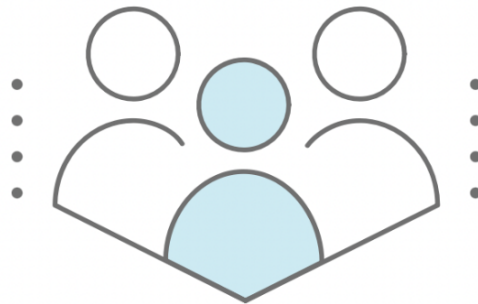


# COMMUNICATION SKILLS

## *A 10 Step Self-Help Therapy Workbook*



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## Introduction

Fill in the blanks to better understand your starting baseline. A **baseline** is a measurement of emotions/functionality/well-being that is utilized at the start of the workbook to better show effectiveness at the end of this workbook.

This workbook belongs to \_\_\_\_\_.

I am starting this communication workbook on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_.

I am feeling \_\_\_\_\_ about the idea of working on my communication skills.

I have a goal to improve my communication and \_\_\_\_\_.

I would like to start seeing improvements within (timeframe) \_\_\_\_\_.

Family and friends describe my communication as \_\_\_\_\_.

On a scale of 1-10, 1 being terrible and 10 being incredible, I feel my communication is \_\_\_\_\_.

I do / do not know my communication style and would like to better understand how to use it to my benefit.

My definition of hearing is \_\_\_\_\_.

My definition of listening is \_\_\_\_\_.

Please set 3 realistic goals you would like to accomplish by the end of the book. (Example: I would like to communicate better, control my responses, and be more understanding of other people's feelings.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

After you complete this workbook, there will be a "Reflection" portion that you are encouraged to fill out. You may also return to this page to compare your responses and ensure you achieved your goals. How did you do? \_\_\_\_\_

## PART 1: Tone of Voice

Psychoeducation: Tone of voice can positively or negatively influence conversations; therefore, it can be beneficial to improve your awareness and better manage your tone. Hidden emotions may come out via tone of voice, so awareness is a primary goal. *Helpful Hint: Do an internet search regarding different tones of voice to better understand what you may experience.*

**The tone of voice** is the way you speak to someone and how you pronounce or express your words. It is important to stay clear with your message, maintain your emotion and body language, and read the situation to match the style. The tone of voice still occurs in writing, so be cautious of the words you use.

Examples: 1. A teacher receives a late project from a student due to an unforeseen circumstance. She responds with a sympathetic face and says, “I understand situations happen in life, I’ll accept this late with no points off since it was your first offense.”

2. An employee finds out that someone she doesn't like received a promotion. She goes to the boss and states; “I can’t believe you would even consider promoting *him*. I clearly am better.”

*Sometimes, there are facial expressions or body language that coincides with the tone of voice.*

Example: *A woman is on a date with her partner. She has a higher-than-normal pitch voice, is smiling frequently, and leaning in close to listen. This indicates a higher level of interest and awareness.*

Therapy Activity #1: Think of a time someone told you that you were being sympathetic, friendly, or even aggressive.

Describe that scenario: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you feel? \_\_\_\_\_

*Answering questions like this can encourage you to process certain situations or emotions.*

Therapy Activity #2: Now, think of the pros and cons of being self-aware of tone of voice.

*(Example: Pro: By not being aggressive with loved ones, I may get more support.)*

*(Example: Con: It is going to be hard to remain self-aware when I am overwhelmed.)*

Pros: \_\_\_\_\_

Cons: \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling Skill: Practice with your tone of voice by thinking before you speak. When you are getting overwhelmed or aggravated, take a moment to breathe and gather your thoughts before responding. You can let the other person know that you need a moment. This can help prevent the “I wish I would have said” scenario later and allow you to try to regulate your emotions.

What would you like to do when you notice your tone of voice change? *(Example: I will take a few breaths and gather my thoughts before responding in stressful situations)*

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**Goal Setting:** Try to set an achievable goal to practice this counseling skill better. Come back in a few days and note any progress. *(Example: Try to be less aggressive when I am angry)*

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Progress: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

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**Journal Prompt:** Write out a conversation you have had or may potentially have in the near future. Notate the different tones of voice and attempt to recognize where you may want to make adjustments. \_\_\_\_\_

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## PART 2: “I Statements”

Psychoeducation: The “I statement” concept is a communication technique used to reduce negativity/ ‘attacking’ and prevent defensiveness in conversations. This encourages the speaker to be more mindful of how their words affect the listener’s feelings.

