

Communication Agreements

Try on new ideas and perspectives, concepts and experiences that are different than your own. Be willing to open up to new territory and break through old patterns. Remember, try on is not the same as “take on.”

Step up/Step back - Honor different beliefs and encourage empowerment by making a space for all voices, experiences and ideas to be heard and shared. Talking does not equal participation. Generous listening is a form of participating. If you tend to speak a lot, try listening more. And, if you tend to sit back and listen, consider speaking up more.

Speak from the “I” is speaking from one’s personal experience. Rather than saying “we”, using “I” allows us to take ownership of thoughts, feelings and actions.

Both/and thinking - Making room for more than one idea and point of view at a time means appreciating and valuing multiple realities – your own (it is possible to be both excited and sad at the same time) and others. While either/or thinking has its place it can often be a barrier to human communication

It’s okay to disagree - Avoid attacking, discounting or judging the beliefs and views of yourself or others – verbally or non-verbally. Instead, welcome disagreement as an opportunity to expand your world. Ask questions to understand the other person’s perspective.

Self awareness – Respect and connect to the authenticity of your true self; be aware of your thoughts, feelings and reactions in the process. Be aware of your inner voice and own where you are by asking questions about why you are reacting, thinking and feeling as you do. Monitor the content, the process and yourself.

Check out assumptions – This is an opportunity to learn more about yourself and others; do not “assume” you know what is meant by a communication especially when it triggers you – ask questions.

Adapted from a document created by Contra Costa Health Services and adapted from VISIONS, Inc.
<http://www.visions-inc.org/index.htm>