INTERPERSONAL SKILLS ACADEMY

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Academy Introduction

Using the **Interpersonal Skills Academy** transparency **(T1)**, review the modules with the paraeducators before beginning the academy.

This academy is designed to help paraeducators develop effective interpersonal skills that are necessary in working as a part of a team. The focus of the academy is on developing effective interpersonal skills through understanding the perception, communication, and conflict resolution processes. Throughout the academy, issues of diversity based on culture, experience, gender, etc. are pointed out and their roles in each aspect of the topics covered are examined.

Interpersonal Skills Academy

Module A: Interpersonal Sensitivity

- *Identify factors that affect perception and understanding of situations and the behavior of others.*

- *Recognize the importance of creating positive communication climates.*

Module B: Effective Communication

- *Identify the components of effective verbal communication.*

- *Identify the components of effective non-verbal communication.*

- *Recognize the importance of effective listening and responding in effective communication.*

- *Adapt communication effectively to diverse situations.*

Interpersonal Skills Academy
(continued)

Module C: Conflict Resolution

- *Identify characteristics of effective interpersonal relationships in the workplace.*

- *Recognize the role of conflict in interpersonal relationships.*

- *Demonstrate effective strategies for resolving conflict between two people.*

- *Demonstrate effective strategies for resolving group conflict.*

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Module A: Interpersonal Sensitivity

Interpersonal Skills Academy
Module A: Interpersonal Sensitivity

A. Energizer: Multi-Cultural BINGO

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to begin to think about aspects of their own culture and the cultures of others.

A.1 Steps

- Distribute the **Multi-Cultural BINGO** handout **(H1)**, reviewing the instructions for the game with the participants.
  - ➟ As each statement is read, mark the corresponding square on the handout if it corresponds to your cultural values and beliefs.
  - ➟ The first person to mark five squares in a row, either across, down, or diagonally, wins.
- Read the following statements to the participants, allowing time for the participants to mark off the squares.
  - ➟ Believe direct eye contact is a sign of disrespect.
  - ➟ Worship in a synagogue.
  - ➟ Live with extended family members.
  - ➟ Traditionally celebrate Christmas on a day other than December 25th.
  - ➟ Celebrate November 1st.
  - ➟ Eat turkey on Thanksgiving.
  - ➟ Believe it is wrong to question any authority figures.
  - ➟ Don't eat pork.
  - ➟ Eat corned beef and cabbage on March 17th.
  - ➟ Drink wine with dinner.
  - ➟ Believe direct questioning is rude and intrusive.
  - ➟ Have your major meal at midday.
  - ➟ Celebrate Kwanza.
  - ➟ Speak more than one language in your home.
  - ➟ Believe time should be taken to develop personal relationships before conducting business.
  - ➟ Celebrate Cinco de Mayo.
  - ➟ Do not believe in killing wild animals.
  - ➟ Don't keep domestic animals in your house.

> ➥ Follow a lunar calendar rather than the typical American calendar.
> ➥ Have eaten snake.
> ➥ Have an altar in your house.
> ➥ Your schedule is not driven by time.
> ➥ Get ashes on Ash Wednesday.
> ➥ Do not celebrate birthdays.

- ▪ It is very likely that there will not be a winner. If there is a winner, stop the game and have the participant review the squares they marked off.

A.2 Lecture: Culture and Interpersonal Relations

Point out that these statements are all examples of different norms of different cultures. The statements may be true of only one culture's norms, or may be true of multiple culture's norms. It is important to recognize that there are similarities and differences in the values and beliefs of cultures, and be mindful of how those similarities and differences affect the ways in which we interact with each other. Ask the participants to bear this activity in mind throughout the topics covered in this module, reflecting throughout on their own culture's influences over their approaches and attitudes toward others.

B. Lecture: Module Goals

Using the **Module A: Interpersonal Sensitivity** handout and transparency **(H2/T1)**, review the goals of the module.

1. Identify factors that affect perception and understanding of situations and the behavior of others.
2. Recognize the importance of creating positive communication climates.

Goal 1: Identify factors that affect perception and understanding of situations and the behavior of others.

1.1 Activity: Tearing a Sheet of Paper

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to begin to understand challenges in perception.

1.1.1 Discussion: Misinterpretations

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding experiences they have had with misinterpretation, using the following questions as a guide.

- Have you ever misinterpreted someone describing a task, even when the instructions were simple?
- How did it make you feel when you realized it?
- Have you ever been misinterpreted while you were describing a task, even when the instructions were simple?
- How did it make you feel when you realized it?

1.1.2 Steps

- Solicit four volunteers from the class.
- Have the volunteers come to the front and stand facing the class.
- Provide each volunteers with identical blank sheets of paper.
- Instruct the volunteers to close their eyes and keep them closed until you tell them to open them.
- Instruct the volunteers to, with their eyes closed, fold their piece of paper in half and tear off the bottom right corner.
- Instruct the volunteers to, with their eyes closed, fold the piece of paper in half again and tear off the upper right corner.
- Instruct the volunteers to, with their eyes closed, fold the piece of paper in half again and tear off the lower left corner.
- When finished, have the volunteers open their eyes, unfold their piece of paper, and show it to the class and each other.
- Thank the volunteers and have them return to their seats.

1.1.3 Discussion: Differences in Interpretation

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding differences in perception, even when instructions are simple and steps are few, using the following questions as a guide.

- What words in the directions could have been (or were) interpreted in different ways?
- How could the directions have been presented in a way that would minimize the chances of misinterpretation?
- How can we encourage co-workers to raise questions for clarification when they don't understand?

1.2 Lecture: Perception and Understanding

Perception can be defined as the process through which we become aware of and gain understanding of a given behavior or situation. Many factors contribute to our perceptions and eventual understanding, and are accounted for in three basic steps. Present and review the **Steps of Perception and Understanding** transparency **(T2)**.

- Selection
  ➥ What we notice and attend to.
- Organization
  ➥ How we organize what we have selected.
- Attributions
  ➥ What we attribute behaviors and situations to and how we interpret them.

1.3 Lecture: Culture and Perception

Emphasize that perception, and all of the steps contributing to it, is largely affected by culture. Culture can be defined as the intellectual, technical, artistic, physical, and moral content of a given group of people. Daniel Chirot (1994) states that, "Cultures interpret our surroundings for us and give them meaning and allow us to express ourselves. Language, religions, science, art, notions of right and wrong, explanations of the meaning of life - these are all part of the cultural system of a society." Culture is taught to, learned by, and eventually added to by each generation.

1.4 Discussion: Cultures Other Than My Own

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding experiences they have had with cultures other than their own, positive and negative. Use the following questions as a guide for the discussion.

- What was the situation?

- How old were you?
- How old was the other person?
- How did the experience make you feel?
- How do you think the experience made the other person feel?
- In what ways did your own culture affect your behavior in, approach to, and feelings about the situation?
- How did the experience change your thoughts, beliefs, or feelings about your own culture, or did it?
- How did the experience change your thoughts, beliefs, or feelings about that other culture, or did it?

1.5 Activity: My Culture and My Perceptions

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on aspects of their culture and how they affect their perceptions of people and situations.

1.5.1 Steps

- Have the participants break into groups by counting off by nine: all 1's together, all 2's together, all 3's together, etc.
- Distribute the **Culture and Perception** handouts **(H3/H4/H5/H6/H7/ H8/H9/H10/H11)** as follows:
  - ➥ Group 1: **Culture and Perception:** *Family Structure* **(H3)**
  - ➥ Group 2: **Culture and Perception:** *Life Cycles* **(H4)**
  - ➥ Group 3: **Culture and Perception:** *Roles and Relationships* **(H5)**
  - ➥ Group 4: **Culture and Perception:** *Discipline* **(H6)**
  - ➥ Group 5: **Culture and Perception:** *Time and Space* **(H7)**
  - ➥ Group 6: **Culture and Perception:** *Religion* **(H8)**
  - ➥ Group 7: **Culture and Perception:** *Food* **(H9)**
  - ➥ Group 8: **Culture and Perception:** *Health and Hygiene* **(H10)**
  - ➥ Group 9: **Culture and Perception:** *History, Traditions, and Holidays* **(H11)**
- Instruct the participants to read through and briefly respond to each of the questions on their handout on their own.
- When finished, have the groups share their responses with each other.
- Have the groups discuss how these aspects of their culture may affect their perceptions of other people and situations.
- When finished, have the groups share their discussions with the class,

noting on a blank transparency the key points of each groups discussions.

1.5.2 Lecture: Further Understanding My Culture and My Perceptions

Emphasize that understanding our own and other cultures is a continuous process, requiring firsthand experiences, extensive studying, and an open mind. It is important to understand our own culture and how aspects of our culture affect our perceptions and understandings. By doing so, we may be able to minimize harmful, hurtful, and unproductive misperceptions and misunderstandings of the people and situations we encounter in our daily lives.

1.6 Activity: Selecting Information

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of how information is selected.

1.6.1 Steps

- Have the participants individually make a list of what they notice in the room. Allow a few minutes for this.
- When finished, have the participants break into small groups.
- Have the groups share their lists and make two new lists, one with the things they all noticed and one with the things that not all members noticed.
- When finished, have the groups share their lists with the class, noting the differences and commonalities.

1.6.2 Lecture: Further Understanding Selecting Information

Point out that at the beginning of the activity, the individual participants probably listed those things that were more noticeable, perhaps because they were large, unusual, loud, etc. As the individuals shared their lists with the groups and the groups then shared their lists with the class, they probably found that the while the lists may have shared several things, they also had several differences. This is because those things that attract our attention are often different for each of us, and while those things may not have been noticeable to all of us initially, we are all aware of them now and will probably be attending to them on some level.

Emphasize that while this activity focused on elements in our physical environment, we also go through the same process when in a conversation

with a friend, a meeting, or a class and what we select to attend to can certainly affect our perception of a given situation or person. It is important to understand that while we may be attending to the temperature of the room or the color of the speaker's shirt, these elements aren't necessarily the most important in the situation and often we engage in internal dialogues which help to focus us on those things that are important. For example, when driving late at night, one might tell one's self to pay attention to the road, or when in a meeting or conversation, one might have to remind one's self to not interrupt the speaker.

1.7 Lecture: Organizing Information

Key to our perception and understanding are the ways in which we organize the information we receive. There is a series of elements which help us to organize information about people and situations. Present and review the **Organizing Information** handout and transparency **(H12/T3)**.

- Prototypes
  - ➥ Prototypes are our ideals for different kinds of people or situations (the perfect teacher, the perfect student, the perfect job, etc.).
  - ➥ We form our prototypes based on our experiences and the people in our lives.
  - ➥ For example, Sue may be the ideal friend because she is kind, considerate, responsible, honest, intelligent, and fun. As we make new friends, they will be measured against our ideal friend, Sue, through the use of personal constructs.
- Personal Constructs
  - ➥ Personal constructs are two-sided mental yardsticks by which we measure people and situations (kind/unkind, considerate/ rude, responsible/irresponsible, honest/dishonest, good/bad, safe/unsafe, etc.).
  - ➥ Which constructs we use to evaluate a given person or situation will vary, depending on which prototype we are attempting to fit them in to. The constructs used to evaluate the ideal supervising teacher (i.e., fair/unfair, flexible/inflexible, experienced/inexperienced, etc.) will be different than those used to evaluate the ideal life-partner (i.e., affectionate/ unaffectionate, playful/boring, family-oriented/not family-oriented, etc.).

