

## Session 2 - Nonverbal Communication

### Main points of this session:

- Nonverbal communication in context plays a significant role in communication
  - Use eye contact, appropriate body language and facial expression to engage your audience
  - **Don't fear failure - learn from it**
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### **Open the session. (5 minutes)**

Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to our workshop on nonverbal communication.

Last time, we learned about the importance of verbal communication. We defined public speaking, and talked about the importance of audience engagement. Furthermore, we talked about the role failure plays in public speaking. If you weren't at the last workshop, don't worry; you can pick up many of the things we talked about already in today's session!

Today, we'll illustrate the importance of non-verbal communication signals. Specifically, we'll talk about the roles eye contact, body language and facial expressions. One more time, we'll reiterate the importance of facing, and dealing with failure - it's one of the most important things one can do as a communicator.

It's time to get to know all the wonderful people joining us today! I'd like you all into pairs and introduce yourselves to each other, by stating your name, your degree, and answering this question to your partner:

*If you could be any vegetable, what vegetable would you be?*

You may have noticed that a few of the spots in this room have some papers upside down on the desks. Feel free to gather around any of these spots to meet your team members and introduce yourself. But whatever you do, do not flip the pieces of paper on the table over. Go ahead now and find a group! If you're not in a group, come talk to me. We will reconvene in 2 minutes.

### **Reconvene for Speech #1. Types of Nonverbal Communication. (7 minutes)**

It's time to keep going. Hopefully, you got the opportunity to get to know some of your group members a little better; you'll be working with them again soon enough!

Last time, we defined public speaking as verbal and non-verbal communication toward an intended audience. We spent a lot of time talking about the audience and verbal

communications, but as a result we spent a lot of time thinking about actual interactions; what happens once you're actually *in conversation* with another party. We're going to continue that for now, however keep in mind a lot of us choose conversational partners before any verbal communication starts. This choice is continued to be made as you make conversation with the other person.

For this demonstration, I'm going to need volunteers. (Get names.)

Welcome, and thank for volunteering. We're going to do some exercises, and I'll ask some questions to you after. To each of my volunteers: I'll give you a line. When it comes to you, read to me like you're responding to something I'm saying.

Demonstration #1:

Their line: You wouldn't take my business? It's my last prized possession!

My line (look between the eyes): You don't know what I'm capable of.

Question to volunteer: did it appear as though I was looking at your eyes?

*Purpose: Eye contact: raising/lowering eyebrows, nodding to agree with a point.*

Demonstration #2:

Their line: You knew that if you dropped the glass, there would be consequences.

My line: But I don't wanna clean it up...

*Purpose: Looking a body language: Crossed arms, sulking, faced away from the person.*

Demonstration #3:

Their line: You have to get caught smoking weed three times in the wrong place before you're fired, regardless of previous charges.

My line: So it's a three-strike policy for everyone here?

*Purpose: Looking at hand gestures: enumeration and hand sweep.*

Thank you to everyone who volunteered! There are far more ways than these that people communicate non-verbally. For instance, a lot of us pick up on communication through mimicry. We're going to be exploring some nonverbal communication without words in our first break-out session!

**Explanation of Breakout #1. Wordless Acting. (3 minutes)**

<https://www.thoughtco.com/nonverbal-communication-activities-1857230>

This is called, “Wordless Acting”, and here’s how it works. Go ahead now, and separate yourselves into pairs. (Use an exemplar sheet to explain.)

Each table will have two blue cards in it, each with the script for two scenarios. In one scenario you will be person A and the other, person B (it will be marked on the cards who is who). Take turns, acting out both scenarios, starting with scenario 1, then scenario 2. In each, case person A will start. Person A will act out their lines normally. Person B, however, will have to respond, not using words, but entirely by non-verbal communication, using the techniques we’ve discussed so far. Here’s the other catch: person B will have some sort of “emotional distraction” that tells them how to act out the line. Choose these by picking up one of the red-coloured cards on the table. So not only will person B not be able to speak they have to communicate a specific emotion. And person A should respond in kind. After each scenario, person A should try to guess what person B’s emotional distraction is. After the exercise, we will do a debrief.

Are there any questions?

Go ahead, and start!

