

OXYGEN

WELLNESS **BLOCK** TRAINING



**STRONGER
FAMILIES**

BUILDING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Where have we missed the mark? How can we overcome the barriers that have impacted good communication?

Facilitator Guide

Facilitation Insight:

Deeper ideas for the Facilitator to consider.

EX "After doing this exercise, many couples will need a break from the tension. Sharing a humorous story or a time that you attempted this activity when it didn't go as planned can be a big tension relief!"

Instruction:

Specific instructions for the Facilitator. EX "Advance to the next slide and ask the following question"

Script:

"This is language the Facilitator may consider using to make sure all essential elements of the curriculum are covered."

Put up the Title Slide as the students are arriving. Make sure that you greet them, introduce yourself (if you don't already know them, ask about their day so far, how their shift is going, anything that will begin to form a connection.



"Welcome to today's Wellness Training. We will be using the Wellness Training Guide from Stronger Families on the topic of Communication. For those of you who don't know, my name is _____.

Display your Family/Team Photo slide and introduce yourself and those you do life with.

What we will cover today applies to many areas of our job where communication can either make or break the moment. As we interact with community members, co-workers, children, partners, other family members, etc., communication is essential. Yet effective communication doesn't always come naturally. Developing good communication habits takes time. It takes practice. In this class, not only will you learn about some truly effective communication tools, but you will also practice them. Don't worry! We will not force you to say or do anything you are uncomfortable with; however, you will get out of this what you put into it."

For some, knowing what to expect will put their mind at ease and allow them to engage with less anxiety. This is an important part of the process, don't skip it!

Put up the OXYGEN Profile Assessment Code and Instruction slide (or instruct the participants to retrieve their OXYGEN Profile report if they were able to take it in advance)

"This Wellness Training also involves a personality assessment known as the OXYGEN Profile. We will explore how different personality types tend to communicate so make sure and have your report in front of you.

How many of you felt as though the assessment got it right?
Was anyone surprised by their results?"

Allow the audience to respond and share about their report.

It is important that participants do not feel as though they are being forced to identify with results they don't agree with. Your role is not to convince them. It's ok if they feel as though the assessment got it wrong. Your goal is to shift their focus to what the assessment got right! Be prepared to engage individuals who are struggling with this process. They may need some help looking past those areas they don't agree with to focus on the areas that can benefit them as they seek to grow in their communication skills.

Sharing about your profile and how it can help or hinder healthy and effective personality is a great way to make this concept come to life.
Consider a personal story based on your OXYGEN Profile.

Display the OXYGEN Profile Compass slide



"We can all agree that our personalities impact how we communicate but in what way? Well, different personality tendencies will produce different values when it comes to communication. For some, direct, fact-based communication is valued. For others, they would prefer a softer, more tactful approach to communication. Let's look at the OXYGEN Compass and see if we can discover some values that may influence communication.

There are 2 scales at work within this compass revealing 4 personality tendencies. First, the vertical scale. At the top of the scale are the task-oriented personalities and at the bottom are the people-oriented personalities. Task-Oriented personalities will focus almost exclusively on the tasks that need to be accomplished in any given situation. The People-Oriented personalities will focus on the people and relationships in any given situation."

You can poll the audience to see who identifies with each side of the scale. Opposites attract! It is highly likely that both Task and People Oriented tendencies are at work within your relationship and that of your couples. Sharing a personal story that helps capture the balance and/or tension these tendencies create will help couples lean in. However, if both you and your partner have the same tendency, share how that dynamic plays out within your relationship.

"The other scale is the horizontal scale. On the right side of the scale are the Fast personalities and the left side are Slow personalities. This is not a reference to IQ! This identifies personality tendencies when it comes to processing information and coming to a decision. The personalities on the Fast side of the scale will react quickly. They want responses quickly, they want action, they prefer a wrong decision over no decision! Those on the fast side of the scale don't mind change. They actually enjoy the process of change. The personalities on the Slow side of the scale tend to take more time in making decisions. They investigate, research, seek out 3rd party validation. They ask a lot of questions and are influenced by others' opinions but will not be rushed into forming theirs."

