

# **Communication Skills Module**

**Marcus Lee**

# Outline

- **Communication Skills**

- Conflict Prevention

- Conflict Management

- Authorship

- Reflection & Self-improvement

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## • Communication Skills

- Conflict Prevention
- Conflict Management
- Authorship
- Reflection & Self-improvement

1. Why is communication important?
2. Identifying expectations.
3. Communication strategies.
4. Active listening.
5. Giving and receiving feedback.

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# Brainstorm

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1. What does a healthy collaboration look like to you?
2. What are some examples of conflict?
3. What do you do when faced with a conflict?

# Communication in Collaborations



**Healthy  
Collaboration**



**Examples of  
Conflicts**



**Resolving  
Conflicts**

- Authorship dispute
- Time commitments
- Disagreements on ideas
- Student-advisor
- Peer to peer

- Continue without changes
- Talk through disagreements
- Bring in a 3rd party mediator
- End collaboration



Mutual contribution,  
appreciation and  
learning



Misunderstood or  
unmet expectations



COMMUNICATE your  
expectations

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# What do we expect?

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1. When do you do your dishes?
2. How often do you want to meet or check in with your advisor?

# Expectations are different for everyone

What do you value?

Dishes

often **vs** all at once

Check ins

independence **vs** guidance

Authorship

Ideas **vs** implementation **vs** writing

Time commitments

this project **vs** other projects

- Don't assume others know what you are thinking/feeling or vice versa.
- Both sides need to communicate effectively and listen actively!

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## 3. Communication Strategies.

4. Active listening.

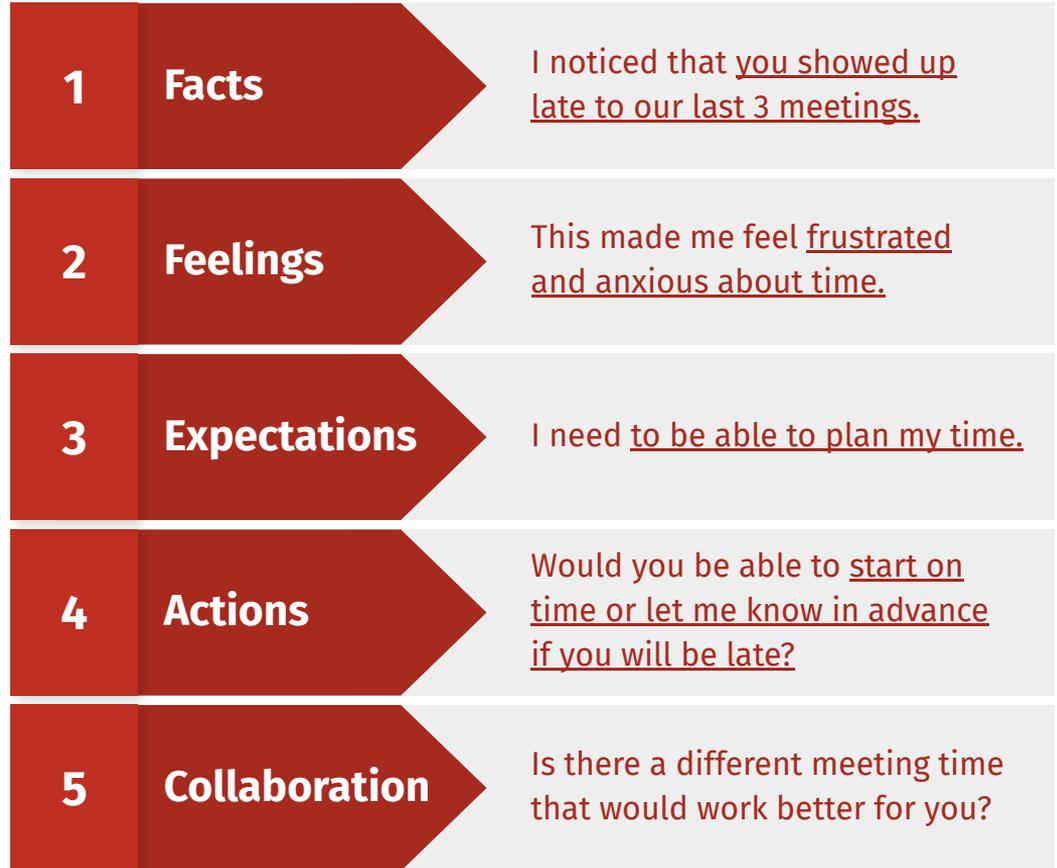
5. Giving and receiving feedback.