By reducing blame while speaking, the other person, in theory, will be more receptive and supportive of the speaker's feelings. The speaker stays mindful of everyone’s feelings, needs, and goals.

*Helpful Hint: Once you get more comfortable with the “I feel \_\_ when \_\_” statement, start trying to incorporate a request after. “I would prefer if \_\_.”*

Examples: “I feel \_\_\_\_ emotion \_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_ scenario \_\_\_\_.”

- “I feel *frustrated* when *I come home to dishes in the sink*.”
- “I feel *uncomfortable* when *I cannot speak my mind*.”
- “I feel *like we do not spend enough time together* when *we both work late*. I would prefer *it if we made sure to have dinner together*.”

Therapy Activity #1: Think of a time when you may have used or needed “I statements”.

Describe that scenario: \_\_\_\_\_

How could it have helped? \_\_\_\_\_

What will you do next time? \_\_\_\_\_

Therapy Activity #2: Now, think of the pros and ways to incorporate “I Statements”

Pros: \_\_\_\_\_

Ways to Incorporate: \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling Skill: Practice mindfulness by using “I statements” in your day-to-day life to gain practice.

Who could you practice your “I Statements” with? \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Setting: Try to set an achievable goal to practice this counseling skill better. Come back in a few days and note any progress. (*Example: Try to be more considerate of my partner’s emotions*)

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Progress: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Journal Prompt:** Write your own “I statement” examples. Can you notice a difference from how you would normally express yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

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## PART 3: Eye Contact

Psychoeducation: Eye contact while communicating shows attentiveness, interest, and appeal. It is a societal expectation that you should hold eye contact for at least half of the conversation with intervals of potentially up to 6 seconds.

Adding gestures and utilizing facial expressions can better allow for better engagement in the topic, reassurance that we are providing believable and valid information, and allow for better impressions. This will also allow us to feel more ‘heard’ in certain situations.

**Eye Contact Anxiety** is common and may discourage someone from engaging in eye contact, especially with new people. This can be better managed with practice and gaining self-confidence. *Helpful hint: Look at the center of the person’s eyebrows to still show interest but feel less anxious.*

Examples: A man is out with his wife and is very smiley and engaged in conversation. He is making frequent eye contact and allowing his wife to feel validated and understood.

- A young girl walks into a new classroom and is nervous about all the new people. She looks down at the ground and sits at her desk without looking at anyone. The other students were smiling, waiting to greet her but she never looked up.

Therapy Activity #1: Think about how eye contact plays a role in your life. Do you ever feel uncomfortable or avoid eye contact?

Describe that scenario: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you feel? \_\_\_\_\_

What would you like to see happen next time: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapy Activity #2: Think about the benefits of eye contact. *Better communication, impressions, believability, being more memorable, etc.*

How has it ever benefited you? \_\_\_\_\_

How can you encourage more eye contact in the future? \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling Skill: Practice being more outgoing with eye contact and smiles with people in your life. Assess if the eye contact interaction plays a positive role in the situation. Assess how you feel in the conversation. \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Setting: Try to set an achievable goal to practice this counseling skill better. Come back in a few days and note any progress. *(Example: Maintain eye contact for at least 3 seconds before slowly looking away.)*

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_



Progress: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Journal Prompt:** Imagine a world with no eye contact. How would it be different? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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## PART 4: Active Listening

Psychoeducation: Active listening is a way to respond to another person's speaking. By providing an understanding, the listener can respond with beneficial feedback and interpretations. It is essential to prevent utilizing judgment when practicing active listening. Eye contact and body language play a large role in active listening.

The listeners can also pick up on different verbal and non-verbal cues if they remain present, can ask open-ended questions to obtain more information, and paraphrase periodically. Active listening shows that you are interested and trying to better understand what the person is saying.