*Ask the students: Based on what we just heard about the OXYGEN Compass can you identify anything that would relate to communication differences between personality types?
Discuss with the group*

"Now let's get specific. Turn to the Keys to Communication section of your OXYGEN Profile Assessment report. Take a few minutes to review the information found there and answer the following questions:"

Display the Keys to Communication Breakout Slide. Have the participants divide into groups of 2 or 3 and follow the instructions in their Study Guide After each group has finished, poll the students for any takeaways that relate to workplace communication.

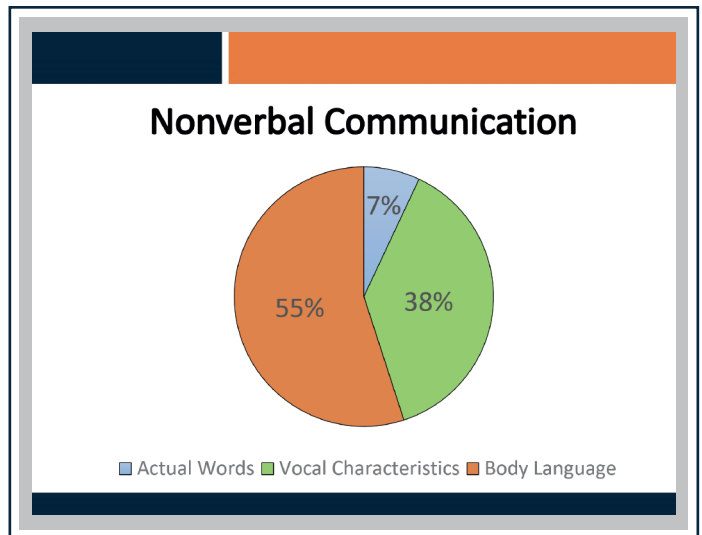
A presentation slide titled "Breakout Activity 'Keys to Communication'". The slide has a white background with a dark blue header bar on the left and an orange header bar on the right. The title is centered in a bold, black font. The slide is framed by a thin black border.

Breakout Activity "Keys to Communication"

"We can all agree that personality plays a big part in communication. The way our personalities show up at work and at home can support healthy communication or create tension, confusion, and misunderstandings. Exploring how personality factors into our communication tendencies will provide a greater opportunity for effective communication.

"One variable that we don't always consider when talking about communication is the non-verbal factor. Our facial expressions, tone, body language, gestures, pauses, etc., are all non-verbal signals. These signals send messages which can either powerfully reinforce our words OR make things quite confusing. When the meaning of the words we choose to say does not match what our non-verbal signals are communicating people are less likely to believe your words."

Display the Albert Mehrabian
"Elements of Communication" slide

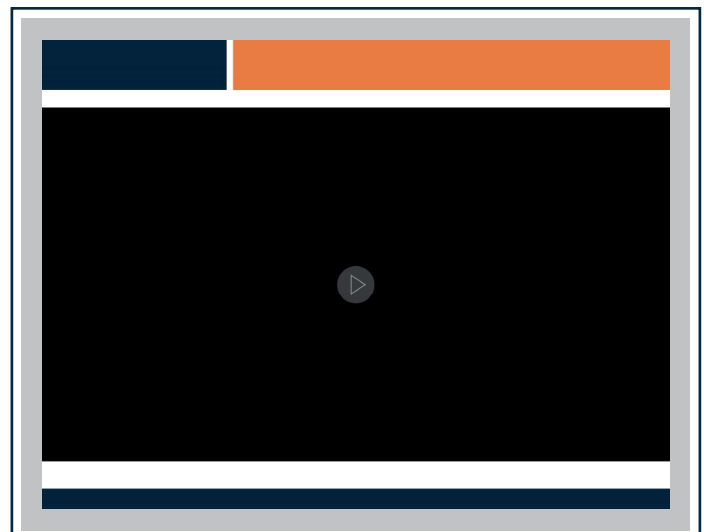


"In fact, research has shown that among people who know you well, your words only have a 7% impact on what the listener believes. 38% is vocal characteristics and 55% is body language and facial expression. Your body language, gestures, and tone are all communicating, whether you realize it or not so be intentional. Choose your words carefully, then make sure that your non-verbal signals reinforce your words."

Listening With Empathy

"It's easy to limit our thinking about communication to only the delivery of information whether verbal or non-verbal; however, one of the most underinvested elements of communication is not how we deliver information, but how we receive it. Listening is an important and essential part of good communication!"

