



SECRETS OF BODY LANGUAGE

Participant Guide



West Virginia Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
Training and Development
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Agenda

- **What Is Communication?**
- **Nonverbal Behavior vs. Nonverbal Communication**
- **What's Your Communicator Style?**
- **Facial Expressions & Eye Behavior**
- **Proxemics (Space)**
- **Gestures & Movement**
- **Nonverbal Immediacy**
- **Environment, Time, and Touch**

Course Overview

Our nonverbal behaviors have a significant impact on our communication. In fact, it has been estimated that about ninety-three percent of the perceived meaning in any communication situation is likely to be stimulated by our nonverbal messages. We can better understand these messages by investigating the different factors that affect our nonverbal communication.

Have you ever been in a situation when you really didn't believe what someone was saying? Did you have a sense that something didn't ring true or a gut feeling that all was not right? Perhaps he was saying "Yes" yet his head was shaking "No"?

The difference between the words people speak and our understanding of what they are saying comes from non-verbal communication, otherwise known as "body language." By developing your awareness of the signs and signals of body language, you can more easily understand other people, and more effectively communicate with them.

There are sometimes subtle – and sometimes not so subtle – movements, gestures, facial expressions and even shifts in our whole bodies that indicate something is going on. The way we talk, walk, sit and stand all say something about us, and whatever is happening on the inside can be reflected on the outside.

By becoming more aware of this body language and understanding what it might mean, you can learn to read people more easily. This puts you in a better position to communicate effectively with them. What's more, by increasing your understanding of others, you can also become more aware of the messages that you convey to them.

There are times when we send mixed messages – we say one thing yet our body language reveals something different. This non-verbal language will affect how we act and react to others, and how they react to us.

Workshop Objectives

This workshop is designed to help you in the following ways:

1. Discover why many people fail at nonverbal communication
2. Explain how verbal and nonverbal messages work together
3. Explain why nonverbal messages are often more important than verbal ones
4. Explore the eight categories of nonverbal messages
5. Explore the supervisor-employee relationship from a nonverbal communication context
6. Determine your personal communicator style
7. Identify specific strategies you can use to improve your nonverbal communication skills.

Communicator Style Measure

This questionnaire contains statements about your communicative behaviors. Indicate how often each statement is true for you personally according to the following scale:

If the statement is **almost always true**, write a **5** in the blank.

If the statement is **often true**, write a **4** in the blank.

If the statement is **occasionally true**, write a **3** in the blank.

If the statement is **rarely true**, write a **2** in the blank.

If the statement is **almost never true**, write a **1** in the blank.

1. _____ I am comfortable with all varieties of people.

2. _____ I laugh easily.

3. _____ I readily express admiration for others.

4. _____ What I say usually leaves an impression on people.

5. _____ I leave people with an impression of me that they definitely tend to remember.

6. _____ To be friendly, I verbally acknowledge others' contributions.

7. _____ I am a very good communicator.

8. _____ I have some nervous mannerisms in my speech.

9. _____ I am a very relaxed communicator.

10. _____ When I disagree with others, I am very quick to challenge them.

11. _____ I can always repeat back to a person exactly what he or she meant.

12. _____ The sound of my voice is very easy to recognize.

13. _____ I am a very precise communicator.

14. _____ I leave a definite impression on people.

15. _____ The rhythm or flow of my speech is sometimes affected by nervousness.

16. _____ Under pressure, I come across as a relaxed speaker.

17. _____ My eyes reflect exactly what I am feeling when I communicate.

18. _____ I dramatize a lot.

19. _____ I always find it very easy to communicate on a one-to-one basis with people I do not know

very well.

20. _____ Usually, I deliberately react in such a way that people know I am listening to them.
21. _____ Usually, I do not tell people much about myself until I get to know them well.
22. _____ I tell jokes, anecdotes, and stories when I communicate.
23. _____ I tend to constantly gesture when I communicate.
24. _____ I am an extremely open communicator.
25. _____ I am a vocally loud communicator.
26. _____ In a small group of people I do not know very well, I am a very good communicator.
27. _____ In arguments or differences of opinion, I insist upon very precise definitions.
28. _____ In most situations, I speak very frequently.
29. _____ I find it extremely easy to maintain a conversation with a member of the opposite sex.
30. _____ I like to be strictly accurate when I communicate.
31. _____ Because I have a loud voice, I can easily break into a conversation.
32. _____ Often I physically and vocally act out when I communicate.
33. _____ I have an assertive voice.
34. _____ I readily reveal personal things about myself.
35. _____ I am dominant in conversations.
36. _____ I am very argumentative.
37. _____ Once I get wound up in a heated conversation, I have a hard time stopping myself.
38. _____ I am an extremely friendly communicator.
39. _____ I really like to listen very carefully to people.
40. _____ I insist that other people document or present some kind of proof for what they are arguing.
41. _____ I try to take charge of things when I am with people.
42. _____ It bothers me to drop an argument that is not resolved.
43. _____ In most situations, I tend to come on strong.
44. _____ I am very expressive nonverbally.
45. _____ The way I say something usually leaves an impression on people.
46. _____ Whenever I communicate, I tend to be very encouraging to people.