Examples: "Tell me more about what you are feeling"

- "It sounds like you are having a few different emotions."
- "It seems like you have been upset, is everything all right?"

Therapy Activity #1: Think about how active listening may have been in your recent life. Did it help the situation?

Describe that scenario: \_\_\_\_\_

How will you practice active listening? \_\_\_\_\_

Therapy Activity #2: Think about the main factors of active listening you would like to use in the future. *List them*: \_\_\_\_\_

How would it benefit you? How can you make this possible? \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling Skill: Practice active listening by paraphrasing information spoken and asking open-ended questions when the speaker is done with the thoughts. *List ideas*: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Setting: Try to set an achievable goal to practice this counseling skill better. Come back in a few days and note any progress. (*Example: Try to be more responsive and understanding*)

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Progress: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

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\_\_\_\_\_

**Journal Prompt:** Envision a sensitive topic conversation. How would you cope and manage while actively listening? What if it was someone offering feedback regarding you? \_\_\_\_\_

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## PART 5: Reflect on and understand emotions

**Psychoeducation:** There are 4 main emotions: **Happiness, Sadness, Anger, and Fear.** These emotions work as categories and contain a variety of other emotions within them. With each emotion, we often experience different physical feelings that coincide. Feelings are felt consciously, and it is hard to ignore. Emotions may be conscious or subconscious and may be hard to distinguish which emotion you are feeling.

**Examples:** **Sad;** lonely, hurt, disappointed. You may cry and not want to be social.

**Happy;** loved, excited, proud. You may be smiling and energetic.

**Anger;** Jealous, annoyed, ashamed. You may not be able to concentrate and feel the adrenaline.

**Fear;** worry, self-conscious, worry. You may feel your heart race and not want to leave your comfort zone.

**Therapy Activity #1:** Think about how emotions play a role in your daily life. Would you benefit from emotion regulation? If so, in which areas of life? Describe below.

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**Therapy Activity #2:** Think about the top 3 emotions (any, not just the main 4) you experience and how they affect your life.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Counseling Skill:** Practice with emotion regulation by being more self-aware, understanding the emotions you are experiencing, why you are experiencing them, and how you would like to respond to emotional triggers.

Emotion I feel \_\_\_\_\_ What triggered it \_\_\_\_\_

How I responded in the situation \_\_\_\_\_

How I would like to respond in the future \_\_\_\_\_

**Goal Setting:** Try to set an achievable goal to practice this counseling skill better. Come back in a few days and note any progress. (*Example: regulate my emotions by being more aware*)

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Progress: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

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**Journal Prompt:** Describe 2 major emotions and how they affect your life. Describe ways to manage these emotions better: \_\_\_\_\_

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## PART 6: Understand Passive Communication

Psychoeducation: Passive communication is when someone avoids what they want to say. They may use verbal and non-verbal communication. Individuals may prioritize other people even at the cost of their own suffering. These individuals may not express their needs or emotions and may agree with scenarios they do not want to partake in. These individuals may regret their responses but struggle with the idea of self-advocacy.

Examples: A person lacks confidence and agrees to go to a concert despite not enjoying that activity or a person is frequently interrupted while speaking but does not say anything to the other person.

An individual knows that he is likely to be passive, therefore, goes into the conversation with an explanation as to why he is not available for the upcoming event.

Therapy Activity #1: Think of a time when you may have used passive communication.

Describe that scenario: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you feel: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapy Activity #2: Now, think of the pros and cons of that communication style.

Pros: \_\_\_\_\_

Cons: \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling Skill: Practice self-advocacy in a part of your life to gain practice with speaking up when you feel you are being passive.

Think of a life example where you can practice:

\_\_\_\_\_

How do you feel about speaking up? How can you motivate yourself to self-advocate?

\_\_\_\_\_

Goal Setting: Try to set an achievable goal to practice this counseling skill better. Come back in a few days and note any progress. (*Example: Advocate for me in at least 1 situation*)

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Progress: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Journal Prompt:** Imagine you need to advocate for yourself in an intimidating situation. How would you prepare? How would you cope during? How would you process it after?