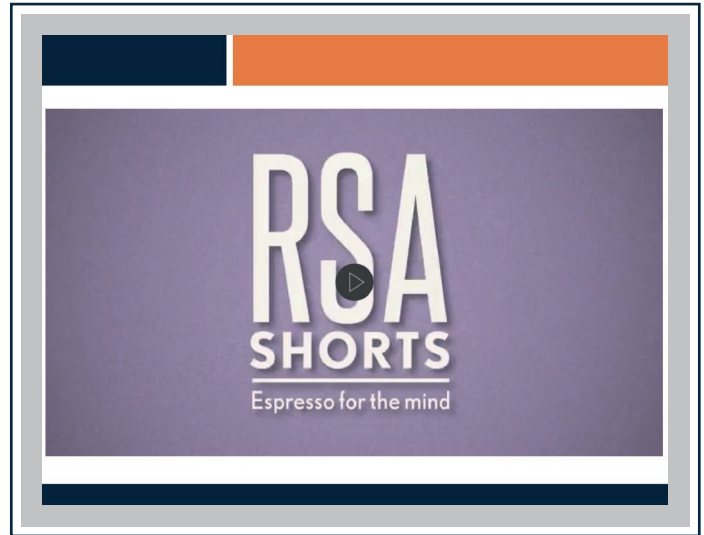
Play the "You're Getting Robbed" video



"What a great reminder to not jump to conclusions! The store clerk came to a decision based on the information that was being delivered. He did not consider who the information was meant for, the context of the information being shared, or who was sending the information. In other words, there was a complete lack of understanding regarding what was behind the words being said. He lacked empathy.

This video by author and researcher Brene Brown does a great job highlighting the power of empathy."

Play Brene Brown "Power of Empathy" video.



"Listening with empathy is truly listening to what the other person is saying. Instead of waiting for an opening to get your own point across, you are willing to listen with the sole intent of understanding what the other person thinks, means, or feels—NOT to judge, rebut, advise, or contradict.

Listening with empathy is a learned skill; it's not something people generally develop automatically. We have a skill set for developing listening with empathy. It's called the Empathetic Communication."

Empathetic Communication

Display the Empathetic Communication Slide and discuss the content

The Empathetic Communication

Purpose: To understand and be understood by another person.

Empathetic Communication is **not** to make an agreement, **nor** necessarily to solve a problem.

Goal = understanding each other's perspective

"Empathetic Communication is a conversation framework that will guide you through listening with empathy. It is particularly beneficial when the conversation you are having, or are about to have, with a coworker is heavy with frustration and could get derailed by emotion, disagreement, or misunderstanding.

Ask the audience to think of a frustrating situation they have experienced at work or at home. Then ask for a volunteer who would be willing to share their experience with the group. Once selected, have the volunteer exit the room for a few minutes while you go over how Empathetic Communication works with the rest of the group.

*Display the Empathetic Communication
How It Works Part 1 Slide*

How Empathetic Communication Works

Part 1 – Mirroring (Listening Step)

- Speaker: Send message in small enough pieces to be mirrored.
- Listener:
 - a. "What I heard you say is..."
 - b. "Am I mirroring you accurately?"
 - c. Or "Is there more?"

There are 3 parts to Empathetic Conversation.

Part 1 – Mirroring. When an engagement with a coworker fits the criteria we just described, begin to implement Part 1 – Mirroring.

Allow the speaker to share their thoughts and repeat back what they express. You may need to frame your intention by stating something like: "What you are saying is important. I want to make sure I don't miss anything so I would like to repeat back what you are saying as you say it to make sure. Are you ok with that?" Most likely the speaker will agree, and you can continue. If they do not agree, take that as a sign that some space may be needed before continuing with the conversation so that damage is not done.

As the speaker continues, you as the listener, will repeat back (or mirror) what the speaker just said to clarify the message and demonstrate that you understand what was shared. You can do this by following the prompts on the slide. Once the Speaker is finished, we move on to the next part."

