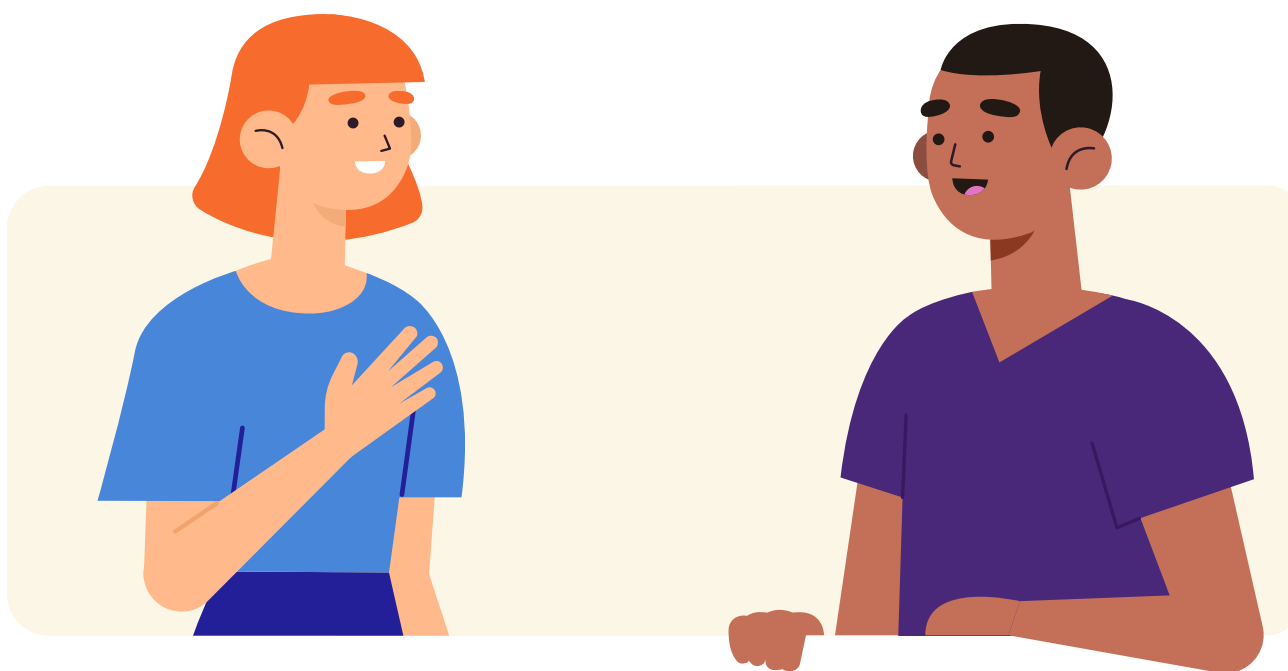
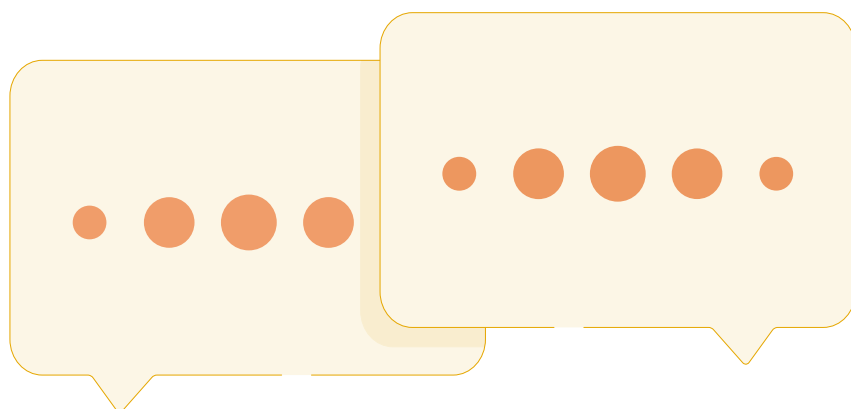


ADVANCED COMMUNICATION SKILLS



**The Skills You Need Guide
to Interpersonal Skills**

PART 2

ADVANCED COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Skills You Need

This is one of a series of eBooks
by Skills You Need available for sale at:

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Cover design by Skills You Need; illustrations by Pikisuperstar / Freepik

ISBN: 978-1-911084-24-2

Published by Skills You Need Ltd

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This version was published in July 2020

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INTRODUCTION

This book is the second in a series of books published by Skills You Need on interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills are those that you use whenever you interact with another person.