- Stereotypes
  - ➡ Once we've established which prototype a person or situation fits into, using our personal constructs, we then gauge how that person will behave or how a situation will play out and how we should behave with a particular person or in a particular situation. These predictions are based on stereotypes.
  - ➡ A stereotype is simply a generalized prediction of a person or situation.
  - ➡ While stereotypes do play a role in guiding appropriate behavior with various people and in various situations, they are subjective and can often be incorrect.
  - ➡ Stereotypes can cause problems in that they do not allow us to see individual differences from person to person or situation to situation.
  - ➡ Inaccuracies occur either because our stereotypes are flawed initially, or a particular individual or situation does not conform to the stereotype.

1.8 Activity: Pair, Square, Share: *Organizing Information*

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the ways in which people organize information.

1.8.1 Steps

- Have the participants break into pairs.
- Instruct the pairs to discuss ways in which their cultural backgrounds affect the way they organize information, referring to the Organizing Information handout as necessary.
- Have the pairs develop a list of specific examples for prototypes, personal constructs, and stereotypes.
- When finished, have each pair join another pair, forming groups of four.
- Instruct the groups to share their previous discussion and examples.
- When finished, have the groups share their discussions and examples with the class.

1.9 Lecture: Interpreting Information

Interpretation is the final step in perception and can be defined as the process through

which we derive meaning and understanding from our experiences by attributing behaviors to various factors. A key part of interpretation is attempting to determine why someone says or does (or does not say or do) something, or why a situation is the way it is. This is the process of attribution. Present and review the **Attribution and Interpretation** handout and transparency **(H13/T4)**. There are three basic factors in interpreting behavior or situations.

- Internal-External Factors
  - ➥ The things people say or do (or do not say or do) are attributed to either internal or external causes. An internal attribution has the cause of a behavior lying within the person, "She's cranky;" whereas an external attribution would attribute the behavior to events in the person's life, "She's frustrated because the kids overslept this morning, the toast burned, and there was a lot of traffic on the way in this morning."
- Stable-Unstable Factors
  - ➥ The things people say or do (or do not say or do) and why situations are the way they are are attributed to either stable and unchanging (i.e., "A paraeducator's job is stressful," or "She's a tense person.") or unstable and temporary factors (i.e., "She's stressed today because she's closing on her house today," or "The office is stressful today because we have a new principal starting this morning.").
- Controllable-Uncontrollable Factors
  - ➥ The things people say or do (or do not say or do) are attributed to either factors thought to be controllable by the individual (i.e., "She can't control her temper.") or things beyond the individual's control (i.e., "She has a chemical imbalance.").

1.10 Activity: Attribution and Interpretation

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to gain a better understand of how the things to which we attribute behaviors and situations affect our interpretations of behaviors and situations.

1.10.1 Steps
- Have the participants break into groups of four.
- Have the groups determine which member will be responsible for the following points necessary for this activity.
  - ➥ Group Member 1: *Behavior Examples*

➥   Group Member 2: *Internal-External Factors*
➥   Group Member 3: *Stable-Unstable Factors*
➥   Group Member 4: *Control Factors*
- Distribute the **Attribution and Interpretation: *Behavior Examples*** handout **(H14)** to *Group Member 1* of each group.
- Have the remaining three group members to refer to the **Attribution and Interpretation** handout **(H13)** to guide their roles.
- Instruct the *Group Member 1*'s to read the two examples provided on the handout to their other group members.
- Instruct the other group members to provide an attribution and interpretation for each end of their assigned factor (e.g., *Group Member 2* should provide an example of an internal attribute and how the behavior is interpreted as a result of that attribution and an example of an external attribute and how the behavior is interpreted as a result of that attribution, etc.), with the *Group Member 1*'s recording their responses on their handout.
- After going through the two example behaviors provided, have the *Group Member 1*'s provide one additional example of a behavior they have had personal experience with and repeat the process.
- When finished, have the groups share their results with the class.

1.11 Discussion: Factors that Affect Perception and Understanding

Present and review the **Factors that Affect Perception and Understanding** transparency **(T5)**. The process of perception can be affected by many things.
- Expectations.
  ➥   Because of the ways we organize information, including experiences, it is common to come into a new situation (i.e., meeting a new person, starting a new job, having a conversation with a supervising teacher or the parents of a student, or attending a meeting) with a certain set of expectations. While these expectations can help to guide our behavior in a given situation, they can also alter our perceptions of the same situation.

    Engage the participants in a discussion regarding experiences they have had in which their expectations of a person or situation has affected their perception and understanding.

- Physiological factors.
  - ➥ It is important to remember that not all people physically experience the same things in the same ways because of physiological differences. What is clearly visible to one person, may not be large enough or completely unseeable to another; what is loud to one person, may be barely audible to another; and what may be a comfortable temperature to one person, may be too cool or warm to another. It is necessary to remember that these differences in sensory abilities may affect our perceptions and understandings.

  Engage the participants in a discussion regarding experiences they have had in which physiological differences have affected their perception and understanding.

- Cognitive abilities.
  - ➥ The ways in which people are able to think about other people and situations vary in complexity, and these cognitive abilities affect perception and understanding. The number of personal constructs a person uses, how abstract the constructs are, and how elaborately the constructs interact all affect perception. For example, if one can only think of others in terms of intelligent or unintelligent, then one only has a limited way of perceiving others. More complex cognitive abilities allow us to be more flexible in how we perceive others and situations and more easily incorporate new, and possibly contradictory, information as it arises. Not doing so would be to disregard otherwise important information about other people and situations simply because it doesn't fit, thereby limiting our ability to accurately perceive and understand the world around us.

  Engage the participants in a discussion regarding experiences they have had in which new information about a person or situation has affected their perception and understanding of that person or situation for the better.

- Age and past experiences.
  - ➥ Our age and past experiences can have a great affect on how we perceive and understand other people and situations. As we get

older and as we have more and varied experiences, we gain a greater ability to look at new people and situations from various perspectives, allowing for greater flexibility in our perceptions.

➥ It is important to also be mindful of the age and past experiences of those we interact with. For example, because of the history of various forms of discrimination, some students, parents, and co-workers may feel discouraged and apprehensive in certain situations.

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding experiences they have had in which age and/or past experience has affected the perceptions and understandings of a particular person or situation.

- Gender.
  ➥ It is important to recognize that males and females may perceive people and situations in different ways, and that males and females may be perceived differently in a given situation based on preconceived notions of gender (stereotypes). As previously mentioned, perception and understanding for some people, (i.e., students, parents, and co-workers) will be affected by the history of and their experiences regarding gender-based discriminations in certain situations.

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding experiences they have had in which gender has affected the perceptions and understandings of a particular person or situation.

- Social roles and corresponding training/demands.
  ➥ The roles we take on in life, personally and professionally, and the training and demands of each of those roles can affect perception. For example, the way the teacher thinks of a class and the way the students think of a class will be different, based on the ways in which they select, organize, and interpret the situation. Additionally, a teacher, a parent, and a paraeducator will all perceive the same child differently based on their roles and the training they have received for that role.

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding experiences they have had in which their roles, corresponding training, and or demands of the role have affected their perception and understanding of a particular

person or situation.

- Prejudices.
  - ➡ Prejudice can be defined as negative attitudes toward and beliefs about a group. It is important to be aware of our own personal prejudices, how they affect our perceptions about others, and how others are affected by them.
  - ➡ Because our prejudices are so deeply ingrained in us, it is often difficult for us to recognize them and to make the necessary modifications to the behaviors, whether subtle or overt, that are generated by them.

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding experiences they have had in which prejudice has led to misperception and/or misunderstanding, and strategies they use to monitor and deal with their own personal prejudices.

- Culture.
  - ➡ As discussed throughout this goal, culture can play a large role in how we perceive and understand other people and situations.

Present and review the transparency of key points recorded on a blank transparency during *1.5 Activity: My Culture and My Perceptions*, regarding the ways in which the participants said their cultures have affected their perceptions and understandings. Ask the participants to share any additional experiences they have had.

1.12 Activity: My Strategies for Effective Perception and Understanding

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to begin to think about the strategies they employ for effective perception and understanding.

1.12.1 Steps
- Have the participants break into small groups.
- Instruct the groups to discuss and list strategies they employ in order to more effectively perceive and interpret various behaviors and situations.
- When finished, have each group share their list with the class and record their strategies on a blank piece of chart paper.

1.13 Discussion: Strategies for More Effective Perception and Understanding

Present and review the **Strategies for More Effective Perception and Understanding** handout and transparency **(H15/T6)**, incorporating the strategies the participants provided in **1.12 Activity: My Strategies for Effective Perception and Understanding**. Point out the similarities in the strategies and discuss any differences.

- See people as individuals, not as members of a group.
  - ➥ Making an effort to see each person as an individual rather than as a member of a group will help in minimizing misperceptions based on differences in and misconceptions about physiology, culture, gender, lifestyle, etc.
- Avoid mind reading.
  - ➥ Assuming that we know what another person is thinking, how they are feeling, or how they will react to a given situation can lead to a variety of problems. Not only can mind reading lead to misunderstandings, but can also convey to the other person that we don't care to hear from them what they are thinking or feeling. Emphasize that we cannot assume to know what is going on in someone else's mind, the only way to really gain understanding is to hear it from that person.
- Check your perceptions with others.
  - ➥ Emphasize that perceptions are subjective. Checking our perceptions with others can confirm our perception and understanding of a situation, or illuminate possible misconceptions. To check your perception, state your perception to the person ("You seem mad at me."), check your perception ("Do you feel angry with me?"), allow the other person to confirm and/or clarify your perception (confirm: "Yes, I feel angry with you. You had committed to having this project finished last week and it still isn't done." or clarify: "No, I do not feel angry with you. I am tense about an upcoming meeting.").
- Distinguish between facts and inferences.
  - ➥ It is important to make a distinction between facts and inferences. Facts are those things that have been proven to be true, while inferences go beyond facts to make further assumptions that may or may not be true. For example, you consistently come in late for the weekly team meeting on Monday mornings. This is a fact. Your supervising teacher may say that you are disrespectful, unreliable, and do not take

your position seriously based on the fact that you arrive to the meetings late. This is an inference. The additional facts your supervising teacher may not be aware of are that on Monday mornings you are responsible for carpool duties for your neighborhood and are just not able to arrive any earlier than you do.

➥ One way to minimize making inferences is to avoid words like "is." Rather than your supervising teacher saying that you *are* disrespectful, unreliable, and not serious about your position, he or she could say that you *seem* disprespectful, unreliable, and not serious about your position. This keeps the inference from being viewed as and accepted as a fact, allowing room for clarification.

