

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Frontline Leader Snapshot

To be successful in the workplace, you must be able to effectively communicate. Learning the four communication styles helps you understand how your communication affects others.

Primary Communication Styles:

There are four types of communication styles, of which no one style is better than another.

- **Collaborator**- approachable, friendly and open. They thrive on interactions with people, have high energy levels, and are outgoing.
- **Contributor** – socially oriented but prefer speaking with people in small groups or individually. Good listeners and open to opinions and new ideas.
- **Inquisitor** – the perfectionists of communication. Logic and reason rule their communication. Does not typically speak in emotional terms but prefer data and hard facts.
- **Director** – focus on the completion of tasks. Adopt a practical approach to situation and generally take action when someone with a different communication style is still analyzing or planning.

Secondary Communication Styles:

When under stress, most people display a secondary communication style that is determined by the primary communication style. Although they vary widely in other attributes, the main characteristic of the secondary styles is inflexibility.

- **Aggressor** – Acting aggressively is the collaborator's secondary style. Fortunately, outbursts are rare and usually subside quickly and once they have vented, ready to put it behind them.
- **Consenter** – Contributor's secondary communication style is to consent. Contributors are peacemakers but can become inflexible and unwilling to discuss any problems or situation that might be responsible for their stress.
- **Avoider** – Avoidance is the inquisitors secondary communication style. Inquisitors cope with stress by avoiding all emotional expression and contact with others. They may remove themselves.
- **Controller** – Controlling is the director's secondary communication style. Directors are naturally determined, so they become very controlling when under duress.

Providing Feedback

Positive feedback reinforces positive behavior. Following a process for providing feedback enables you to be more effective because you provide the recipient with specific, detail information.

- **Describe the positive behavior** – in as much detail as possible to encourage the recipient to repeat the positive behavior
- **Explain why the behavior is positive** – Helping them to understand how they are contributing to the success of the organization
- **Help them accept credit** – sometimes employees may shrug off praise or compliments. Provide specific examples so they realize the importance of their actions.
- **Thank and encourage the individual** – express your appreciation by thanking them. Doing so helps them feel more self-confident and satisfied with their work.

Please refer to your Frontline Leader Workshop Manual titled “**Advanced Interpersonal Communication**” for more information and tips to help with your leadership skills during this challenging time.