47. _____ I actively use a lot of facial expressions when I communicate.

48. _____ I verbally exaggerate to emphasize a point.

49. _____ I am an extremely attentive communicator.

50. _____ As a rule, I openly express my feelings and emotions.

Scoring: reverse code items 8, 15, and 21 (if you put a 5 for item 8, change this score to 1; if 4, change this score to 2; if 2, change this score to 4; if 1, change this score to 5).

1. Add your scores for items 3, 6, 38, and 46. This is your **friendly** score: _____
2. Add your scores for items 4, 5, 14, and 45. This is your **impression leaving** score: _____
3. Add your scores for items 8, 9, 15, and 16. This is your **relaxed** score: _____
4. Add your scores for items 10, 36, 37, and 42. This is your **contentious** score: _____
5. Add your scores for items 11, 20, 39, and 49. This is your **attentive** score: _____
6. Add your scores for items 13, 27, 30, and 40. This is your **precise** score: _____
7. Add your scores for items 17, 23, 44, and 47. This is your **animated** score: _____
8. Add your scores for items 18, 22, 32, and 48. This is your **dramatic** score: _____
9. Add your scores for items 21, 24, 34, and 50. This is your **open** score: _____
10. Add your scores for items 28, 35, 41, and 43. This is your **dominant** score: _____

Communicator Style Definitions

Communicator Style is defined as the way an individual uses verbal and nonverbal communicative behaviors to indicate how literal a message should be taken or understood. This style may be comprised of any combination of these ten attributes. Generally, we each use several of these at the same time. This creates our “communication style cluster.”

The 10 communicator style attributes are as follows:

1. **Friendly** people recognize others in a positive way and are generally considered to be kind and caring.
2. **Impression leaving** communicators have a memorable style, which depends on their affiliative expressiveness and use of information-seeking behaviors.
3. **Relaxed** communicators are anxiety-free and remain calm and at ease when engaged in interactions with others.
4. **Contentious** individuals will argue, and may get somewhat hostile, quarrelsome, or belligerent.
5. **Attentive** communicators are alert and are good listeners who are concerned with understanding others.
6. **Precise** communicators try to be strictly accurate, using well-defined arguments and specific proof or evidence to clarify their positions.
7. **Animated** communicators use eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, body movement, and posture to exaggerate content.
8. **Dramatic** communicators use stylistic devices (exaggerations, voice, rhythm, stories) to underscore content.
9. **Open** communicators are extroverted, unreserved, and straightforward; they do not have problems directly communicating their thoughts or emotions.
10. **Dominant** communicators “take charge” of the situation by talking louder, longer, and more frequently than others.

We look at these scores in “clusters.” Take your top three scores and these may be the most descriptive of your general style of communication.

Researchers have found that:

- Employees prefer their superiors to use the relaxed, friendly, and attentive attributes.
- Charismatic leaders tend to use the attentive, relaxed, friendly and dominant attributes.
- Strong public speakers are dominant, animated, open, friendly, dramatic, and attentive.

Facial Expressions Activity

Identify which emotions you see: *Sadness, contempt, anger, disgust, fear, surprise, happiness, neutral*

Some may be “blends”

Picture #	Emotion
1	
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Proxemics Activity

Proxemics is a term for the distance one person likes to maintain between him and another.

Pair up with another person into two groups, one half of which stands against a wall on one side of the room facing outward toward their partners (Ones). The other side faces them approximately five (5) feet apart (Twos - aggressors).

Part 1:

- Twos line up in as straight a line as possible
- Twos begin walking slowly toward their Ones partners
- Ones raise their hands when their partners when they have gotten “close enough”
- Twos are to stop as soon as their Ones partners raise their hands to signal “Stop!”
- Observe the line made by the approaching Twos

Part 2:

- Twos now change places with Ones and place their backs against the wall.
- Ones now begin slowly walking toward their Twos partners
- Twos now raise their hands when their partners have gotten “close enough”
- Observe that the distances may not be the same as they were when the Twos were the aggressors

When you find yourself in front of someone, you might approach him to a distance that you find to be comfortable. This might result in him feeling threatened. Although the distance is OK for you, it's not OK for him.