- Self-monitor.
    - ➥ Because of the ways we interpret information, our perceptions can be skewed. Being constantly and consciously aware of our own biases, prejudices, attribution tendencies, etc. can help us to catch ourselves before or after misunderstandings occur. We can reflect on how harshly, fairly, or accurately we perceive other people and situations, growing and learning from these reflections.

- Avoid labeling.
    - ➥ While it may seem unnecessary to point out that labeling people is detrimental, there are times when each of us needs to be reminded. The color of a person's skin, their lifestyle, or a disability isn't more important than recognizing the contributions a person makes to their family, school, and community.

- Use people-first language.
    - ➥ There may be times when an attribute of an individual is necessary to mention, however, it is important to remember that the way we say things may convey a prejudice and/or minimize an individual's (or group's) worth. For example, by referring to "a retarded person" or "a disabled person," rather than to "a person who has a disability," we emphasize the attribute, not the person and create situations where the person is seen only as a member of a group and not valued for their individual contributions to their family, school, and community. People-first language emphasizes the person before the attribute.

Goal 2: Recognize the importance of creating positive communication climates.

2.1 Lecture: Communication Climates

A communication climate can be defined as the emotional tone of a given situation or relationship, and influences the effectiveness of all communications.

Communication climates begin to develop as soon as communication begins, whether the communication takes place in a formal or informal setting, via email, telephone, letters, or face-to-face. Once a communication climate has been established (positive or negative), it can take on a life of its own, with each participant reinforcing each other's messages. For this reason, it is necessary to strive to create a positive climate for communication from the onset. Positive communication climates foster trust and confidence; help to build supportive and productive environments; and allow people to express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions without fear of criticism or ridicule.

There are two primary components involved in creating positive communication climates: self-disclosure and confirming, valuing, and respecting others.

Creating and sustaining positive communication climates requires effort on the part of all those involved. Present and review the **Guidelines for Creating Positive Communication Climates** transparency **(T7)**.
- Establish a sense of openness and honesty.
- Confirm, value, and respect others.
- Acknowledge and respect diversity.
- Affirm and assert yourself.
- Time conflict appropriately.
- Show grace when appropriate.

Note to Instructor: Strategies for assertive communication will be further addressed in *Module B: Effective Communication*. Issues and strategies regarding conflict will be further addressed in *Module C: Conflict Management and Problem Solving*.

2.2 Lecture: Self-Disclosure

Establishing a sense of openness and honesty is key in creating positive communication climates. Self-disclosure is essential to this. Present and review the **Self-Disclosure…**

transparency **(T8)**. Self-disclosure:

- Involves sharing information about ourselves that the other person may not otherwise learn.
- Enhances the closeness and openness in a given relationship or situation, encouraging more open and honest communication.
- Should be done gradually, carefully, and reciprocally.
- Is key in developing new relationships and establishing a productive, supportive working environment.
  - ➥ This allows co-workers to more easily focus on job-related tasks once a friendly working atmosphere/relationship has been established.
- Should reflect the situation.
  - ➥ The type of information disclosed will vary from person to person and should reflect the situation. For example, if a fellow paraeducator is sharing with you that they are upset about a recent conversation they had with a student's parents that did not go well, an appropriate self-disclosure would be to share a similar experience that you have had, how it made you feel, and how you dealt with it. When sharing your experiences, always be sure to attend to issues of confidentiality, preserving the anonymity of the students, parents, teachers, etc.

2.3 Lecture: Confirming, Valuing, and Respecting Others

Present and review the **Confirming, Valuing, and Respecting Others** transparency **(T9)**. There are three levels of confirming, valuing, and respecting others.

- Recognition
  - ➥ The most basic level of confirming, valuing, and respecting others is simply recognizing that the other person exists by replying to them, phoning them, making eye contact, etc.
- Acknowledgment
  - ➥ Acknowledging the feelings, ideas, and communication of others requires more than just making eye contact. Acknowledgment involves being an active listener, whether or not you agree with them.
- Endorsement
  - ➥ Endorsement is the highest level of confirmation and goes beyond acknowledging to accepting and validating the thoughts and feelings of others, actually agreeing with them.

It is important to remember that there are many ways to convey a lack of value and respect for others. Being aware of such pitfalls enables us to monitor our responses and prevent negative communication environments from being established. Such obstacles include verbal abuse; complaining; and impervious, irrelevant, impersonal, ambiguous, or otherwise unsuitable responses.

2.4 Activity: Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the process of acknowledging and respecting diversity.

2.4.1 Steps

- Have the paraeducators break into groups by counting off by eight: all 1's together, all 2's together, all 3's together, etc.
- Distribute the **Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity** handouts **(H16/H17/H18/H19/H20/H21/H22/H23)** accordingly.
  - ➡ Group 1: **Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity:** *The Complexity of Diversity* **(H16)**
  - ➡ Group 2: **Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity:** *Personal Biases and Stereotypes* **(H17)**
  - ➡ Group 3: **Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity:** *People as Individuals* **(H18)**
  - ➡ Group 4: **Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity:** *Different Approaches and Viewpoints* **(H19)**
  - ➡ Group 5: **Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity:** *Language Patterns* **(H20)**
  - ➡ Group 6: **Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity:** *Seeking Feedback* **(H21)**
  - ➡ Group 7: **Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity:** *Initiate Discussions* **(H22)**
  - ➡ Group 8: **Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity:** *Seeking Knowledge* **(H23)**
- Instruct the groups to review, discuss, and generate a list of at least three strategies for approaching their topic.
- When finished, have the participants form new groups, ensuring each new groups contains one member from each of the previous groups.
- Instruct the participants to share the discussions and lists regarding their originally assigned topic with their new group.
- Have the new groups develop two additional strategies for approaching

each of the topics.

- When finished, have the each of the participants share the new examples of their topic with the class.

2.4.2 Discussion: Further Understanding the Role of Diversity

Present the **Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity** transparency **(T10)**. Engage the participants in a discussion regarding the role of diversity in communication climates. Ask the participants to provide specific strategies that they plan implement in order to further facilitate the acknowledgment of and respect for diversity in their professional and personal lives, ensuring they provide examples for each of the points.

- Recognize the complexity of diversity.
- Recognize personal biases and stereotypes.
- Treat and respect each person as an individual.
- Recognize the importance of considering different approaches and viewpoints.
- Monitor language patterns.
- Welcome and invite feedback regarding how you approach diversity.
- Initiate discussions and/or agenda items regarding acknowledging and respecting diversity in meetings.
- Seek knowledge about the history and cultures of groups other than your own.

Emphasize that how well (and consistently) we acknowledge and respect diversity, affects all of our communication climates. Acknowledging and respecting diversity plays a role in every aspect of creating positive communication climates, including how we approach issues of self-disclosure and, most definitely, confirming, valuing, and respecting others.

2.5 Lecture: Defensive vs. Supportive Communication Climates

Communication climates can be either defensive or supportive. Defensiveness can be triggered by many things and is often expressed through:

- Attacking our critics,
- Verbal aggression,
- Sarcasm,
- Distorting critical information, and
- Avoidance.

Present and review the **Defensive vs. Supportive Communication Climates** transparency **(T11)**. Jack Gibb (1970) identified six types of communication that create defensive climates and six alternatives that foster supportive climates.

- Evaluation vs. Description
  - ➥ When people feel that they are being evaluated, they may feel that they are being judged, leading to feelings of defensiveness.
  - ➥ Describing behaviors rather than evaluating them involves not passing judgement, helping to create a supportive climate for communication.
  - ➥ "You don't participate enough in our team meetings." vs. "You seem to be less involved in our team meetings lately."
- Certainty vs. Provisionalism
  - ➥ Certainty refers to communicating that there is only one correct point of view, answer, or approach to a situation, most often yours. This narrow approach does not leave room for further discussion and conveys that the thoughts, ideas, and feelings of others do not matter.
  - ➥ Provisionalism conveys an openness and willingness to listen to, respect, and consider the thoughts, ideas, and feelings of others.
  - ➥ "My mind's made up." vs. "One possibility would be..."
- Strategy vs. Spontaneity
  - ➥ People engaging in strategic communication seek to manipulate others and hide our their ultimate goals, leaving others feeling as though they are being manipulated or setup.
  - ➥ Approaching others with spontaneity conveys openness and honesty.
  - ➥ "Would you do something for me?" vs. "Would you help me with my computer?"
- Control vs. Problem Orientation
  - ➥ Controlling communications seek to dominate others, conveys that one feels they have more power, more rights, are more intelligent, etc.; imposes ones own thoughts, feelings, and opinions on others; and conveys that the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of others are not worthy of being heard or considered.
  - ➥ A problem-oriented approach seeks to ease tensions; consider the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of everyone; and come to an agreement that is acceptable to everyone.
  - ➥ "I'm the boss, and we're doing it this way." vs. "I'd like each of us to be heard, then we'll discuss our options and make a decision that will satisfy all of our needs."

- Neutrality vs. Empathy
  - ➥ Neutrality implies apathy, that you don't care, and are indifferent about the person.
  - ➥ Empathy confirms and values others and their thoughts, feelings, and ideas.
  - ➥ "Oh, well. That's life." vs. "I don't blame you for feeling that way."
- Superiority vs. Equality
  - ➥ Defensiveness is a natural response when people act like they are better than we are. Approaching people and situations with an air of superiority conveys that you are the expert, that others should defer to you, and that the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of others are insignificant.
  - ➥ Treating others as our equals conveys respect and promotes an open, honest, and supportive communication climate in which the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of all are valid.
  - ➥ "You don't have the same experience and education I do." vs. "While I have had experience with this, I'd like to hear your thoughts."

Once a negative (defensive) communication climate has been established, all hope is not lost. Present and review the **Transforming Negative Communication Climates** transparency **(T12)**.

- Seek more information.
- Clarify information.
- Inquire about the other person's intent.
- Agree with facts.

2.6 Activity: What Do You Do?

Paraeducators will participate in an activity the provides an opportunity to reflect on their approaches and beliefs about the topics covered in this module.

2.6.1 Steps

- Distribute the **What Do You Do?** handout **(H24)**.
- Have the participants read through each of the statements and evaluate their behavior by circling the appropriate number.
- When finished, have the participants identify at least three areas of opportunity for themselves and one or two ways in which they will

approach each of the areas.

- When finished, ask the participants to volunteer to share their results with the class.

Module A Handouts

Multi-Cultural BINGO

Believe direct eye contact is a sign of disrespect.	Speak more than one language in your home.	Worship in a synagogue.	Believe time should be taken to devleop personal relationships before conducting business.	Live with extended family members.
Traditionally celebrate Christmas on a day other than December 25th.	Celebrate Cinco de Mayo.	Celebrate November 1st.	Do not believe in killing wild animals.	Eat turkey on Thanksgiving.
Don't keep domestic animals in your house.	Believe it is wrong to question any authority figures.	**FREE SPACE**	Don't eat pork.	Follow a lunar calendar rather than the typical American calendar.
Eat corned beef and cabbage on March 17th.	Have eaten snake.	Drink wine with dinner.	Have an altar in your house.	Believe direct questioning is rude and intrusive.
Your schedule is not driven by time.	Have your major meal at midday.	Get ashes on Ash Wednesday.	Celebrate Kwanza.	Do not celebrate birthdays.