Our brains have an amazing ability to filter through an incredible amount of information picking out only what we feel is relevant. This Mirroring technique is essential for helping us avoid the mistake of adding or taking away from what someone says to us. Remind students to refrain from drawing conclusions or making assumptions beyond what is clearly stated by the Speaker. This could be a great opportunity to incorporate a personal story about a time you assumed or drew a conclusion and were wrong! You can also refer to the opening video as an example.

*Display the Empathetic Communication
How It Works Part 2 Slide*

How Empathetic Communication Works

Part 2: Validation (Thought Level)

When the **Speaker** says, "That is all," the **Listener** then validates the **Speaker**.

- a. "I can understand how you would think..."
- b. "I see why that bothers you."
- c. "I would probably be upset too, if that happened to me."

"Part 2 – Validation. The goal of this step is to make sure the speaker feels validated. In other words, they know that what they have just said matters and has value, whether or not you agree with what the Speaker has just said. You, as the listener, will craft a response to what was shared that validates the speaker's thought process.

An example of validation is to say, "I can understand how you would think that..." or "I can see why that bothers you..."

*Advance to the Empathetic Communication
How It Works Part 3 Slide*

How Empathetic Communication Works

Part 3: Empathy (Feeling Level)

The goal of empathy is to feel what your partner is feeling.

- a. "I imagine you might be feeling..."
- b. "I imagine you might have felt..."
- c. "If I were in your shoes, I might feel...Do you feel like that?"

Then, trade roles. The listener now speaks, and the speaker listens.

Part 3 – Empathy. The goal of empathy is to try to identify what the speaker may be feeling and then put yourself in their shoes.

Communicating empathy can sound like, “I can imagine you might be feeling...” or, “If I were in your shoes, I might feel.... Do you feel like that?”

A good point to make here is not to be over-confident in your empathy. It's wise and humble to ask if your guess is right.

“Empathetic Communication requires your full attention. Make sure that you can be fully present with no interruptions or distractions. It may be necessary to reschedule the conversation if the situation you are in makes it difficult to fully engage. That's okay! If now isn't a good time, then find a time when you are both available.

So, we've got three parts: Mirroring, Validating, and Empathy. Let's see how this would play out in a real-life situation.”

Invite the Volunteer back into the room. Ask them to join you up front and share with you about their frustrating situation. Remember to frame how you will be interacting with the information so that they are not thrown off by the Part 1 – Mirroring.

As they share their frustration follow the Empathetic Communication framework arriving at a point of expressing validation, and empathy to the volunteer.

When finished feel free to interview the volunteer about their experience ultimately discovering if they felt heard and/or understood.

Reference the Study Guide, page 8, “Perception... Is it Reality?” tying the results of the study to what the volunteer expressed.

Please put up Empathetic Communication “Activity” slide

Empathetic Communication “Activity”

"Now it's your turn.

Remember the situation you identified that has been frustrating for you to deal with at work or at home? Great! Let's get back into our small groups and this time I want you each to take turns sharing your frustrating scenario while someone else from the group follows the Empathetic Communication framework and listens with empathy. The others can observe making sure each part of Empathetic Communication is engaged. Then trade roles so that each person in the group has an opportunity to both express their frustration and listen with Empathy,

Display the Empathetic Communication slide.

Allow the students to complete the activity. Make yourself available to help guide the process as needed and answer any questions that may come up.

The Empathetic Communication

"This probably feels a little scripted to you, but the three steps are a framework for conversation where strong feelings are involved which can derail communication efforts. It may feel "unnatural" however, what comes naturally is often fight or flight... neither of which are helpful for effective communication. Trust the process it really does work.

When finished, consider engaging the audience about their experience. Some will immediately see the benefit and have made useful conclusions they will want to share. Others will have found it difficult. A personal story can help validate their feelings as well as reinforce the effectiveness of the Empathetic Communication framework. Feel free to acknowledge the reality... no one talks this way in real life! That's true! Give the participants permission to find wording that better fits their way of talking while making sure to stay true to the process!

Conclusion

"Knowing our own communication tendencies based on our personalities, learning the Empathetic Communication framework, and being mindful of our non-verbal signals are all powerful tools for more effective communication. But as with any skill set, practice makes perfect!

This concludes our Wellness Training on Communication. Thank you for your time and attention. For more resources, feel free to reach out to me personally (include a slide in the deck with your contact info) or go to www.strongerfamilies.com