You’ll need as many copies of both skits half with “A” at the top, the other half with “B”. For copies of each mood should be printed and give with the scripts.

**Breakout #1: Wordless Acting. (4 minutes)**

1. You’re late to yoga and definitely not feeling “namaste”.
2. You were up all night finishing a stats assignment and it’s 7am.
3. You’ve just encountered the all-encompassing wrath of your boss.
4. You were preparing for your daily afternoon nap.
5. You're in the middle of a date, and your friend shows up out of the blue...

Scenario 1:

A: Have you seen my book? I can’t remember where I put it.

B: Which one?

A: The murder mystery.

B: Is this it?

A: No, not that one. It’s the one you borrowed.

B: I don’t remember borrowing a book from you?...

A: Maybe it’s under the chair. Can you just look?

B: OK--give me a minute.

A: How long are you going to be?

B: Geez, why so impatient?

A: Forget it. I'll find it myself.

B: Wait—I found it!

Scenario 2:

A: Hey, which friend were you going to see today?

B: My best friend!

A: Oh, yeah, I know them!...I don't like them.

B: Really? Why not?

A: Don't you remember? They were so mean to me!

B: Oh, don't worry. It was just a joke.

A: It wasn't a joke to me, you know I'm sensitive about some things.

B: Toughen up!

A: You always choose their side over mine!

B: I'm done with this conversation.

A: I just don't understand why you're so good to them when they're so mean to you.

B: ...I don't understand either.

### **Debrief #1: Verbal Communication**

Ok, it's time to reconvene.

Each of you had the opportunity to both read and act. Let's now consider a few of the emotional distractions, and what person B could've done.

Put the emotional distractions on a slide.

### **Speech #2: Verbal and Nonverbal Communication. (5 minutes)**

That was excellent.

During our first activity, we took the verbal part of communication completely out of the picture, and we acted out lines without explicitly telling the other person what we were trying to say. Of course, in regular conversation, this never happens. The words we speak (and their meaning) work in tandem with our nonverbal communication to form a cohesive message to our intended audience.

Have you ever been in conversation where it seems like the other person suddenly “zones out” and you don’t understand why? Others are aware of our nonverbal communication, whether we are aware or not. They pick up on “ticks” or small actions before we are often aware of them. Even though we may be communicating great value in the words that we say, crossing our arms or pulling our phone out at the wrong could cause the other party to think we are losing interest, and thus they to lose interest themselves.

Other people are like mirrors when it comes to nonverbal communication. Whatever they see, they respond accordingly. But it’s not until we look in the mirrors ourselves that we see how we “look” like. The only way to become aware how the two kinds of communication work together is to focus on how they work together in each phrase, which is essentially our next exercise.

### **Breakout #2 explanation.** *(5 minutes)*

Now, it’s time for our second breakout session, “Same Phrase”.

First, let’s break into groups of 5.

Now, at each station there will be 5 yellow cards and 5 green cards. Each of you will pick up a yellow card which will be yours for the whole exercise. It will contain a phrase. Each of the green cards will contain a specific mood.

Each of you take turns starting the conversation. These conversations

The person before you should offer up some idea, then you deliver the phrase that you were given, trying to emit the mood you were given also. Then, you’ll change mood cards, and repeat the exercise (keeping the same phrase). Try to depict the mood as accurately as possible. It seems simpler than it is...

(do an example)

Are there any questions?

Let’s start! We will reconvene at 12:40.

### **Breakout #2: Same phrase.** *(3 minutes)*

*(everyone receives 1 mood and 1 line (so print out 4 copies of each sheet))*

Phrase 1: “I’ve come up with a better way!”

Phrase 2: “This stuff is quite hard.”

Phrase 3: "That's a great idea!"

Phrase 4: "How do you know?"

Phrase 5: "You're just too much!"

Mood 1: Confidence

Mood 2: Vulnerability

Mood 3: Anger

Mood 4: Sarcasm

Mood 5: Dismissing

**Final Debrief + Conclusion.** *(5 minutes)*

Two questions: *What did you change about yourself for each mood? What did you most notice about the other person's nonverbal communication?*

Unfortunately, that brings us to the end of today's workshop.

That's all; thank you.

**Session end.**