Module A: Interpersonal Sensitivity

1.   Identify factors that affect perception and understanding of situations and the behavior of others.

2.   Recognize the importance of creating positive communication climates.

Culture and Perception: *Family Structure*

What constitutes a family?

Who lives in one house?

In general, what are the rights and responsibilities of each family member?

What is the hierarchy of authority within the family?

What is the relative importance of the individual family member to the family as a whole?

What are the attitudes toward marriage and raising a family?

Culture and Perception: *Life Cycles*

What are the criteria for defining the stages in a life?

What are the rites of passage for each stage of life?

What are appropriate behaviors for people at different ages or stages in life?

Culture and Perception: *Roles and Relationships*

Which roles are available and to whom?

How are roles acquired?

Is education relevant to the various roles and in what ways?

What are the gender differences in roles?

How do people greet each other?

How do people with differing roles greet each other?

Do males and females work and interact with each other?

What are accepted manners when interacting with people older than yourself, people of your same age, and people who are younger than you are?

Culture and Perception: *Discipline*

What is discipline?

Which behaviors are socially acceptable for males and females?

Who is responsible for discipline?

Is blame ascribed for behaviors?

Who has authority over whom?

To what extent can one person impose his or her will on another?

How is behavior traditionally controlled, and to what extent and in which domains is it controlled?

Culture and Perception: *Time and Space*

How important is punctuality?

How important is speed in the completion of a task?

How much personal space are people accustomed to?

What is the accepted distance between individuals?

What significance is associated with direction (e.g., north, south, east, and west)?

Culture and Perception: *Religion*

What are the beliefs concerning what should and should not be discussed in schools?

Are there dietary considerations that need to be observed, and, if so, when?

What beliefs are associated with death and the dead?

What are the attitudes toward the divine and the supernatural and how they affect a person's thoughts and actions?

What are the beliefs concerning the roles and responsibilities of males and females?

Culture and Perception: *Food*

Which kinds of foods are eaten?

In what order and how often are specific kinds of food eaten?

Which kinds of foods are restricted, or are there no restrictions?

Which types of foods are typical?

What social obligations are there with regard to giving (or accepting) food?

Culture and Perception: *Health and Hygiene*

How are illnesses treated and by whom?

What are considered to be the causes or sources of illnesses?

Would common first aide practices be considered acceptable or unacceptable, and why?

What are the beliefs regarding personal behavior and appearance, such as laughing, smiling, voice quality, gait, poise, hairstyle, cosmetics, dress, etc.?

Culture and Perception: *History, Traditions, and Holidays*

Which events and/or people are sources of pride?

To what extent do you, living in the United States, identify with the history and traditions of your (or your ancestor's) country of origin?

Which holidays and celebrations are considered appropriate for observing in school?

Which holidays and celebrations are considered appropriate for private observance only?

In what ways is your history preserved and passed from generation to generation?

Organizing Information

- Prototypes
  - ➥ Prototypes are our ideals for different kinds of people or situations (the perfect teacher, the perfect student, the perfect job, etc.).
  - ➥ We form our prototypes based on our experiences and the people in our lives.
  - ➥ For example, Sue may be the ideal friend because she is kind, considerate, responsible, honest, intelligent, and fun. As we make new friends, they will be measured against our ideal friend, Sue, through the use of personal constructs.

- Personal Constructs
  - ➥ Personal constructs are two-sided mental yardsticks by which we measure people and situations (kind/unkind, considerate/rude, responsible/irresponsible, honest/dishonest, good/bad, safe/unsafe, etc.).
  - ➥ Which constructs we use to evaluate a given person or situation will vary, depending on which prototype we are attempting to fit them in to. The constructs used to evaluate the ideal supervising teacher (i.e., fair/unfair, flexible/inflexible, experienced/inexperienced, etc.) will be different than those used to evaluate the ideal life-partner (i.e., affectionate/unaffectionate, playful/ boring, family-oriented/not family-oriented, etc.).

- Stereotypes
  - ➥ Once we've established which prototype a person or situation fits into, using our personal constructs, we then gauge how that person will behave or how a situation will play out and how we should behave with a particular person or in a particular situation. These predictions are based on stereotypes.
  - ➥ A stereotype is simply a generalized prediction of a person or situation.
  - ➥ While stereotypes do play a role in guiding appropriate behavior with various people and in various situations, they are subjective and can often be incorrect.
  - ➥ Stereotypes can cause problems in that they do not allow us to see individual differences from person to person or situation to situation.
  - ➥ Inaccuarcies occur either because our stereotypes are flawed initially, or a particular individual or situation does not conform to the stereotype.

Attribution and Interpretation

- Internal-External Factors
  - ➥ The things people say or do (or do not say or do) are attributed to either internal or external causes. An internal attribution has the cause of a behavior lying within the person, "She's cranky;" whereas an external attribution would attribute the behavior to events in the person's life, "She's frustrated because the kids overslept this morning, the toast burned, and there was a lot of traffic on the way in this morning."

- Stable-Unstable Factors
  - ➥ The things people say or do (or do not say or do) and why situations are the way they are are attributed to either stable and unchanging (i.e., "A the paraeducator's job is stressful," or "She's a tense person.") or unstable and temporary factors (i.e., "She's stressed today because she's closing on her house today," or "The office is stressful today because we have a new principal starting this morning.").

- Controllable-Uncontrollable Factors
  - ➥ The things people say or do (or do not say or do) are attributed to either factors thought to be controllable by the individual (i.e., "She can't control her temper.") or things beyond the individual's control (i.e., "She has a chemical imbalance.").

Attribution and Interpretation: *Behavior Examples*

Behavior Example 1: Your mother-in-law rearranges your kitchen cabinets every time she visits.

- Internal Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- External Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- Stable Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- Unstable Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- Controllable Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- Uncontrollable Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

Attribution and Interpretation: *Behavior Examples*
(continued)

Behavior Example 2: The parent of a student of yours with severe disabilities is rude to you when you meet her each morning to escort the student to class.

- Internal Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- External Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- Stable Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- Unstable Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- Controllable Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- Uncontrollable Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

Attribution and Interpretation: *Behavior Examples*
(continued)

Behavior Example 3:

- Internal Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- External Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- Stable Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- Unstable Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- Controllable Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

- Uncontrollable Attribution and Resulting Interpretation

Strategies for More Effective Perception and Understanding

- See people as individuals, not as members of a group.
  - ➥ Making an effort to see each person as an individual rather than as a member of a group will help in minimizing misperceptions based on differences in and misconceptions about physiology, culture, gender, lifestyle, etc.

- Avoid mind reading.
  - ➥ Assuming that we know what another person is thinking, how they are feeling, or how they will react to a given situation can lead to a variety of problems. Not only can mind reading lead to misunderstandings, but can also convey to the other person that we don't care to hear from them what they are thinking or feeling. Emphasize that we cannot assume to know what is going on in someone else's mind, the only way to really gain understanding is to hear it from that person.

- Check your perceptions with others.
  - ➥ Emphasize that perceptions are subjective. Checking our perceptions with others can confirm our perception and understanding of a situation, or illuminate possible misconceptions. To check your perception, state your perception to the person ("You seem mad at me."), check your perception ("Do you feel angry with me?"), allow the other person to confirm and/or clarify your perception (confirm: "Yes, I feel angry with you. You had committed to having this project finished last week and it still isn't done." or clarify: "No, I do not feel angry with you. I am tense about an upcoming meeting.").

- Distinguish between facts and inferences.
  - ➥ It is important to make a distinction between facts and inferences. Facts are those things that have been proven to be true, while inferences go beyond facts to make further assumptions that may or may not be true. For example, you consistently come in late for the weekly team meeting on Monday mornings. This is a fact. Your supervising teacher may say that you are disrespectful, unreliable, and do not take your position seriously based on the fact that you arrive to the meetings late. This is an inference. The additional facts your supervising teacher may not be aware of are that on Monday mornings you are

Strategies for More Effective Perception and Understanding
(continued)

> responsible for carpool duties for your neighborhood and are just not able to arrive any earlier than you do.

➡ One way to minimize making inferences is to avoid words like "is." Rather than your supervising teacher saying that you *are* disrespectful, unreliable, and not serious about your position, he or she could say that you *seem* disprespectful, unreliable, and not serious about your position. This keeps the inference from being viewed as and accepted as a fact, allowing room for clarification.

■ Self-monitor.

➡ Because of the ways we interpret information, our perceptions can be skewed. Being constantly and consciously aware of our own biases, prejudices, attribution tendencies, etc. can help us to catch ourselves before or after misunderstandings occur. We can reflect on how harshly, fairly, or accurately we perceive other people and situations, growing and learning from these reflections.

■ Avoid labeling.

➡ While it may seem unnecessary to point out that labeling people is detrimental, there are times when each of us needs to be reminded. The color of a person's skin, their lifestyle, or a disability isn't more important than recognizing the contributions a person makes to their family, school, and community.

■ Use people-first language.

➡ There may be times when an attribute of an individual is necessary to mention, however, it is important to remember that the way we say things may convey a prejudice and/or minimize an individual's (or group's) worth. For example, by referring to "a retarded person" or "a disabled person," rather than to "a person who has a disability," we emphasize the attribute, not the person and create situations where the person is seen only as a member of a group and not valued for their individual contributions to their family, school, and community. People-first language emphasizes the person before the attribute.

Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity: *The Complexity of Diversity*

Being able to recognize the complexity of diversity is crucial. In order to begin to acknowledge and respect diversity, it is essential to first recognize that diversity is, in and of itself, complex. There are no easy answers or simple strategies.

Strategies for Recognizing the Complexity of Diversity:

Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity: *Personal Biases and Stereotypes*

Being able to recognize personal biases and stereotypes is crucial to acknowledging and respecting diversity. As addressed earlier, it is essential to be aware of our own prejudices and the behaviors generated by them. In all our communications, we have the opportunity to acknowledge and respect one another or to demonstrate our prejudices toward one another. It is important to teach those around us, including children and youth, to appreciate diversity and to be aware of and proud of their own unique identities. In order to do this, we must first be aware of the personal biases and prejudices we bring with us to all our communication environments, including the workplace.

Strategies for Recognizing the Personal Biases and Stereotypes:

Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity: *People as Individuals*

It is important to recognize, treat, and respect each person we encounter as an individual and not merely a member of a group. Though various cultures have many similarities, it is often the case that when we talk about cultures other than our own, we tend to focus on the differences. As a result, when we are dealing with a person from a culture other than our own, we tend to emphasize those differences and think of the individual as part of the larger group. This undermines the individual's worth as a person and conveys a lack of respect for their thoughts, feelings, and opinions.

