Communication

*Communication Styles: 3 types*

1. Aggressive – overly forceful, pushy, or hostile.
   1. May involve bullying or intimidation. People with this style may not pay attention to others’ thoughts or feelings.
2. Passive – tend to be unwilling and unable to express thoughts or feelings in a direct or firm manner. Tend to put others feelings before yours.
   1. May choose this style because conflict makes them uncomfortable.
3. Assertive – expresses views clearly and respectfully.
   1. Involves standing up for your rights and beliefs while also respecting those of others. Tend to move towards negotiation to find the best solution.

*Conversation Killers*

* Talk about themselves
* Appear disinterested in what the other person is saying
* Interrupts the other person
* Change the subject
* Be a know-it-all
* Brag
* Complain
* Talk about others
* Dominate the conversation
* Avoid eye contact

*Good Listening Rules*:

* Give your full attention, and eliminate distractions.
* Focus on the message/main point. Seek to understand, even if you don’t agree.
* Indicate your interest
  + Eye contact.
  + Tone of voice
  + Body language
    - Facial expressions, posture, gestures, etc.
  + Encouraging phrases and/or questions.
* Stop yourself from interrupting
* Clarify by repeating, and then remembering

NOTE: Listening is hard work. When you are speaking, remember to choose your words, and tone of voice and sounds very carefully. Watch your non-verbal’s as well, and make sure they match your words.

*Healthy Conflict Resolution:*

* Think before you speak.
  + What am I really upset about?
  + What are my motives?
  + Am I being selfish?
  + Is what they did wrong/ unhealthy, or is it just different, annoying, bothersome, etc. ?
* Know what you are trying to accomplish
* Communicate using “I” messages. Focuses on feelings rather than behavior.
  + “You never listen to anything I say.” – Example
  + I statement – “I feel like my suggestions aren’t being taken seriously.”
* Stick to one topic.
* Allow the other person to respond
* Aim for ventilation, not conquest
* Balance criticism with affection
* Don’t dramatize
* Allow enough time
* Pick a time & place that works for both.
* Don’t lay on the guilt
* Don’t get defensive - try to stay open.
* Don’t let the situation overwhelm you.
* Try corresponding in writing
* Value your relationship more than whatever is causing the conflict.
* Be willing to forgive each other.