Effective communication skills are vital to interpersonal interactions. They are the foundation of all interpersonal relationships. They are also highly valued by employers, and in any voluntary role, because good communication skills help organisations to run smoothly.

This book focuses on spoken or verbal communication skills. It follows the first book in the series, *An Introduction to Communication Skills*, which discusses effective speaking, non-verbal communication, personal presentation, and effective listening, as well as barriers to communication.

We now move on to discuss more advanced communication skills including:

- How you can minimise misunderstandings by checking back and clarifying that you have understood correctly;
- How you can move on from simple interactions, and use your communication skills and emotional intelligence to build positive interpersonal relationships;
- The role in communications and interpersonal relationships of politeness and honesty;
- The importance of developing your assertiveness, and helping others to be more assertive in their interpersonal relationships and interactions, so that individual rights are respected; and
- How you can apply your communication skills to communicating in difficult situations, including giving and receiving feedback and persuading and influencing others.



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Like the first book in this series, *An Introduction to Communication Skills*, this book can simply be read.

We think that it will be most useful, however, if you also complete the exercises which are spread throughout the book, taking time to note down the outcomes, and also reflect on what you did, saw and learned in the process.

As with the first book, you may find it most useful if you do our Interpersonal Skills

Self-Assessment test first to highlight areas that need particular improvement. You can find the self-assessment at www.skillsyouneed.com/ipstest, or you can buy a hard copy from the Skills You Need shop www.skillsyouneed.com/shop.

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IMPROVING UNDERSTANDING: QUESTIONING, CLARIFICATION AND REFLECTION

Communication skills are perhaps the most crucial of all interpersonal skills because they underpin almost all the others.

Communication is simply the act of transferring information from one place to another.

It requires a sender and one or more recipients of the information, and happens via a communication channel. The sender must 'encode' the message, and the recipient(s) decode it successfully to ensure understanding.

The goal of all communication is understanding.

INTRODUCING CLARIFICATION

One of the key ways in which we can improve understanding is to check back with the other person to make sure that we have a shared view of the conversation or exchange. The sender can:

- Ask the recipient to explain their understanding of the message, and check that it is correct;
- Summarise what they said in short, simple terms to ensure it has been understood;
- Provide examples to illustrate particular points;
- Answer any questions from the recipient; and
- Confirm whether the recipient's understanding is correct, or clarify particular points of misunderstanding.

The recipient can:

- Ask the sender non-judgemental questions to clarify their understanding;
- Summarise or reflect back the message to the sender to check that their understanding is correct;
- Ask the sender to repeat something if they are unsure of its meaning; and
- Ask the sender to provide some examples to clarify particular elements.

This process is known as clarification, which means ‘making clearer’.

No matter which of these elements is used, the essential purpose is the same: to ensure that speaker and listener share the same understanding of what has been said, and to identify and resolve any areas of misunderstanding or confusion.

The purpose of clarification is to:

- Ensure that the listener’s understanding of what the speaker has said is correct, reducing misunderstanding.
- Reassure the speaker that the listener is genuinely interested in them and is attempting to understand what they are saying.

A listener may ask for clarification when they cannot make sense of the speaker’s responses. Sometimes the messages that a speaker is attempting to send can be highly complex, involving many different people, issues, places and/or times. Clarifying helps to sort these out and also to check the speaker’s priorities.

Through clarification it is possible for the speaker and the listener to make sense of these often confused and complex issues.

**The full eBook
is available at**

www.skillsyouneed.com