Strategies for Recognizing People as Individuals:

Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity: *Different Approaches and Viewpoints*

It is essential to acknowledging and respecting diversity to recognize and consider different approaches and viewpoints. In order to effectively address a given situation, it is important to take into account approaches and viewpoints other than our own and to appreciate the ways in which these different approaches and viewpoints can help to better understand a given situation. In order to be able to effectively consider different approaches and viewpoints, it is first necessary to be aware of and understand the ways in which our own approaches and viewpoints are affected by our own culture.

Strategies for Recognizing Different Approaches and Viewpoints:

Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity: *Language Patterns*

A key element in acknowledging and respecting diversity is to monitor our language patterns. The words we choose to use (or not to use) convey our prejudices and beliefs about our own and other cultures. It is important to recognize that the people we encounter in a given situation will most likely come from a variety of backgrounds. There will be differences in gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, cultural values, socio-economic status, etc. and it is imperative to strive for neutrality in our speech regarding each of these aspects. Examples of language patterns that benefit from self-monitoring include, but are not limited to:

- Using the word "men" to refer to males and the word "girls" to refer to females conveys a belief that males are superior to females. Use terms of equal weight (e.g., "girls" and "boys" or "women" and "men").
- Referring to the aspects of cultures other than your own as "weird," "unusual," or "bizarre" conveys a belief that your own culture's aspects are the norm and that other cultures are deviant and, therefore, inferior.
- Using the terms "Afro-American" or "Hispanic" shows cultural insensitivity. The words used to refer to people of a given decent change over time and it is important to be aware of and use the current socially accepted and preferred term. In the before mentioned instances, the currently socially preferred and accepted terms would be "African American" and "Chicano," "Latino," or "Mexican American," respectively.

Strategies for Monitoring Language Patterns:

Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity: *Seeking Feedback*

Welcoming and inviting feedback regarding how you approach diversity is a highly effective way to improve your ability to acknowledge and respect diversity. In order to be aware of our prejudices and shortcomings regarding how we approach diversity, it is necessary to understand how others perceive and interpret our behaviors. The easiest way to do this is to ask others for their input, making sure to be receptive to their potential criticisms.

Strategies for Seeking Feedback:

Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity: *Initiate Discussion*

Initiate discussions and/or agenda items regarding acknowledging and respecting diversity in meetings. As an individual concerned with issues of diversity, one way to further the cause is to initiate discussions and agenda items during staff (or team) meetings. Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- Communication climates in classrooms;
- Course content, wording, and requirements;
- Graduation, retention, and placement rates;
- Options for and access to extra-curricualr activities;
- New student or employee orientation programs; and/or
- Placement in, aspects of, and/or availability of bilingual, English as a Second Language (ESL), and/or Special Education programs.

Strategies for Initiating Discussions:

Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity: *Seeking Knowledge*

Seeking knowledge about the history and cultures of groups other than your own is essential to one's growth regarding diversity. Attempting to understand a culture other than our own can be a daunting task, filled with feelings of apprehension and nervousness, a sense of loneliness, and a lack of self-confidence. What seems logical, sensible, important, and reasonable in one culture may not hold true in another and recognizing this is an important step in acknowledging and respecting diversity.

Strategies for Seeking Knowledge:

What Do You Do?

Rarely   Always

1 2 3 4 5   ***Attitudes:*** I take the idea of equity seriously. I do not put down men or women or joke about peoples abilities, roles, or backgrounds.

1 2 3 4 5   ***Language:*** I use non-biased language. For example, I do not refer to doctors, lawyers, or company presidents in general as "he" or nurses, secretaries, and teachers in general as "she;" or to people with disabilities as "the mentally retarded," "the disabled," or "the handicapped."

1 2 3 4 5   ***Generalizations:*** I avoid generalizations that refer to stereotypes. For example, I would not say "You throw like a girl," "You think like a man," "Asians are good in math."

1 2 3 4 5   ***Types of Examples:*** I use examples when working with my students showing both males and females of diverse backgrounds and with a wide range of feelings, interests, and career choices.

1 2 3 4 5   ***Comparisons:*** I avoid comparison of students based on gender. For example, I would not say, "The girls are working harder than boys," or "Boys are better at math than girls are."

1 2 3 4 5   ***Attention:*** I give equitable attention to all males and females, and do not show preference for any one group over another. For example, I do not call on boys more than I call on girls in class.

1 2 3 4 5   ***Discipline:*** I address all inappropriate behavior with a calm, respectful, and courteous approach, regardless of the gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual preference, physical ability, native language, etc. of the individual.

Areas of Opportunity:

Module A Transparencies

Module A: Interpersonal Sensitivity

The PAR²A Center

- *Identify factors that affect perception and understanding of situations and the behavior of others.*

- *Recognize the importance of creating positive communication climates.*

Steps of Perception and Understanding

The PAR·A Center

- *Selection*

- *Organization*

- *Attributions*

Organizing Information

- ■ *Prototypes*

- ■ *Personal Constructs*

- ■ *Stereotypes*

Attribution and Interpretation

- ***Internal-External***

- ***Stable-Unstable***

- ***Controllable-Uncontrollable***

Factors that Affect Perception and Understanding

- *Expectations*

- *Physiological Factors*

- *Cognitive Abilities*

- *Age and Past Experiences*

- *Gender*

- *Social Roles and Corresponding Training and Demands*

- *Prejudices*

- *Culture*

Strategies for More Effective Perception and Understanding

- *See people as individuals, not as members of a group.*

- *Avoid mind reading.*

- *Check your perceptions with others.*

- *Distinguish between facts and inferences.*

- *Self-monitor.*

- *Avoid labeling.*

- *Use people-first language.*

Guidelines for Creating Positive Communication Climates

- *Establish a sense of openness and honesty.*

- *Confirm, value, and respect others.*

- *Acknowledge and respect diversity.*

- *Affirm and assert yourself.*

- *Time conflict appropriately.*

- *Show grace when appropriate.*

Self-Disclosure...

- *Involves sharing information about ourselves that the other person may not otherwise learn.*

- *Enhances the closeness and openness in a given relationship or situation, encouraging more open and honest communication.*

- *Should be done gradually, carefully, and reciprocally.*

- *Is key in developing new relationships and establishing a productive, supportive working environment.*

- *Should reflect the situation.*

Confirming, Valuing, and Respecting Others

- **Recognition**

- **Acknowledgment**

- **Endorsement**

Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity

- *Recognize the complexity of diversity.*

- *Recognize personal biases and stereotypes.*

- *Treat and respect each person as an individual.*

- *Recognize the importance of considering different approaches and viewpoints.*

- *Monitor language patterns.*

- *Welcome and invite feedback regarding how you approach diversity.*

- *Initiate discussions and/or agenda items regarding acknowledging and respecting diversity in meetings.*

- *Seek knowledge about the history and cultures of groups other than your own.*

Defensive vs. Supportive Communication Climates

The PAR²A Center

- *Evaluation vs. Description*

- *Certainty vs. Provisionalism*

- *Strategy vs. Spontaneity*

- *Control vs. Problem Orientation*

- *Neutrality vs. Empathy*

- *Superiority vs. Equality*

Transforming Negative Communication Climates

The PAR·A Center

- *Seek more information.*

- *Clarify information.*

- *Inquire about the other person's intent.*

- *Agree with facts.*

Module B: Effective Communication

Interpersonal Skills Academy
Module B: Effective Communication

A. Lecture: Module Goals

Using the **Module B: Effective Communication** handout and transparency **(H1/T1)**, review the goals of the module.

1. Identify the components of effective verbal communication.
2. Identify the components of effective non-verbal communication.
3. Recognize the importance of effective listening and responding in effective communication.
4. Adapt communication effectively to diverse situations.

Note to Instructor: Throughout this module, emphasize that what is considered appropriate in one culture may be inappropriate in another, and that any one person's or culture's approach to the various aspects of communication is not better or worse than anothers. Remind the participants of the importance of acknowledging and respecting diversity

Goal 1: Identify the components of effective verbal communication.

Note to Instructor: Throughout this goal, emphasize that what is considered appropriate in one culture may be inappropriate in another, and that any one person's or culture's use of verbal communication is not better or worse than another's. Remind the participants of the importance of acknowledging and respecting diversity.

1.1 Discussion: Communication Styles

There are four basic styles of communication.

- Passive
- Aggressive
- Passive-Aggressive
- Assertive

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding the characteristics of each of the styles of communication. Ask for specific examples of what they think are characteristics of each, recording their responses on a blank transparency or chart paper.

1.2 Activity: What is Your Communication Style?

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to begin to think about their own style of communication in various situations.

1.2.1 Steps
- Distribute the **What is Your Communication Style?** handout **(H2)**.
- Instruct the participants to complete the handout on their own by reading the scenarios and possible responses, indicating on the handout which possible response most accurately describes how they would respond in the given situation.
- When finished, instruct the participants to score their responses by tallying the number of "A" responses, "B" responses, "C" responses, and "D" responses.
- Using the **What is Your Communication Style?** transparency **(T2)**, review the scoring of the assessment. If you responded with more:
  - ➥ "A" responses, you may have a tendency to interact with others

in a more passive manner and view their thoughts, feelings, and opinions as more valuable than your own.

➥ "B" responses, you have a more assertive style of interacting with others, respecting the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of others without discounting your own.

➥ "C" responses, you have a more passive-aggressive style of interacting with others, avoiding direct confrontation and getting your needs met through manipulation.

➥ "D" responses, you have a more aggressive style of interacting with others, getting your needs met through manipulation and force.

■ Emphasize that it is possible to communicate with others in varying ways (e.g., you may be more passive at work and more aggressive with your family or vice versa). Point out that, in all situations, the most consistently effective style of communication is being assertive, valuing others and yourself equally.

1.3 Lecture: Passive Communication

Present and review the **People Engaging in Passive Communication...** transparency **(T3)**, while reviewing the characteristics provided by the participants in **1.1 Discussion: Communication Styles**. People engaging in passive communication:

■ Do not express their emotions, needs, values, or concerns openly.
■ Rarely involve themselves with others.
■ Are uncomfortable with people who enter "their space."
■ May sometimes answer a question with, "Oh, it doesn't matter to me," or, "Do whatever you want."
■ Communicate nonverbally by shrugging their shoulders, not making eye contact, or speaking in an excessively soft voice.
■ Communicate that they can be taken advantage of, that their needs are insignificant and that yours are important.
■ May lack self-respect and respect for other people.

Passive communication implies deference, compliance, and conformity. People engaging in passive communication avoid confrontation, rarely talk or question, and may accomplish very little. Passive communication emphasizes not rocking the boat and that it is safer to not react and be noticed than to stand up and be noticed.

1.4 Lecture: Aggressive Communication

Present and review the **People Engaging in Aggressive Communication...** transparency **(T4)**, while reviewing the characteristics provided by the participants in **1.1 Discussion: Communication Styles**. People engaging in aggressive communication:

- Block others while denying they are doing it.
- Openly express feelings, needs, and ideas at the expense of others.
- Must win arguments.
- Appear to have a "chip" on their shoulder.
- Speak loudly and may be abusive, rude, and sarcastic.
- Overpower other people to satisfy their need to have their point of view heard.