# A framework for effective communication

1	<b>Facts</b>	State what happened objectively.	I noticed that _____.
2	<b>Feelings</b>	This is subjective but still valid!	This made me feel _____.
3	<b>Expectations</b>	What are your unmet needs?	I need _____.
4	<b>Actions</b>	What concrete actions will help?	I would like if _____. Can you do that for me?
5	<b>Collaboration</b>	Focus on solutions. Be constructive. Empathize with their needs.	How do you feel about this? What do you suggest?

# Example

**Scenario:** Someone often shows up late to their meetings with you. They do not say why and do not apologize. You have a lot to do so you feel frustrated when you are on time and they are not. After the third time, you are starting to get annoyed and want to say something. It does not seem like they are respecting your time.



# Practice for yourself

**Scenario:** You mentor a SURF student. They have been asking you a lot of questions and it doesn't seem like they take time to think about solutions for themselves. It is taking away too much of your time to do other work. You would like to figure out a way for them to be more independent.

How could you bring this up?

1

**Facts**

I noticed that \_\_\_\_\_.

2

**Feelings**

I feel \_\_\_\_\_.

3

**Expectations**

I need \_\_\_\_\_.

4

**Actions**

Could you try \_\_\_\_\_?

5

**Collaboration**

What would help you most?  
What do you suggest?

# Practice for yourself

**Scenario:** You mentor a SURF student. They have been asking you a lot of questions and it doesn't seem like they take time to think about solutions for themselves. It is taking away too much of your time to do other work. You would like to figure out a way for them to be more independent.

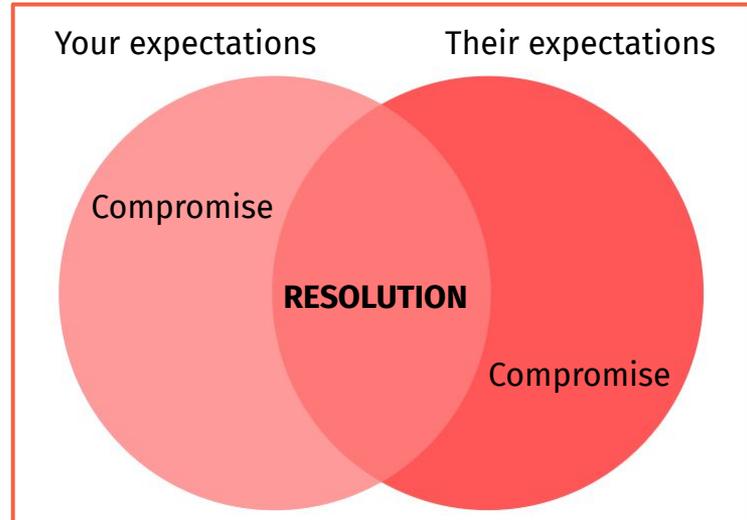
What might you say?

4

**Actions**

Could you try \_\_\_\_\_?

## Resolution vs Compromise



# Reflect

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1. What do you personally find difficult about communicating in a conflict?

# Additional Tips

- State observations rather than judgements.

“You were late for 3 of our past 5 meetings.”  
vs  
“You are always late”

- Reinforce positive consequences.

“I enjoy working with you and would feel more efficient and motivated if we start on time.”

- Write it out and practice.

- Have conversations face-to-face or over Zoom.

