

Listening, understanding and communicating

Duration: 45 minutes

Learning objective:

To understand the reasons why listening, understanding and communicating are important in all relationships

Learning outcomes:

- I can identify key skills in good communication
- I can explain how to overcome the challenges to good communication
- I can evaluate the benefits and challenges of online communication

Resources:

- Ask-it-basket
- Slides: Listening, understanding and communicating
- Handout: Good communication symbols (**alternative activity**)
- Handout: Listening, understanding and communicating symbols (optional communication tool to support additional learning needs)

Before using this resource, it is your responsibility to ensure that:

- You have read all of the advice in the 'Respecting me, you, us introduction and guidance' document.
- You have considered adapting the content to meet the needs and characteristics of individuals, or the class as a whole. We recommend using:
 - **Key vocabulary** lists and **alternative activities** to support young people with different learning needs.
 - **Extension activities** and **optional homework** to support young people who finish the activities quickly, or need further challenge.
 - **Editable worksheets** and **slides** to make content changes for young people with special educational needs or difficulties.

(Further information can be found on page 4- 6 of the introduction document)



- You are following your organisation's policies and procedures for safeguarding and delivering Relationships and Sex Education.
- The designated person responsible for safeguarding in your setting is aware that you are delivering this resource.

Key vocabulary

Communication: how people share information with others, including through spoken word, written word and non-verbal such as body language, gestures or facial expressions.

Body language: unspoken communication, using body movements, posture or facial expressions to convey how someone is feeling.

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

Slide 2. Introduce the learning objectives and outcomes for the lesson. Explain that the lesson is about listening, understanding and communicating.

Slide 3. Share the ground rules, adding any additional rules that are relevant.

Introduce the **Ask-it-basket**. Explain that young people can write questions anonymously and put them in the box at any time throughout the lesson or as exit cards. Let young people know when you will answer important questions (this could be at the end of the lesson or at another point over the next week. For example, schools may wish to answer these during form time). Remind young people that the ground rules also apply to the use of the Ask-it-basket.

2. Baseline activity – Good communication (5 minutes)

Slide 4. Ask young people to create a mind map with 'Good communication' written in the centre. Ask them to write down everything they know/think/believe about good communication using these prompts:

- What does good communication mean?
- What might good communication look like?
- What might the challenges to good communication be?

Let young people know that it is ok to not know how to answer or to be unsure of their answers, as the lesson will explore this further.



Alternative activity (discussion based)

You may want to ask learners to contribute their answers verbally. Use the examples given to draw a mind map on the board displaying the different answers.

Alternative activity (practical)

Use **Handout: Communication symbols and images** to help prompt discussion about what good communication looks like. Ask young people to choose which cards show good communication, for example smiling or nodding.

Slide 5. Explain that communication is more than just the words we say. Talk through the communication skills in each of the three areas of the chart.

3. The importance of good communication (5 minutes)

Slide 6. Explain that communication is how people listen and express themselves. Good communication is important because it:

- **helps people achieve things they want deep down**
...such as healthy relationships
- **also helps people achieve everyday things**
...such as team projects, making social plans
- **enables people to respect others' feelings, wishes and views**
...and to avoid disrespecting them
- **means people can avoid misunderstandings**
...which can cause problems and arguments

Slide 7. Ask young people to use their mind map from the beginning of the lesson to share their ideas about the challenges to good communication.

Slide 8. Explain that there are some things that can get in the way of people communicating what they are really thinking and feeling, such as:

1. **Feelings** – such as anger, hurt, shame or embarrassment.
2. **Fears** – such as worrying about how they'll be judged or perceived.
3. **False beliefs** – such as the stereotype that men shouldn't express their emotions.
4. **Assumptions** – such as assuming people won't understand their point of view or will respond in a certain way
5. **Insufficient time, privacy or means of communicating** – such as rushing a chat about something important; or sending a text when they



need to hear someone's tone of voice and see their expression.

Slide 9. Explain that there some key skills that can help people really listen and understand what someone is communicating, even when it's difficult.