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## PART 7: Understand Assertive Communication

Psychoeducation: Often consists of confident communication, encouraging self-advocacy, and understanding the needs of oneself and others. These individuals will generally be self-aware and mindful of the needs of others involved in the conversation. Assertive speakers will say what is on their minds directly to the other person. They are also able to say “no” without feeling negatively as a result.

*Helpful Hint: It is acceptable to prioritize your needs and wants, especially when you feel pressured into a situation.*

Examples: “I appreciate the invitation, but I have to decline.”  
“Please do not leave the room when I am expressing my feelings.”

Therapy Activity #1: Think of a time when you may have used assertive communication.

Describe that scenario: \_\_\_\_\_  
How did you feel: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapy Activity #2: Now, think of the pros and cons of that communication style.

Pros: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cons: \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling Skill: Practice mindfulness by staying aware of other people’s emotions and needs while communicating yours.

-Think of some considerate words to validate emotions: \_\_\_\_\_  
-Practice trying to decline an invitation: \_\_\_\_\_

*Helpful Hint: Try not to make assumptions or jump to conclusions.*

Goal Setting: Try to set an achievable goal to practice this counseling skill better. Come back in a few days and note any progress. (Example: I will listen to what someone has to say entirely before responding)

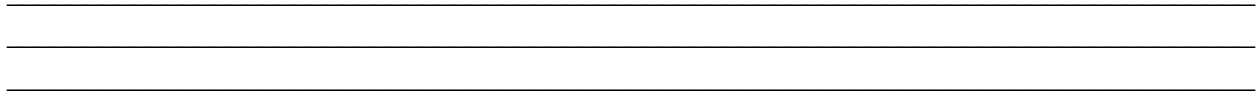
Goal: \_\_\_\_\_  
Progress: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Journal Prompt**: Practice ways you could say no or decline an invitation: \_\_\_\_\_





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## PART 8: Understand Aggressive Communication

Psychoeducation: When an individual defends their own needs or feelings without concern for the other person involved, sometimes in a *bullying* style. This can trigger conflict or encourage others to feel negative. When people feel that they are being bullied or attacked, they often become defensive. Aggressive communication and defensiveness do not mix well; therefore, this can turn confrontational quickly.

Aggressive communication is not always an intentional style, but it is often difficult to talk to the individual about. Stay mindful to prevent conflict from rising. If you are feeling aggressive, take a moment to breathe and better understand the root of the anger.

Examples: “It’s your fault”

“Everyone should agree with me”

“I don’t care what you say”

Therapy Activity #1: Think of a time when you may have used aggressive communication.

Describe that scenario: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you feel: \_\_\_\_\_

What would you do differently: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapy Activity #2: Now, think of the pros and cons of that communication style.

Pros: \_\_\_\_\_

Cons: \_\_\_\_\_

-Let’s consider taking a step back during a conversation to better understand the other person.

How could this help you understand the other person? \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling Skill: Practice being more accommodating by asking other people how they feel and putting yourself in their shoes. What could you ask to better understand? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you handle compromise? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you do with respect/interrupting? \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Setting: Try to set an achievable goal to practice managing this counseling skill better.

Come back in a few days and note any progress. (*Example: Try to ‘put yourself in someone else’s shoes’ before coming to a conclusion*)

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Progress: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

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**Journal Prompt:** How can I find ways to be less judgmental towards other people? Describe ways in which you may be able to maintain a less judgmental attitude: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Reflection: Understand Your Communication Style:

*Passive      Assertive      Aggressive      Passive Aggressive*

Which tone of voice do you use with...

Family: \_\_\_\_\_

Friends: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Partner: \_\_\_\_\_

Strangers: \_\_\_\_\_

Authority: \_\_\_\_\_

Yourself: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think your overall communication style is? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe any areas within your communication style you would like to improve? \_\_\_\_\_

Set 3 achievable goals to *improve* your communication style:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Set 3 achievable goals to *maintain* your communication style:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Journaling prompt:** Describe how communication has played a role in your life. What was communication like during your childhood? Adulthood? Current daily situations?

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## PART 9: Confident Body Language

Psychoeducation: The way we present ourselves to other people can make impressions. People will attempt to read your body language, and facial expressions, and understand hand gestures. Staying aware of how you are expressing yourself through body language can provide several benefits including making better impressions, gaining more support, engaging in more in-depth conversations, etc. Helpful hints: Make eye contact, stand up straight, refrain from fidgeting, slow your speech and movements, firm handshake, positive smile, and facial expressions.

