

Communication, Part 1

Welcome back to school! I am excited to continue the mental health column for another year and look forward to receiving more questions from all of you! We are going to start the school year off with a two part piece on communication. This month we will learn about 4 different styles of communication.

1. Aggressive communication: Includes yelling, name calling, intimidating others with your body or your words, physically harming another person (for example: pushing or hitting someone), threatening (for example: to harm someone, to get someone in trouble, to embarrass them, etc.), not listening to what the other person has to say, blaming the other person, and accusing them.

2. Passive communication: Includes pretending like everything is ok when it is not, not telling someone how you feel or what you need, and avoiding talking about or addressing a problem or concern.

3. Passive-aggressive communication: Includes initially pretending that everything is fine and then, later, doing something aggressive to get back at the other person. For example, your best friend says something that hurts your feelings. You do not tell your friend that you have hurt feelings but then say something to embarrass them in front of others to get back at them for hurting your feelings.

4. Assertive communication: Includes using a calm voice, explaining how you feel and what you need, listening to what the other person has to say, taking responsibility for your part in what happened, working together to solve the problem, being respectful and safe with your words and body (for example: no name calling, no put-downs, no yelling, no blaming, no threats).

While you won't always get your needs met by being assertive, you are most likely to successfully fix your problem or mend hurt feelings by being assertive. *One of the main ways that children and teens learn how to solve problems and communicate with others is by watching what their caretakers do. As such, it is important to ask yourself, what kind of communication am I using and teaching to the children in my life?* We can't expect children and teens to use respectful communication if the adults in their lives are not doing the same.

Over the next month I challenge you to become more aware of the type of communication you use most often (we all use some of these styles at different times – no one is perfect!). Then, next month, we will learn what we can do to increase assertive communication!

Newsletter version:

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One of the main ways that kids learn how to solve problems and communicate is by watching what their caretakers do. As such, *it's important to ask yourself, what kind of communication am I teaching to the children in my life to use?* We can't expect kids to use respectful communication if the adults in their lives are not doing the same.

Please visit the online version of this column on your school's website for additional information. As always, you can email me with questions or topic ideas at stacy_bancroft@reynolds.k12.or.us