Part 3:

- Ones turn their bodies at a 45-degree angle toward their partners
- Keeping eye contact with their partners, Ones continue to approach their partners
- Twos raise their hands when their partners have gotten “close enough”
- Observe the distances and whether or not the Twos permitted their partners to come any closer

When you “blade” your partner, it offers you the ability to get closer to him without causing him to feel threatened.

But how close do you really need to get?

Worksheet: Understanding Different Cultural Interpretations of Common Gestures

It is important for us to understand how the gestures we use unconsciously may be misunderstood. This activity allows us to look a little closer at how body language might be interpreted by coworkers and clients from other cultures.

Write down what you think each gesture means. Also indicate if you think the gesture is considered rude in the United States. Then discuss how body language could influence communication between cultures.

Gesture	Meaning
Beckon with the index finger.	
Point at something in the room using the index finger.	
Make a 'V' sign.	
Smile.	
Sit with the sole of foot or shoe showing.	
Form a circle with fingers to indicate 'OK.'	
Pat a child or adult on the head.	
Pass an item to someone with one hand.	
Wave hand with palm facing outward to greet someone.	
Nod head up and down to say 'yes.'	

Nonverbal Immediacy Chart

Category	Immediacy Behaviors	Non-immediacy Behaviors
Verbal Immediacy	Use of pronouns such as <i>we</i> and <i>us</i> . Talk with others. Statements that infer liking – “I like your dress. I really like that. You are right.”	Use of <i>you</i> and <i>I</i> , and <i>I</i> . Talk to/at others. Guarded statements of liking (Your dress is OK. That’s dumb. That’s a stupid idea.)
Appearance	Attractive. Neat. Clean. Informal clothing but not sloppy. Appropriate hairstyle.	Unattractive. Dirty, unkempt. Formal clothing. Inappropriate or unusual hairstyle.
Gesture & Body Movement	Leaning toward another. Open body position. More gestures. More positive affect displays. Relaxed body position. Calm movements. Positive head movements.	Leaning away from another. Closed body position. Fewer gestures. More negative-affect displays. Tense body position. Nervous movements. Negative head movements.
Face & Eye	Eye contact and mutual gaze. Facial expressions that show pleasure. Smiles a lot.	Limited eye contact. Averted eye gaze. Facial expressions that show displeasure. Frowns a lot.
Voice	Short pauses. Few silences. Positive vocal inflections. Vocal variety. Relaxed tones (calm). Sounds confident. Dynamic, animated, interested. Friendly vocal cues.	Lengthy pauses/silence. Sarcasm. Monotonous, dull, irritated tones. Nasal. Harsh sounding. Sneering sounds. Bored, unfriendly vocal cues.
Space	Moves closer to other. Stands closer to other. Sits closer. Orients more directly. Leans forward while seated.	Leans away from other. Sits farther away. Leans away/back while seated. Stands farther away. Indirect body orientation.
Touch	Touch on hand, forearm, shoulder. Pat. Friendly handshake. Frequent touch. Hugging.	Avoids or withdraws from touch. Clammy/distant handshake. Seldom touches. Slapping. Hitting. Striking another.
Environment	Warm, secure, pleasant environments. Soft colors. Movable chairs. Moderate to soft illumination.	Cold, distant, ugly environments. Bright illumination. Fixed seating. Ugly rooms. Ugly colors.
Scent	Pleasant, inoffensive scents. Familiar scents. Scents of one’s own culture.	Unpleasant, offensive scents. Unfamiliar scents. Scents from other cultures.
Time	Short latency of response. Promptness. Spending more time with another. Spending time with another when they choose.	Long latency of response. Delinquent about being on time. Spending little time with another. Often glances at watch/clock.

Nonverbal Immediacy Scale-Self Report (NIS-S)

This is the most up-to-date measure of nonverbal immediacy as a self-report. Alpha reliability estimates around .90 should be expected. This measure has more face validity than previous instruments because it has more and more diverse items. Its predictive validity also is excellent.

When using this instrument it is important to recognize that the difference in these self-reports between females and males is statistically significant and socially significant (that is, substantial variance in the scores on this instrument can be attributed to biological sex). Whether these differences are "real" (that is, females may actually be more nonverbally immediate than males) or a function of social desirability (that is, females think they should be more immediate than males think they should be) or a function of actual behavior has not yet been determined (as of September, 2003).