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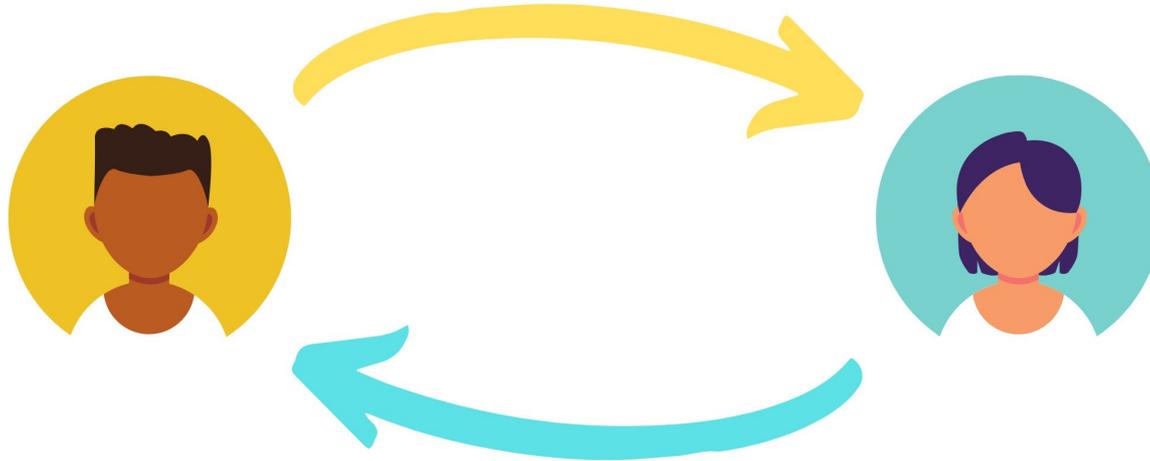
3. Communication strategies.

4. **Active Listening.**

5. Giving and receiving feedback.

# Two sides to communication

Effectively communicate  
expectations



Listen and empathize

- Don't assume they know what you are thinking/feeling or vice versa.
- Both sides need to communicate effectively and listen actively!

# Reflect

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1. What are signs of a great listener?

Try thinking of someone you think is a great listener.

# Active Listening Skills

1

**Pay Attention**

Be willing to listen in good faith. **Don't interrupt.**

2

**Withhold judgement**

Listen with the **intent to understand** rather than counter. Understand that their feelings are valid.

3

**Reflect**

Do you understand where they are coming from?  
Can you identify **what you agree on**?

4

**Clarify**

**Don't assume** something. If you don't understand where they are coming from, be sure to ask more to understand the full picture.

5

**Summarize**

**Repeat back** what you have heard to confirm that you understood.

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# Giving and receiving feedback

## When to give feedback

1. Are you trying to help or criticize?
2. Does it actually matter? (stylistic)
3. Is it within their control?



Constructive criticism  
centers improvement

## Triggers that block feedback\*

1. **Truth Triggers** - The feedback is wrong, unfair or unhelpful
2. **Relationship triggers** - What do we believe about the giver?
3. **Identity triggers** - How does the feedback make us feel?

# Practice

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1. Your co-author wrote a section of the paper you are working on together. There are a lot of grammatical errors and you think there is a better way to structure it too.

What might you say?

# Some ways to give feedback

## Establish feedback early

“Your comments are really helpful! Would you like me to give you some comments as well?”

“I would appreciate any ideas you might have to improve. Maybe we can provide each other with some feedback.”

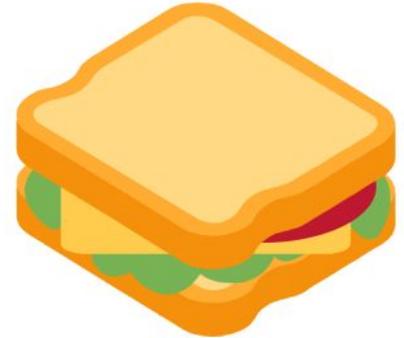


## Sandwich method

Something good

Something to improve

Something good



# Key Takeaways

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<b>5</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	Focus on solutions. Be constructive. Empathize with their needs.	How do you feel about this? What do you suggest?

# Special Thanks To...

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