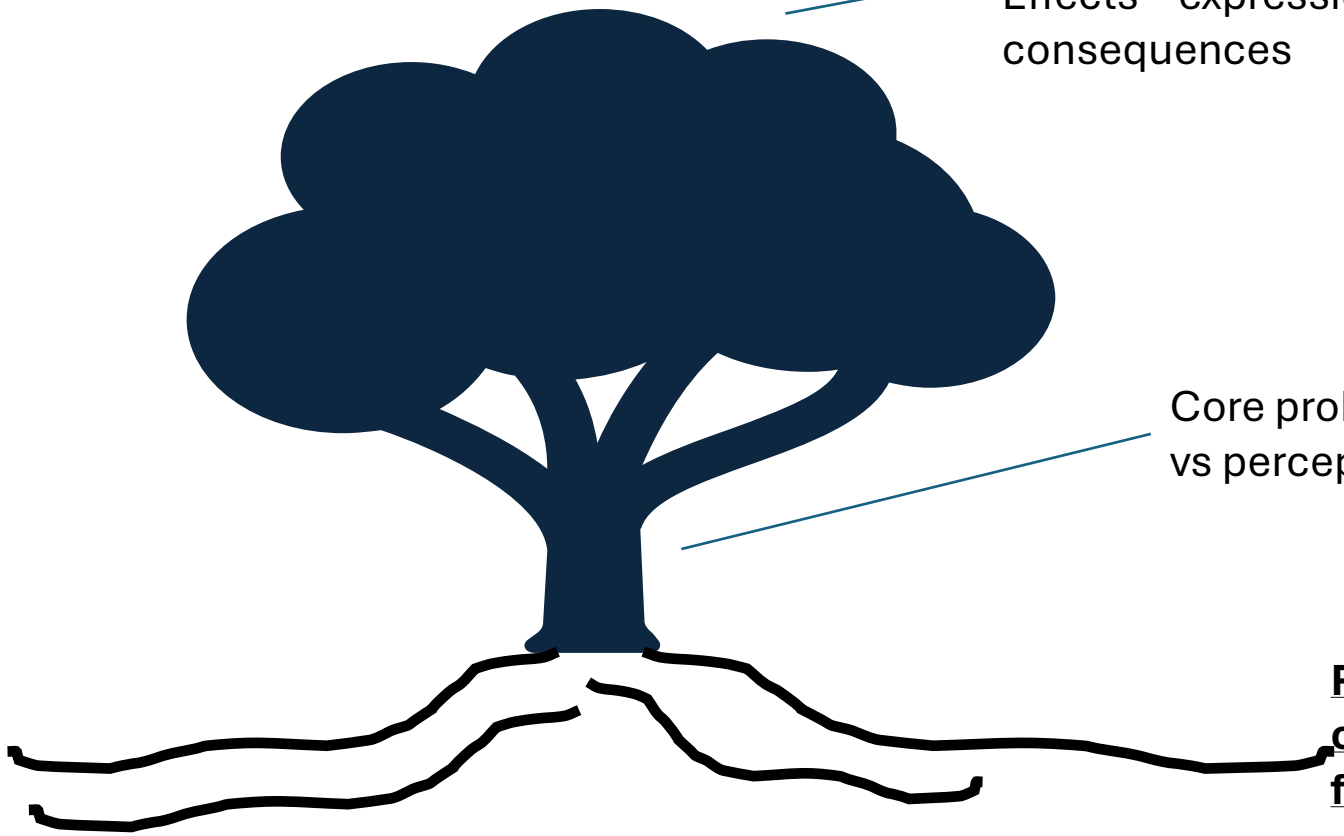
Listening

What makes listening difficult?

What identifies a good listener?

What strategies help you listen?

Quick and clean conflict analysis



Effects – expression and consequences

Core problem – substantive vs perceptual

Roots: causes of the conflict, contributing factors & goals

Listen to Assess

Conflict roots, causes, & goals:

- Topic
- Relationship
- Identity
- Process

Conflict Systems

Listen to Assess

- Levels of meaning & TRIP
- Question perceptions

  What I hear you saying is that … It sounds like you are … and would like to …

  Is that right?

- The “Rule of 3”

2. Reflect to Express

Expressing Conflict – Self Analysis

Conflict backgrounds

- Culture
- Gender
- Role

+ Conflict origins

- Family of origin -

= Conflict Orientations

Breakout Rooms

- For each conflict orientation, discuss:
  - How does your conflict style “show up” in communication?
  - What benefits does your conflict style present?
  - What drawbacks does your conflict style present?

Reflect & Express Goals

- Goals for the content/topic
- Goals for the relationship

Reflect to Express

- Get oriented
- Own your own
  - I feel _____ when _____ because _____
- Have a BATNA

3. Build to Resolve

Resolving Conflict

- Destructive – negative patterns, lack of satisfaction, reinforce elements of conflict
  - 4 Horsemen: Criticizing, Defensiveness, Stonewalling, Contempt
  - Conflict Spirals – escalatory & avoidant
  - Demand/Withdraw patterns

- Productive – productive patterns, satisfaction with outcomes, establish positive interactions

Creating a Communication Climate: Recognize Acknowledge Endorse

SUPPORTIVE/CONFIRMING	DEFENSIVE/DISCONFIRMING
Empathy	Neutrality
Straightforward	Manipulation
Description	Evaluation
Equality	Superiority
Collaboration/Problem Orientation	Control/Solution Orientation
Flexibility	Certainty

Climate Practice

Avoid critical start ups and…

- Turn neutrality into empathy:
I don’t care what you’re doing! I need you in my office right now.

- Turn manipulation into straightforwardness:

I know I told you that taking Friday off was okay, but if you don’t cancel your plans and come in we won’t get this project finished and that’s going to be on you.

- Turn evaluation into description:
This report is awful. I can’t believe you would submit something in this kind of shape.

- Turn superiority into equality

  “Once you have more experience you might be able to offer input.”

- Turn control into collaboration

  I need this done exactly as I have outlined. No getting fancy bright ideas.

- Turn certainty into flexibility

  This is the only thing that is going to work. We’re wasting time talking about other options.

Resolving Conflict (“Getting to Yes”)

Separate	Separate people from the problem
Focus	Focus on interests, not positions
Invent	Invent options for mutual gain
Evaluate	Use objective criteria
Engage	Engage in principled negotiation

Build to Resolve

- Avoid critical start ups
  - Accusations: You …
  - Absolutes: always, never
- Manage the climate

  5 : 1 ratio (Gottman)

Resolving Conflict through Communication

Summary:

- Communication skills are conflict skills
  - Listening
  - Effective expression
  - Climate

Wrapping up …

Questions, Comments, Concluding Thoughts?

Resources:

- Better than Buzzfeed! Communication Skill Assessment Measures: https://jamescmccroskey.com/measures/
- Conflict assessment – overview of different approaches: https://www.beyondintractability.org/artsum/ch6-conflict#:~:text=The%20Hocker%2DWilmot%20Conflict%20Assessment,potential%20transformations%20of%20those%20elements.
- Test your EQ: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/tests/personality/emotional-intelligence-test
- The Gottman Institute: https://www.gottman.com/
- William Ury video collection https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQ_xHcpyTuQRfQtAor8GdOw?app=desktop