Point out that the definition of aggressive is to move with the intent to hurt. Aggressive communication typically involves manipulation, with the person engaging in aggressive communication making others do what they want through anger, intimidation, and control tactics. The emphasis in aggressive communication is on meeting one's own needs immediately. In situations such as competitive sports or war, aggressive behavior may be necessary, but it generally does not work in personal or professional relationships.

1.5 Lecture: Passive-Aggressive Communication

Present and review the **People Engaging in Passive-Aggressive Communication...** transparency **(T5)**, while reviewing the characteristics provided by the participants in **1.1 Discussion: Communication Styles**. People engaging in passive-aggressive communication:

- Do not openly express their thoughts, needs, feelings, or concerns.
- Act passively, resulting in their problem becoming someone else's problem.
- Must win and get their way.
- May act in a passive way, getting their needs met by creating an uncomfortable situation for someone else.

The passive-aggressive approach to communication is a combination of two styles: passive and aggressive. People engaging in passive-aggressive communication avoid direct confrontation (passive), but attempt to get even through manipulation (aggressive). This style of communication often leads to an unhealthy atmosphere and

tension in personal and professional relationships. Point out that, sometimes, the absence of any overt behavior may result in an aggressive act.

1.6 Lecture: Assertive Communication

Present and review the **People Engaging in Assertive Communication...** transparency **(T6)**, while reviewing the characteristics provided by the participants in **1.1 Discussion: Communication Styles**. People engaging in assertive communication:

- Confirm their own needs and self-worth, while simultaneously confirming and maintaining the worth of others.
- Expresses their own needs, feelings, and values in a way that defends their point of view, but without abusing or dominating others.
- Stand-up for their rights without violating the rights of others.

Assertive communication focuses on creating mutually satisfying solutions. People engaging in assertive communication communicate their needs in a clear and honest manner, care about the relationship, strive to create a win-win atmosphere, and establish and observe boundaries with others to ensure no one is taken advantage of.

1.7 Activity: Identifying Communication Styles

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, and assertive communication styles.

1.7.1 Steps

- Have the paraeducators break into small groups
- Distribute the **Identifying Communication Styles** handout **(H3)**.
- Instruct the groups to read and discuss each situation and the responses to each, identifying the communication style being used in each response.
- When finished, have each group share their responses and why they selected the style they did.
- After all groups have presented, review the correct style for each situation and response, clarifying where needed.
    - ➥ Situation 1, Response A: Passive
    - ➥ Situation 1, Response B: Aggressive

➡   Situation 1, Response C: Assertive
➡   Situation 1, Response D: Aggressive
➡   Situation 2, Response A: Assertive
➡   Situation 2, Response B: Passive-Aggressive
➡   Situation 2, Response C: Passive
➡   Situation 2, Response D: Aggressive
➡   Situation 3, Response A: Passive
➡   Situation 3, Response B: Aggressive
➡   Situation 3, Response C: Passive-Aggressive
➡   Situation 3, Response D: Assertive

1.8 Activity: Examining Communication Styles

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to examine different communication styles.

1.8.1 Steps

- Have the participants break into small groups.
- Distribute the **Examining Communication Styles** handout **(H4)**.
- Instruct the groups to read the handout, and discuss and record how each style of communication would respond.
- Have the groups discuss each style and decide which of the four would be the most effective and why.
- When finished, have each group share their responses.

1.8.2 Lecture: The Best Approach

Understanding these four basic styles of communication helps in learning how to respond most effectively when confronted with a difficult situation. The style we choose generally depends on our past experiences regarding what works best in a given situation in order to get our needs met. Most people use a combination of these styles, depending on the person or situation.

Point out that we always have a choice as to which communication style we use, emphasizing that the assertive communication style is often the most effective and the healthiest, as it helps to diffuse negativism and build both personal and professional relationships.

1.9 Lecture: "I"-Messages

Present and review the **"I"-Messages** handout **(H5)**. "I"-messages are perhaps one of the most effective communication tools, and provide us the ability to be genuine with one another about our feelings and needs. "I"-messages are communications that:

- State the speaker's feelings in a non-threatening or non-accusatory manner.
- Clearly identify the speaker's feelings, interests, and needs to resolve the conflict without placing blame on others.
- Allow for effective communication by phrasing things in a neutral, objective manner so that the listener need not be put on the defensive, as they are not being blamed for anything.
- Permit people to like the person even though they may not like the behavior the person is currently engaged in.
- Organize one's feelings. "I feel...when...because..."
- Must do three things:
  - Report the problem in a factual way.
    - "When you leave the door unlocked..."
  - Describe a concrete effect of a specific behavior.
    - "When you leave the door unlocked, things of mine get stolen."
  - Clearly state the feelings generated by a specific behavior.
    - "When you leave the door unlocked, things of mine get stolen and I feel irritated because I have to replace them."

At first, using and teaching "I"-messages may seem awkward and contrived. Indeed, we are accustomed to talking about our feelings and needs so indirectly that communicating them directly will seem strange at first. In overcoming this awkwardness, it often helps to constantly practice and model using "I"-messages. This helps the use of "I"-messages become more natural and commonplace.

Present and review the **"I" vs. "You"** transparency **(T7)**. "I"-messages begin with "I" rather than with impersonal pronouns, such as "you," "they," "we," or "it."

- "I feel..." vs. "It would be best if..."
- "I don't understand..." vs. "It's not clear..."
- "I would like..." vs. "You should..."
- "I'm upset about..." vs. "You upset me..."
- "I suggest..." vs. "You haven't considered..."

"I"-messages inform the other person of your frustration and/or disappointment, without accusing him or her of causing it. "I"-messages clearly indicate to the other person how his or her behavior is interfering with your efforts to meet your own needs and then leaves the responsibility for any change in that person's behavior with that person, where it belongs.

1.10 Activity: Using "I"-Messages

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to gain experience using "I"-messages.

1.10.1 Steps
- Distribute the **Using "I"-Messages** handout **(H6)**.
- On their own, have the participants read through the handout, responding to each situation with an "I" and a "You"-message.
- When finished, have the participants break into small groups and discuss their responses.
- Ask the groups to share their responses with the class, clarifying where needed.

1.11 Lecture: Guidelines for Effective Verbal Communication

Present and review the **Guidelines for Effective Verbal Communication** transparency **(T8)**.
- Be accurate.
  - The potential for misunderstanding as a result of individual and cultural differences always exists. While misunderstandings cannot be completely eliminated, they can be minimized by communicating clearly and accurately.
- Use language that is appropriate for the communication objective and situation.
  - Using abstract or vague language can lead to misunderstanding. For example, a supervising teacher may say to a paraeducator, "I'd like you to show more initiative." The paraeducator may take this to mean that they should be more independent, while the teacher actually meant they should work more hours, take on new tasks or responsibilities, or work more independently.
- Qualify statements.

➡ When making generalizations or describing and evaluating a person, it is important to clarify the language we use.

⇉ Generalizing

◗ Statements like, "The seventh-graders are stupid" are false because they over generalize. It is more accurate to say, "The test results show that, on average, this year's seventh-graders scored lower than last year's."

⇉ Describing and Evaluating People

◗ Statements like, "Mary is irresponsible," "Her parents are rude," and "Asian-American students are quiet" suggest that the attribute (irresponsible, rude, quiet) is always true and unchanging, when in fact people and the ways in which they behave constantly change. For example, someone who acted irresponsibly in one situation may act responsibly in others.

▪ Own your thoughts, feelings, and actions.

➡ Remember that we are each ultimately responsible for our thoughts, feelings, and actions.

➡ Use "I"-messages.

1.12 Discussion: Cultural Variation in Verbal Communication

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding cultural variation in verbal communication. Ask the participants to provide examples from their own culture or background that vary from the points made in the goal.

If they have not been previously addressed, point out that the following are common variations in verbal communication based on culture or background.

▪ Speaking softly.
▪ Speaking slowly.
▪ Speaking loudly.
▪ Speaking fast.
▪ Speaking with affect.
▪ Not interjecting.
▪ Interjecting infrequently.
▪ Offering words for encouraging communication.
▪ Interrupting when possible as a means of turn taking.

- Quick to respond.

Such variation in verbal communication techniques are not better or worse than any other techniques. Emphasize that in order to facilitate effective verbal communication, the most important technique is to recognize and understand the use and perception of verbal communication techniques by all involved in the communication process.

Goal 2: Identify the components of effective non-verbal communication.

Note to Instructor: Throughout this goal, emphasize that what is considered appropriate in one culture may be inappropriate in another, and that any one person's or culture's use of non-verbal communication is not better or worse than another's. Remind the participants of the importance of acknowledging and respecting diversity.

2.1 Activity: Communicating Without Words

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to begin to think about ways in which people communicate non-verbally.

2.1.1 Steps

- Have the paraeducators break into groups by counting off by eight: all 1's together, all 2's together, all 3's together, etc.
- Distribute the handouts as follows:
  - Group 1: Body Language and Facial Expressions **(H7)**
  - Group 2: Touching **(H8)**
  - Group 3: Physical Appearance **(H9)**
  - Group 4: Personal Objects **(H10)**
  - Group 5: Personal Space **(H11)**
  - Group 6: Physical Environment **(H12)**
  - Group 7: Time **(H13)**
  - Group 8: Vocal Qualities **(H14)**
- Instruct the groups to complete the handout by discussing their assigned topic and answering the questions accordingly.

2.2 Discussion: Non-Verbal Communication

There are nine types of non-verbal communication. Present the **Non-Verbal Communication** transparency **(T9)**. After reviewing each type of non-verbal communication, ask the participants to provide examples of such differences from their own experiences.

Prior to explaining each of the types of non-verbal communication, ask the corresponding group to share with the class their group's discussion. As you review

the specifics of each topic, incorporate the group's responses, pointing out any similarities and discussing as a class any differences.

- Kinesics (Body Language and Facial Expression)
  - ➥ Body Language
    - ⇉ Standing straight and appearing confident often communicates self-assurance, while slouching and shuffling may communicate a lack thereof.
    - ⇉ Inclining one's body toward the speaker can communicate more energy and attention.
    - ⇉ Facing a person squarely, your right shoulder to the other person's left shoulder, may communicate your involvement.
    - ⇉ Maintaining an open position, arms and legs uncrossed, may convey receptiveness. Tightly crossing arms and legs may convey closed-mindedness or defensiveness.
    - ⇉ Distracting body motions and gestures can show a lack of interest. Some movement in response to the speaker is good.
  - ➥ Facial Expression
    - ⇉ The face is capable of more than a thousand distinct expressions, which express important, intricate, and complex messages about our thoughts and feelings including anger, challenges, love, respect, sadness, frustration, etc.
    - ⇉ In some cultures, eye contact is a key aspect of facial expression, essential for effective interpersonal communication, and one of the most effective communication skills we have. However, it is important to remember that not all cultures feel the same way. There are cultures in which making direct contact is a sign of disrespect, and in other cultures there are differences in what is considered to be appropriate eye contact based on gender.
      - ◗ Making eye contact can express interest and a desire to learn.
      - ◗ Not making eye contact, repeatedly looking away, constantly staring, or staring blankly can express disinterest, a lack of respect, or great respect depending on the culture and society.

