



Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

For Those Who Serve and Those Who SupportSM

COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND TIPS

This resource includes communication tips and specific skills that you can practice and share with others to help you navigate the reintegration phase successfully.

Set the Stage	Use Verbal Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be open and respectful to others and their ideas ✓ Good communication requires an active effort from all parties ✓ Consider your timing and make sure everyone is emotionally and physically available for the conversation ✓ Face to face communication is ideal ✓ Don't attack what others say – listen to what they're contributing ✓ Be honest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Think before you speak – this can help you stay respectful of others' ideas ✓ Make eye contact and engage the person you're speaking to ✓ Be specific and clear ✓ Be concise – say what you mean as succinctly as possible ✓ Be positive and receptive to others ✓ Practice verbal modeling by matching the tone and modulation of the person you're talking to – this builds the connection
Read Non-Verbal Cues	Use Non-Verbal Cues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Practice observing people and see what you can learn from their body language ✓ Be aware of individual differences ✓ Look at nonverbal signals as a group – consider what the overall message being shared is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use nonverbal signals that match your words – point and gesture to better articulate your message ✓ Adjust your nonverbal signals to the context – consider your setting: the office and home require different signals ✓ Use body language to convey positive feelings – smile if you're engaged and agree. Let the other person know how you feel



Be an Active Listener	Give Good Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Focus fully on the speaker – remember communication requires an active effort, even as a listener✓ Avoid interrupting – hold your thoughts and questions until the other person has finished his or her thought✓ Avoid appearing judgmental – people can read your body language and may withdraw if they think you are judging them✓ Show your interest by nodding, making eye contact, and asking questions✓ Provide feedback on what is being said	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Practice parroting or paraphrasing what you're hearing by restating the original content and feeling in your own words✓ Don't express opinion as fact✓ Explain your reasons and provide a rationale for your feelings✓ Ask questions and dig deeper – this can help minimize miscommunications✓ Be courteous and respectful of others, even if you disagree with them✓ Critique the idea not the person✓ Respond, don't react – reactions are emotional where responses are thoughtful and concrete
Manage Stress in Communication	Avoid Communication When You're Upset
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Recognize you are becoming stressed – listen to your body and monitor it for stress symptoms✓ Take a moment to calm down – take a walk or a breath and regain your composure✓ Look for humor and use it to diffuse tension and lighten the mood✓ Be willing to compromise✓ Agree to disagree if you cannot find common ground but maintain respect for the other person	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Wait 48 hours before re-engaging – this gives you adequate time to think about the conflict and decide if you are still upset✓ Stop – don't say something you'll regret✓ Think – consider what you want out of the conversation and how you can achieve it✓ Talk – resume conversations and a clear message and an open mind✓ Listen – actively listen to others and engage them in the conversation