Go through the list of skills on the slide and as a class, ask young people to suggest everyday examples for each one:

1. Being present and paying attention

Focussing, not getting distracted by other objects or people

2. Reflecting in the conversation

Gently repeating back what someone thinks has been said

3. Mental reflection

Thinking through what they might be trying to say

4. Listening to everything (words, body language, facial expressions)

Is the person saying something through these things that is difficult to say straight out?

5. Gentle questions which do not put pressure

Ask questions to understand 'tell me about...', not accuse – 'why/why not'

6. Communicating in words and actions that that help them understand

Showing they care and want to fully understand someone. Using 'I feel' instead of 'You are' statements

4. Film – Listening, understanding and communicating (15 minutes)

Slide 10. Play the 'Listening, understanding and communicating' film.

The film depicts Rohaan and Theo having a conversation, but not effectively communicating how they are really feeling.

Slide 11. At the end of the film, ask young people to discuss answers to the following questions (possible answers below each question):

What do you think could be stopping Rohaan and Theo communicating what they are really thinking?

- Assuming that the other person won't understand or isn't interested
- Not wanting to seem 'over-emotional'
- Being in a public place (school)



- Fear of being rejected for other friends
- Feeling embarrassed to talking about feelings

What advice would you give Theo and Rohaan to have a productive conversation about their feelings?

Ask young people to think back to the key skills of listening, understanding and communicating.

- Using 'I feel' not 'You are' statements
- Choosing a good time and place to speak
- Including the positives about the friendship
- Paying attention
- Using body language and facial expressions to show they care
- Asking gentle questions

Slide 12. Ask young people to write the first few lines of a script showing how Rohaan and Theo could have a conversation about their feelings. Highlight that both young people should be honest about how they've been feeling. For example, it could begin with:

- **Rohaan:** Sorry I didn't make it to the party. I've been missing the old days and feeling a bit left out since you've been hanging around Tiago.
- **Theo:** Oh really, I thought you just weren't that interested in hanging out anymore. I do still wanna do things together.

In pairs, ask young people to act out one of their scripts using key skills in listening, understanding and communicating. When they have finished, ask the group to share which of the key skills they saw their partner using and how these would have helped the conversation.

Note: prior to running this activity, ensure you have read the guidance on managing role-play safely on [pages 9-10](#) of the '*Respecting me, you, us* introduction and guidance' document.

5. Online communication (10 minutes)

Slide 13. As a class, ask young people to share positive and negative things about online communication. If not mentioned, share the following examples:

- Positive: time to think things through before sending a message, not having to worry about other people overhearing, not having to think about looks, emojis can help people show how they're feeling, people can say things they may be too shy to say offline.



- Negative: not being able to see someone's facial expressions to help understand how they're feeling, misunderstanding what a message means, some people feel more confident to say rude or mean things.

Alternative activity (practical):

Split the class into two. Ask Group 1 to discuss the positives of online communication and Group 2 to discuss the negatives. Ask young people to explain to the other group why online messaging is a positive experience, and ask the other group to respond with why it's negative, forming a debate.

Slide 14. Show young people the slide and ask them about what they think the young person (Alex) might really be feeling. For example, embarrassed and not wanting to make a 'big deal' about something that's happened.

Ask young people what a person could do if they are unsure about what someone is trying to communicate in online messages. This could include:

- Ring/video call them to check if their tone of voice or facial expression demonstrates how they're really feeling
- Ask to have a conversation face to face where the other person may feel more comfortable to open up
- Ask for clarification if they're unsure about what's being said
- Use the 'ask twice' rule – often our natural first response to 'how are you?' is to say 'I'm good' or 'I'm fine' even if we're not. Asking again may prompt a more honest answer

