COMMUNICATION

Relevance

Effective communication improves your conversations and presentations, raises participation at meetings you lead, and lets you express ideas clearly.

Learning objectives

By the end of the session, participants should be able to:

- Identify different communication styles
- Discuss ways to communicate more effectively

Before the session

- Ask participants what they would like to gain from the session and use their comments to customize its content.
- Consider how you will facilitate the session and adjust it for your audience.
- Think of an opening activity that will grab participants' attention and other ways to keep the session interactive.
- Prepare any materials you will need for the session.

During the session

- Welcome participants and introduce yourself.
- Review learning objectives.
- Highlight these key messages:
  - Club leaders are responsible for organizing and giving information to club members, other club leaders, and the community.
  - Storytelling can be a powerful tool to convey your message.
  - Skilled communicators can quickly shift their style to suit any situation.
  - Communication styles include:
    - Analytical: Uses unemotional, logical arguments based on facts and data
    - Intuitive: Refers to the overall topic and avoids detail
    - Functional: Focuses on process, detail, and planning
    - Personal: Values emotional connections and listens well
  - Effective communication also includes active listening, constructive criticism, and recognizing barriers to understanding.
  - No matter what communication style you use, saying "yes, and …" instead of "yes, but …" when you disagree can help you stay open to

others' ideas and perspectives.

- Use discussion questions to boost conversation:
  - Which communication styles do you identify as your own?
  - How do you use storytelling to communicate?
  - How do your spoken and written communication styles differ?
  - What interferes with good communication in your club and in your work? How can it be improved?
  - What are barriers to effective communication? Think of a situation when you communicated poorly and that affected the outcome. What could have improved the interaction?
  - What are some tips for reacting to a quickly changing situation? How do you adapt your interaction based on the person who's speaking with you?
- Lead one of the activities below.
- At the end of the session:
  - Take questions from participants.
  - Review the learning objectives to make sure they've been achieved.
  - Ask participants to write down one idea they'll use from the session.

Activities

1. Purpose: Identifying communication styles

   - Allow 20 minutes for this activity.
   - Write the four communication styles mentioned above on a flip chart.
   - Explain that you will pair participants, and that one partner, then the other will discuss why they should get more involved in Rotary (3-5 minutes for each person).
   - Ask participants to notice their partners' communication styles during the discussion.
   - Tell pairs that they will assess each partner's communication styles when finished.
   - Divide participants into pairs.
   - Start a discussion with the group after 10 minutes:
     - Which communication styles did you observe?
     - What nonverbal communication did you notice?
     - Which communication styles were most effective?
     - How can you use communication styles personally, professionally, or to help your community?

2. Purpose: Practice impromptu speaking
   - Allow 20 minutes for this activity.
   - Start by saying, "Once upon a time there was ..." and continue the story using your imagination.

- Explain the next steps: Groups of participants will gather in circles, then begin a story and try to keep it going. The first member of each group will start by saying a sentence on any topic. Then, one after another, around the circle, members will say, "Yes and … ," adding to what the previous member said.
- Encourage participants to speak their first thought and avoid hesitating. Stories can go in any direction.
- Participants should not question or deny any story additions.
- Divide participants into groups of five or more.
- Allow the groups to begin the storytelling, which will last 10 minutes.
- Let groups know when only a couple of minutes are left to finish their stories.
- After 10 minutes, start a discussion with the groups:
  o What was hard about this activity?
  o What did and didn't work?
  o How did "Yes and …" help you contribute to the story?
  o How could "Yes and …" improve your everyday conversations?