

Communication Styles:

It's useful to develop your awareness and understanding of different communication styles (including your own and others) because it can help to establish a good relationship with people. For example, if you need to negotiate or seek support from your GP, District Nurse and Social Worker, being aware of his/her communication style can assist in getting a proper answer and so avoid unnecessary frustration.



What's the communication style from your observations?

Now think about someone you know who's easy to talk to and someone who's hard going. What is it about the way they listen, talk and ask questions that makes it easier or more difficult for you to interact with them?

What makes someone easier to talk to?	What makes someone hard going?

Finally, what about your own communication style? Do you think other people find you easy to talk to? Take a look at the characteristics below, which ones would other people say are true of you?

✓ The ones that apply to you.

	Quiet
	Tends to butt in
	Can be long winded
	Always gives other people a chance to speak, takes turns
	Sometimes doesn't listen
	Sometimes hesitates, not sure what to say
	Talkative
	Asks questions
	Good listener
	Pays attention

What did you notice about your communication style?



Communication is complex which is influenced by many things. For example, how well you know the person, what mood you're in, what you need to talk about.

In addition, to these points above there can be subtle power relationships at play especially when dealing with more formal or official situations.

For example, when speaking to a Doctor, they have specialist knowledge which you don't have. This may include making decisions or giving a prescription. It's moments like this when the power is not equal. Having said that, it doesn't mean that you are not entitled to your say, to share your feelings and thoughts. You are to be spoken to and treated with respect. Even so, you may recognise that speaking to someone in authority is very different to speaking to a friend.

Body language:

Body language is an important part of communication especially in face-to-face encounters. Even when on the phone you can tell a lot from the tone of voice and pauses. Body language or non-verbal cues include:

- Eye contact
- Facial expression
- Gestures
- Touch
- Posture
- Appearance

What does your body language reveal about you?

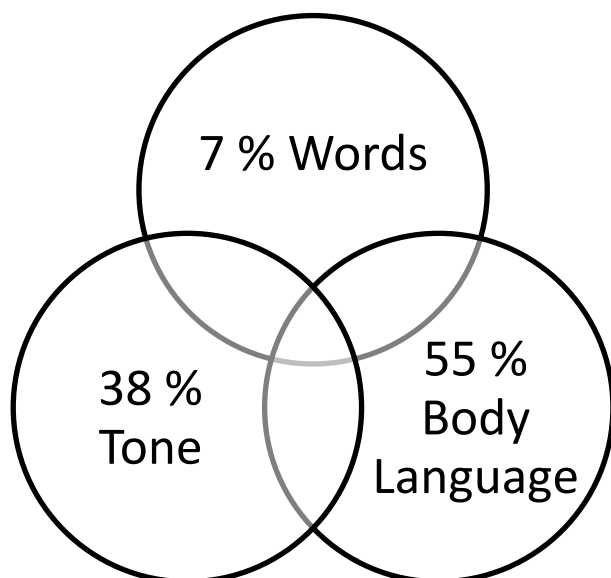
Read through the list below and tick the things that you know you tend to do. Then ask someone who knows you to tick ✓ the things that they notice you doing.



What I tend to do	What others think I tend to do	Body language that may help communication
		Make plenty of eye contact
		Nod to show you're listening
		Stand fully facing the other person
		Lean forward when sitting
		Sit with hands in lap
		Make noises such as <i>mm / ah</i> to show you're following
		Smile now and then if it's appropriate
		Avoid standing close to someone unless you know the person very well
		Body language that may NOT help communication
		Avoid eye contact
		Look around the room/out of the window
		Frown when you're concentrating
		Cover your mouth with your hands
		Point or wag your finger

		Regularly scratch or fiddle with something
		Stand too close to someone when talking to them
		Having arms folded

Here is how communication is broken down...



So it's not what you say that matters, it's **HOW** you say it!