6. Closing activity – Communicating effectively (5 minutes)

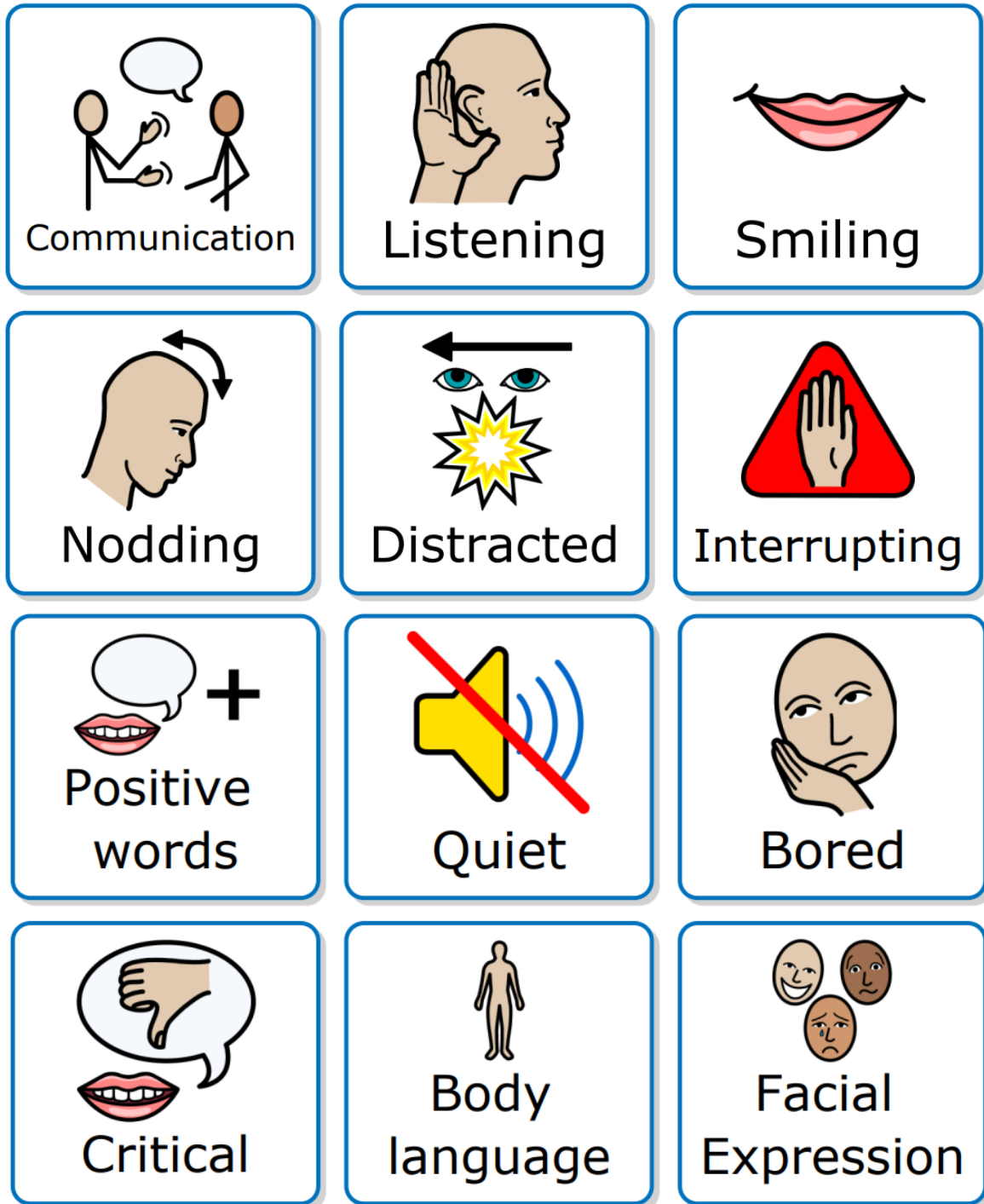
Slide 15. Ask young people to revisit their mind map from the beginning of the lesson and, using a different coloured pen/pencil, add anything new they have learnt about how to communicate effectively, including communicating online.

If the alternative baseline activity was used, ask the group to share additional points that they have learnt that can be added to the mind map on the board.

Slide 16. Explain that there are sources of support available to young people who are worried about something that's happened to them.