- Haptics (Touching)
  - Touching can communicate power, status, liking, and/or intimacy.
  - When using touch to communicate, it is important to keep in mind cultural and gender-based differences in interpretation.
- Physical Appearance
  - Physical appearance includes physiological aspects (height, skin color, eye color, etc.) and how we present ourselves (clothing, hair color and style, makeup, etc.). It is important to be aware of how these things can influence our perceptions and lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding.
  - Western culture tends to value aspects of physical appearance highly. For example, researchers in one study found that people tended to associate plump bodies with being lazy and weak, thin bodies and angular physiques with being driven and stubborn, and athletic bodies with being strong, adventurous, and self-reliant (Wells & Siegel, 1961).
- Artifacts (Personal Objects)
  - Personal objects are used to communicate information about our identities, and include clothing and personal objects in our homes and workspaces.
- Proxemics (Personal Space)
  - Cultural differences regarding personal space are significant. In the U.S., people interact with acquaintances at distances of between 4 and 12 feet, but only 18 inches or less with close friends and romantic partners (Hall, 1968).
  - Maintaining an appropriate distance from the speaker is key in facilitating communication. Too much distance impedes communication, while not enough may increase anxiety.
  - Taking up a lot of space or invading the space of others can communicate a sense of self-importance and power, possibly impeding other communication efforts.
- Environmental Factors
  - Remove distracting stimuli in the environment (e.g., a noisy fan, music, etc.).
  - Remove physical barriers (e.g., a desk).
  - Close the door for privacy.
  - Don't answer the phone.
- Chronemics (Perception and Use of Time)
  - Time is often used to negotiate and convey status (Henley,

1977). For example, in the U.S., making someone wait communicates that you are important, hold the position of power, and that your time is more valuable. At the same time, those people with less status are expected to be punctual.

- Paralanguage (Vocal Qualities)
  - ➥ Vocal qualities (not words) that contribute to communication include tone of voice, volume, mumbling, whispering, etc. For example, whispering can convey secrecy or confidentiality, shouting often conveys anger, and a negative tone of voice can convey dissatisfaction.

- Silences
  - ➥ Often what isn't said sends strong messages to others.
  - ➥ Silence can communicate disapproval, contentment, anger, awkwardness, etc.
  - ➥ Silences can manifest as avoidance. When you avoid, you are not confronting an issue. There may be times when you are so angry, upset, or frustrated, that avoidance may serve as a time-out until you are ready to face and confront issues.

2.3 Discussion: Guidelines for Effective Non-Verbal Communication

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding their non-verbal communication skills, using the following questions as a guide.

- With your current non-verbal skills in mind, are you communicating what you want to about yourself? If so, how? If not, what can you change?
- How have you misinterpreted someone's message, or had a message of yours misinterpreted, because of ineffective non-verbal communication?
- Have you ever been told that you seem uninterested, that you're not paying attention, or that you don't care when you in fact do? What gave the other person that impression? How can this be prevented in the future?

Present and review the **Guidelines for Effective Non-Verbal Communication** transparency **(T10)**. There are two key elements to effective non-verbal communication.

- Monitor your non-verbal communication.
  - ➥ Monitoring your non-verbal communication and the way in which you have arranged your environment provides an

opportunity to for you to reflect on ways you can better communicate your interest and involvement in conversations, as well as better deliver your communication goals.

- ■ Be careful when interpreting other's non-verbal communication.
  - ➥ The meaning of various forms of non-verbal communication vary from person to person based on culture, gender, socio-economic status, educational background, etc. It is important to remember this and that for as many ways as there are to communicate non-verbally, there are at least as many ways to interpret those messages.
  - ➥ There is no formula for interpreting non-verbal communication. Never assume you understand exactly what someone is trying to convey based solely on their non-verbal communication.

2.4 Discussion: Cultural Variation in Non-Verbal Communication

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding cultural variation in non-verbal communication. Ask the participants to provide examples from their own culture or background that vary from the points made in the goal.

If they have not been previously addressed, point out that the following are common variations in non-verbal communication based on culture or background.

- ■ Not making eye contact with authority figures.
- ■ Avoiding eye contact all together.
- ■ Using an indirect eye gaze.
- ■ Direct and prolonged eye contact while listening, indirect eye contact while speaking.
- ■ Smiling or head nodding for acknowledgment.
- ■ Extended silences.

Such variation in non-verbal communication techniques are not better or worse than any other techniques. Emphasize that in order to facilitate effective non-verbal communication, the most important technique is to recognize and understand the use and perception of non-verbal communication techniques by all those involved in the communication process.

Goal 3: Recognize the importance of effective listening and responding in effective communication.

Note to Instructor: Throughout this goal, emphasize that what is considered appropriate in one culture may be inappropriate in another, and that any one person's or culture's approach to listening and responding is not better or worse than another's. Remind the participants of the importance of acknowledging and respecting diversity.

3.1 Lecture: Hearing vs. Listening

How effectively one listens and conveys to the speaker that they are listening is crucial to good communication. Hearing is not enough; hearing is the physiological process in which auditory sensations are received by the ears and transmitted to the brain. We can also listen to information we receive through sight (non-verbal behavior, lip reading, sign language, etc.).

3.2 Activity: Are You a Good Listener?

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on their listening skills.

3.2.1 Steps
- Distribute the **Listening Inventory** handout **(H15)**.
- Have the participants think about their listening behaviors in recent meetings or gatherings.
- With that in mind, instruct the participants to read each statement and mark either "yes" or "no" for each, ignoring the third ("+ or -") column.
- When finished, have the participants read each statement again and review their response. For each, have them mark the third column with a "+" if they are satisfied with their response, and a "-" if they should have responded differently.
- When finished, review the correct answers, instructing the participants keep track of the number of correct responses they made as you review the justification for each.
  - ➥ Q1: No.
    - ⇒ You have a finite listening capacity. The more

conversations you try to hear, the less fully you will be able to listen to each.

➥ Q2: No.
⇒ A "yes" answer indicates a greater concern for facts and information than for interpretation and limits the communication process.

➥ Q3: No.
⇒ Invariably, you get caught. When you do, people not only feel angry that you were not listening, but also feel deceived. Telling someone up front that you are unable to listen at this time is the lesser of two evils.

➥ Q4: Yes.
⇒ Approximately 68% of the meaning of a message is transmitted nonverbally. If you answered "no" to this question, you are missing most of a message.

➥ Q5: No.
⇒ You are probably evaluating incomplete information.

➥ Q6: No.
⇒ Diverting attention is a "leave-taking" behavior, a sign that you wish to end the conversation. It is better to state openly that you need to be excused.

➥ Q7: No.
⇒ Evaluative feedback that is excessive or comes too early in the conversation can lead a speaker to make changes in the message, often trying to make it more palatable.

➥ Q8: No.
⇒ If you are properly sequencing your listening behavior, it is virtually impossible to respond immediately. You must hear all of a message, take time to process the message, and formulate your response before you speak.

➥ Q9: No.
⇒ Again, this is improper sequencing. Wait for full and complete information.

➥ Q10: No.
⇒ This is another example of improper sequencing. You cannot be listening carefully if you are busy planning what you are going to say.

➥ Q11: No.
⇒ Many times we become so conscious of how someone said something that we miss what was said.

- ➥ Q12: Yes.
  - ⇉ Whenever you are not completely sure, solicit feedback. Nothing is more dangerous than proceeding with a conversation when you are not sure what the other person said.
- ➥ Q13: Yes.
  - ⇉ Most of us do not make a serious effort to understand other people's points of view.
- ➥ Q14: No.
  - ⇉ A "yes" answer indicates self-protectiveness in listening. We tend to protect ourselves from messages that may hurt, disappoint, or anger us.
- ➥ Q15: Yes.
  - ⇉ We should be listening for feedback.
- ▪ To score the inventories, have the participants tally the number of incorrect responses, multiply by 7, and subtract that number from 105.
- ▪ Present and review the **Interpreting Your Score** transparency **(T11)**.
  - ➥ *91 to 105:* You approve of your own listening habits and are on the right track.
  - ➥ *77 to 90:* You have some doubts about your effectiveness, and your knowledge of the listening process in somewhat skimpy.
  - ➥ *76 and Below:* You do not like the way you listen, and your friends and colleagues probably do not think much of you as a listener, either.

3.3 Lecture: Effective Listening

Present and review the **Effective Listening** transparency **(T12)**. Effective listening is a complex process, involving:

- ▪ Selecting and attending to the person who is trying to communicate;
- ▪ Physically receiving messages, either through hearing or seeing;
- ▪ Interpreting and understanding the messages we receive; and
- ▪ Responding to the speaker.

3.4 Discussion: Selecting and Attending to the Speaker

Becoming actively engaged in listening means focusing all your concentration on what is being communicated and who is saying it. Because our attention tends to drift,

actively listening is hard work and requires determination, concentration, discipline, and practice.

Recognizing that we must select which of the information in our hectic daily lives to attend to is a vital part of being a good listener. Human beings are likely to notice loud or unusual distractions, causing them to ignore a speaker who is not equally loud or unusual. With this knowledge, we are able to act as responsible listeners and actively select (choose) to listen and attend to the speaker, not the distraction.

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding how they engage in active listening, using the following questions as a guide.

- Currently, what skills do you employ in order to attend to a speaker?
- If your attention drifts during a conversation, what happens?
- How do you handle it if you are distracted by something in the environment? What if the distraction is something that you cannot control (i.e., a crying child)?
- How do you get yourself back on track?
- Do you ask the speaker to clarify what you missed?

3.5 Discussion: Receiving Information

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding the various ways information can be received. Ensure the discussion includes both through hearing and sight (non-verbal behavior, lip reading, sign language, etc.).

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding factors that may inhibit our ability to receive information. Ensure the discussion includes environmental factors (t.v., radio, etc.), language barriers, cultural differences, and gender-based differences.

3.6 Activity: May I Talk to You?

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the ways in which information is conveyed and received.

3.6.1 Steps

- Have the participants break into small groups.
- Distribute the **May I Talk to You?** handout **(H16)**.
- Instruct the groups to read the scenario and answer the questions.

■   When finished, have the groups share their responses with the class.

3.7 Lecture: Interpreting and Understanding Information

Interpretation can be defined as determining the meaning or significance of a piece, or the combination of pieces, of information. This is a key aspect to effective listening and communication. Effective interpretation depends on the listener's ability to understand the speaker on his or her terms, regardless of agreement. Being able to recognize the speaker's point of view does not mean that the listener agrees, but that the listener has heard and understands.

When involved in conversations with others, effective questioning skills are key in clarifying and understanding what is being communicated. There are several types of questions that can be asked, each providing a different level of clarification when used alone or in combination. Present and review the **Questions** handout and transparency **(H17/T13)**.