Examples: a man walks into an interview, smiles, shakes the interviewer's hand, and sits up straight in the seat. He answers the questions confidently and does not fidget. He made a good impression.

A woman is on a date but is feeling intimidated and shy. She is not conscious of her body language and did not engage in conversation, eye contact, or active listening.

Therapy Activity #1: Think of a recent scenario when your body language played a role in the situation.

Describe that scenario: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you feel: \_\_\_\_\_

What body language did you use: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapy Activity #2: Now, think of the pros and cons of body language in that situation.

Pros: \_\_\_\_\_

Cons: \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling Skill: Practice mindfulness by being aware of your body language and how you may present while speaking. Describe what you may notice: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal Setting: Try to set an achievable goal to practice this counseling skill better. Come back in a few days and note any progress. (*Example: Try not to cross your arms as it shows disengagement or blocking yourself off from others*)

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Progress: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

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**Journal Prompt:** List 3 gestures that would affect body language interpretations. Describe the possible outcomes: \_\_\_\_\_

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## PART 10: Self-Awareness

Psychoeducation: Focus on what your body tells you it needs. Ensure you are meeting your physiological needs. Are you getting proper sleep? Nutrition? Exercise? Socialization? This will ensure that your body is functioning as best as possible so your brain can as well.

Take responsibility if necessary. Think about the actual emotions you are feeling. How are you treating yourself in a stressful situation? How are you treating others in that situation? Sometimes taking a second to think before we speak can encourage us to better understand how we may present ourselves to other people.

*Helpful Hint: Learn about the 'Locus of Control' to better help manage your self-awareness when it comes to controlling situations.*

Examples: A woman starts getting upset at her partner during a conflict. She begins to raise her voice and become hurtful. She takes a moment to breathe and reminds herself that her partner is not the enemy but rather the conflict. She takes a moment to refocus on the conflict and calm herself to properly communicate.

A teenager uses mindfulness and meditation to regain focus and ground herself while she is stressed about upcoming exams and schoolwork.

Therapy Activity #1: Think of a recent scenario where self-awareness could have benefited you. Describe that scenario: \_\_\_\_\_  
How did you feel: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapy Activity #2: Now, think of some goals to set to make improvements with your self-awareness. \_\_\_\_\_  
Describe the goals: \_\_\_\_\_  
Steps to achieve them: \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling Skill: Practice self-awareness by thinking about how you may be treating others or yourself, keeping an open mind, staying focused on the goals, having self-discipline, setting healthy boundaries, and accepting feedback from others.

Goal Setting: Try to set an achievable goal to practice this counseling skill better. Come back in a few days and notate any progress. (Example: Take a moment to think about the other person's response to prevent a conversation from going in the wrong direction)

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_  
Progress: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:

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**Journaling Prompt:** Practice with self-awareness and describe your confidence levels, decision-making skills, social skills, and stress management:

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## Reflection

1. How do you feel that you have grown throughout the utilization of this workbook?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What improvements would you still like to see?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why would you like to make improvements to your communication skills?  
\_\_\_\_\_

I have completed this communication workbook on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_.

I am feeling \_\_\_\_\_.

I have noticed improvements in my communication and \_\_\_\_\_.

I started seeing improvements within \_\_\_\_\_ days/weeks/months.

Family and friends now describe my communication as \_\_\_\_\_.

I feel my communication is now \_\_\_\_\_.

Please describe 3 ways to continue making progress with your communication now that the workbook has been completed.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Helpful Ideas to continue improving your communication:

read books, watch television or movies, observe people you interact with, reflect on yourself, practice with a loved one or a mirror, ensure you speak clearly and at a pace that matches the other speaker, and seek other workbooks or professional counseling that can provide further beneficial information.

*Thank you for your interest in my Communication Skills Workbook. Please feel free to visit my website at [www.pleasantvalleymentalhealthcounseling.com](http://www.pleasantvalleymentalhealthcounseling.com) for more resources or to leave feedback.*

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