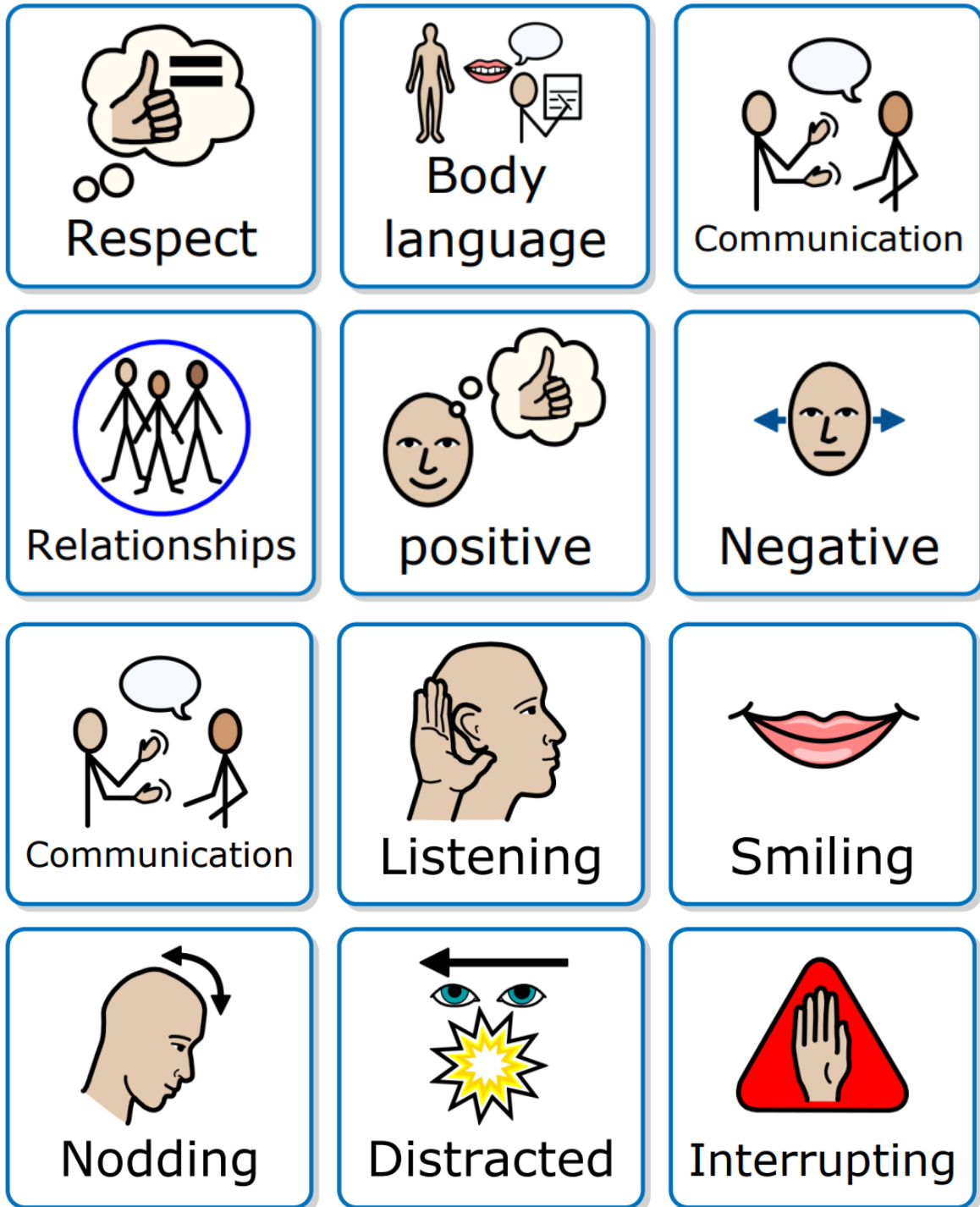
Handout: Good communication symbols (alternative activity)



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Handout: Listening, understanding and communicating symbols (optional)



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Handout: Listening, understanding and communicating symbols (optional)