DIRECTIONS: The following statements describe the ways some people behave while talking with or to others. Please indicate in the space at the left of each item the degree to which you believe the statement applies **TO YOU**. Please use the following 5-point scale: **1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Occasionally; 4 = Often; 5 = Very Often**

- _____ 1. I use my hands and arms to gesture while talking to people.
- _____ 2. I touch others on the shoulder or arm while talking to them.
- _____ 3. I use a monotone or dull voice while talking to people.
- _____ 4. I look over or away from others while talking to them.
- _____ 5. I move away from others when they touch me while we are talking.
- _____ 6. I have a relaxed body position when I talk to people.
- _____ 7. I frown while talking to people.
- _____ 8. I avoid eye contact while talking to people.
- _____ 9. I have a tense body position while talking to people.
- _____ 10. I sit close or stand close to people while talking with them.
- _____ 11. My voice is monotonous or dull when I talk to people.
- _____ 12. I use a variety of vocal expressions when I talk to people.
- _____ 13. I gesture when I talk to people.
- _____ 14. I am animated when I talk to people.

- ____ 15. I have a bland facial expression when I talk to people.
- ____ 16. I move closer to people when I talk to them.
- ____ 17. I look directly at people while talking to them.
- ____ 18. I am stiff when I talk to people.
- ____ 19. I have a lot of vocal variety when I talk to people.
- ____ 20. I avoid gesturing while I am talking to people.
- ____ 21. I lean toward people when I talk to them.
- ____ 22. I maintain eye contact with people when I talk to them.
- ____ 23. I try not to sit or stand close to people when I talk with them.
- ____ 24. I lean away from people when I talk to them.
- ____ 25. I smile when I talk to people.
- ____ 26. I avoid touching people when I talk to them.

Scoring:

Step 1. Add the scores from the following items: 1, 2, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, and 25.

Step 2. Add the scores from the following items: 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15, 18, 20, 23, 24, and 26.

Total Score = 78 plus Step 1 minus Step 2.

Norms:

Females Mean = 102.0 S.D. = 10.9 High = >112 Low = <92

Males Mean = 93.8 S.D. = 10.8 High = >104 Low <83

Source: Richmond, V. P., McCroskey, J. C., & Johnson, A. D. (2003). Development of the Nonverbal Immediacy Scale (NIS): Measures of self- and other-perceived nonverbal immediacy. *Communication Quarterly*, 51, 502-515.

Architecture Attractiveness Measure

Directions: Complete the following measure about environment and communication. Please indicate whether or not you believe each statement applies to you by marking whether you: Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

- _____ 1. I really dislike dull, dark, heavy looking buildings.
- _____ 2. I like clear, open, airy buildings.
- _____ 3. I prefer old, dark, heavy buildings with a history.
- _____ 4. I perform at my best when there is a lot of sunlight coming into my work area.
- _____ 5. I really dislike open, airy, sunny architecture.
- _____ 6. I dislike new, modern architecture.
- _____ 7. I am very irritable when I have to work in a dark building.
- _____ 8. I am very alert in clean, clear, open buildings.
- _____ 9. I am very irritable when I have to work in new modern buildings with lots of windows.
- _____ 10. I am very alert when I am working in a building where there is little light.
- _____ 11. I rarely do well on assignments when I work in a setting where the environment is ugly.
- _____ 12. I usually do very well on assignments when I work in attractive buildings.
- _____ 13. Working in unattractive environments does not affect the outcome of my work.
- _____ 14. I do well on assignments when working where there are a lot of distractions.
- _____ 15. I like to do my assignments in attractive buildings.
- _____ 16. Doing my assignments in unattractive buildings does not impact my productivity.

Scoring: To determine your score on the Architecture Attractiveness Measure, complete the following steps:

Step 1. Add scores for items 3, 5, 6, 10, 13, 14, and 16

Step 2. Add the scores for items 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15

Step 3. Complete the following formula:

$AAM = 48 + \text{Total from Step 1} - \text{Total from Step 2}$

Score should be between 16 and 80

>50 is a person who prefers high AA

<40 is a person who prefers low AA

Source:

Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (1995). *Nonverbal behavior in interpersonal relations* (3rd Ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Positive Body Language

- When greeting someone for the first time, make sure you have a smile on your face – even if it's a forced smile.
- Keep the physical distance between you and the person you are wanting to converse with approximately an arm's length away.
- Don't invade someone else's space – keep the arm's length rule at play.
- Don't fiddle with objects or be distracted while someone is talking with you.
- Don't hog the conversation – take turns talking and listening.
- Show interest by keeping good eye contact without staring.
- If someone likes you, (s)he may occasionally touch your arm or shoulder, therefore if you like someone, you can occasionally do the same.
- Don't get too friendly too fast – too much information too early will turn most people away. Don't tell your life story so quickly.
- While listening to someone, be very conscious of your own facial expressions – allow your face to show interest by mirroring the other person's facial expressions.
- Don't steal another person's story. If someone starts sharing his/her vacation story, allow him/her to finish and show interest the whole time. Be patient. Then and only then can you share a similar experience or story if appropriate.