- ■ Open
    - ➥ Open questions are broad and cannot be answered with one word.
        - ⇒ "What do you think are options are for handling the situation?"
- ■ Closed
    - ➥ Closed questions are specific and illicit specific, narrow, exact answers.
        - ⇒ "How did you handle that situation?"
- ■ Mirror
    - ➥ Mirror questions are reflective, paraphrasing questions that call for further elaboration on the part of the speaker.
        - ⇒ *Speaker:* "I've dealt with a lot of student fights."
          Listener: "So, you are skilled in conflict mediation, right?"
- ■ Hypothetical
    - ➥ Hypothetical questions are designed to determine how someone feels about a given topic or situation, how well they grasp a complex topic or situation, and how they will respond to a given topic or situation.
        - ⇒ "What would you do if the two teachers you work for gave you conflicting instructions for working with a specific student?"

- Probing
  - ➥ Probing questions seek a deeper level of understanding by building on the responses to previous questions.
    - ⇒ *Speaker:* "I don't like this job."
      Listener: "What don't you like about the job?"
      Speaker: "It's hard."
      Listener: "Is the work you're being asked to do difficult?"
      Speaker: "It isn't too difficult, I just don't know how to do all of the things I need to do in order to do the job."
- Leading
  - ➥ Leading questions tend to illicit a desired response by suggesting the correct answer (loaded questions).
    - ⇒ "You work well in teams, don't you?"
  - ➥ Leading questions can be used to determine how committed someone is to a given topic.
    - ⇒ "Being a paraeducator can be challenging. I assume you are interested in taking additional courses, right?"
- Summary
  - ➥ Summary questions verify what has been communicated and what is expected of each party involved, and are often posed as statements.
    - ⇒ "We've covered a lot." *Translation: "Is there anything else that we need to discuss?"*
    - ⇒ "We all know what to do." *Translation: "Do you understand what's expected of you?"*

3.8 Discussion: Responding to Information

Responding to information being conveyed involves expressing interest, paying attention, asking questions, and remembering what was communicated. Good listeners are reflective in their responses, meaning the listener restates and/or asks questions about the feelings or content of the information the speaker has communicated in a way that demonstrates interest, understanding, and acceptance.

Present and review the **Reflective Responses...** transparency **(T14)**. Reflective responses:

- Don't fake understanding.

➥ There are many times when we may not understand what a speaker is saying. This may be because we started daydreaming, were thinking about what was said earlier, or the speaker is not making their point clear.

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding a listener can clarify their understanding of the speaker's message. Some possible responses include:
➥ "Would you go over that once more?"
➥ "I understood what you were saying up until..."

■ Don't tell the speaker that you know how he or she feels.
➥ When people begin to listen reflectively they tend to say, "I know just how you feel."

Engage the participants in an discussion regarding why not telling a speaker you know how he or she feels is important, asking for specific reasons. Ensure the discussion includes the following points:
➥ You really don't know how the speaker feels.
➥ Your reading of how the speaker feels is an approximation.
➥ Stating that you know how the speaker feels may block the speaker from adding more information that is necessary for further understanding.

■ Are varied.

Engage the participants in a discussion about using a variety of appropriate reflexive responses, using the following scenario as a guide.
➥ A paraeducator complained to a friend, "The teacher I work with always butts into my small groups to tell me something she thinks I ought to be doing with a student. I wish she would do this in our meeting time."
⇒ Some possible responses include:
◗ It bugs you to have the teacher interrupt you so much.

■ Focus on the speaker's feelings.

Present the following scenario to the participants. When finished,

engage the participants in a discussion regarding whether or not the speaker's (paraeducator's) feelings were appropriately addressed. If so, how and, if not, how could it have been better handled?

> A teacher and a paraeducator had a meeting after the paraeducator's first day on the job.
>
> *Paraeducator:* "I feel this job is too hard for me. I don't understand why the students won't listen to me."
>
> *Teacher:* "The work is too difficult."
>
> *Paraeducator:* (starting to cry) "I don't feel I have the skills."

■ Use the most accurate word that conveys the feeling and emotion of the speaker.

➥ Reflecting the emotion the speaker is trying to convey and to the correct degree is vital for communication. Refletive responses accomplish this through the words the listener uses to represent the feeling.

Present the following scenario to the participants. When finished, engage the participants in a discussion of whether or not the speaker's feelings were accurately represented by the feeling word in the listener's response, and why or why not.

> *Teacher:* "I just talked to Jimmy's mom and she thinks I'm treating him unfairly because I made him clean the cafeteria tables for throwing food. I'm really frustrated and upset she can not see the value of the consequence."
>
> *Paraeducator:* "You feel annoyed."

➥ One way to be able to more accurately reflect a speaker's feelings is to develop a more accurate feeling-word vocabulary by reading and rereading a list of feeling words. Distribute the **Feeling Words** handout **(H18)** for the paraeducators to use on their own for practice. Emphasize that the list is not complete and that they should feel free to add feeling words to it as they see fit.

■ Are empathetic.

➥ Empathy is listening with your heart, as well as your head.

➥ If the listener's reaction to the speaker is cold and matter-of-fact in tone, the speaker will probably not feel that they were

understood.

➥ Responsive sounds can convey a high level of understanding.

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding what refletive sounds are, asking for specific examples. Some possibilities include:

- Ohhhh.
- Mm-hmm.
- Hmmm!

3.9 Discussion: Obstacles to Effective Listening

Present and review the **Obstacles to Effective Listening** transparency **(T15)**. There are many obstacles to effective listening.

- There was too much information presented.
- The information presented was difficult for the listener.
  - ➥ This may happen because the information is complex or because of the way in which it was presented.
  - ➥ Part of being a good listener is clarifying those points that are not understood through questioning, paraphrasing, and summarizing.
- Environmental distractions.
  - ➥ These distractions could include loud music, telephone calls, uncomfortable surroundings, interruptions, etc.
  - ➥ Distractions should be minimized when possible. Turning off radios, not answering the telephone, dimming or turning up lights, adjusting the thermostat, etc. are examples of simple things that can be done to create a better environment for listening.
- The listener is preoccupied.
  - ➥ Preoccupation is quite common and natural. Problems in our personal lives, prior meetings, an upcoming exam, or just having a lot of tasks in front of us can certainly make it difficult to focus completely on the speaker and what is being communicated.
  - ➥ Prior to beginning a conversation, entering a meeting, or attending a presentation, clear your mind of all such distractions so as to allow yourself to focus on the topic(s) at hand.
- The listener has preconceived notions about the speaker or topic.

- If a listener thinks he or she knows what the speaker is going to say, has disagreed with the speaker in the past on the given topic, or thinks that the speaker has nothing of value to say, the listener is likely to not pay attention.
- Misunderstandings.
  - Misunderstanding can be due to cultural, gender-based, or other differences in speaking and listening styles.
  - Part of being a good listener is eliminating misunderstandings by seeking clarification through questioning, paraphrasing, and summarizing.
- The speaker has hit on one of the listener's emotional triggers.
  - For all of us there are people, ideas, topics, and words that trigger strong emotional responses in us. When one of these emotional triggers are set off, one's ability to listen effectively and objectively can be diminished.
  - When working with colleagues and students, it is important to keep these triggers in mind and be careful not to respond emotionally or allow your interpretation of what is being communicated to become distorted.
  - It is important to know what your emotional triggers are in order to have more control over your responses to them.
- The listener has ineffective listening skills.
  - Pretending to listen.
  - Monopolizing the conversation.
  - Only hearing what you want to hear.
  - Reading personal attacks, insults, and/or criticism into what the speaker is saying.
  - Listening only to gather ammunition to be used against the speaker later.

3.10 Activity: Emotions as Obstacles to Listening

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on how emotions have become barriers for them in past communications.

3.10.1 Steps
- Have the paraeducators break into pairs.
- Distribute the **Emotions as Obstacles to Listening** handout **(H19)**.
- Instruct the pairs to review and discuss the questions on the handout.

- When finished, have the pairs share their responses with the class.
- Instruct the pairs to share and discuss a situation in which a strong emotional response was triggered in them that impaired their ability to listen effectively and objectively.
- Have the pairs discuss ways in which they could have responded differently, with more control over their emotions.
- Have the pairs develop a role play of one of the situations.
- When finished, have the pairs share their role-plays with the class.

Goal 4: Adapt communication effectively to diverse situations.

Note to Instructor: Throughout this goal, emphasize that what is considered appropriate in one culture may be inappropriate in another, and that any one person's or culture's beliefs and values are not better or worse than another's. Remind the participants of the importance of acknowledging and respecting diversity.

4.1 Lecture: The Importance of Adapting Communication

Effective communication includes being able to adapt communication skills to the challenges and opportunities of a variety of situations. Being flexible and able to adapt, facilitates more effective communication. The same speaking style, listening skills, communication climate, physical environment, etc. is not necessarily conducive to effectively communicating with your supervising teacher, a student's parent, and your best friend.

In order to effectively adapt our communication, we need to be able to recognize that communication is a system. All aspects of communication are related. When one element is changed, the system is changed. It is important to understand that it isn't possible to focus on just one aspect of communication (e.g., tone of voice or physical environment) without understanding how it is related to all other parts of the system.

4.2 Lecture: Recognizing Differences

The first step in being able to adapt communication to a particular person or situation is to recognize the differences between people, groups, and situations. This enables one to see people as individuals, and understand the individual and the situation. This is best achieved through spending time getting to know someone and through self-disclosure (as addressed in *Module A: Interpersonal Sensitivity*, and allows one to move beyond stereotypes.

Once the other person and the situation are better understood, the speaking style, communication climate, and physical environment should all be adapted to best facilitate the specifics of the situation.

4.3 Activity: Adapting Communication

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to better understand how to adapt communication styles to various situations.

4.3.1 Steps

- Have the paraeducators break into pairs.
- Distribute the **Adapting Communication** handout **(H20)**.
- Have the pairs read through the scenario.
- Instruct the pairs to complete the handout by describing the communication style they would use (passive, aggressive, assertive, or passive-aggressive), the words they would use (they should write out the actual sentences they would use), listening skills they would employ, strategies they would use to achieve a positive communication climate, and the ideal physical environment for communicating the scenario to the various people listed.
- When finished, have the pairs share their responses with the class, pointing out the adaptations they made for each person.

4.4 Lecture: Adaptation and Diversity

Being able to effectively communicate with people from diverse backgrounds takes time. Change in any aspect of life, including communication, takes time. Learning to adapt our approaches to communication and the various components of communication is an ongoing process that requires time, experience, and a genuine desire to want to be a part of a diverse society. The first step to being able to adapt to diversity is to understand that there is a process involved and that throughout our lives, we will find ourselves at various stages in the process with various groups of people.

4.5 Activity: Adapting to Diversity

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the process involved in adapting to diversity.

4.5.1 Steps

- Have the participants break into small groups.
- Distribute the **Adapting to Diversity** handout **(H21)**.

- Instruct the groups to read and discuss each of the steps in adapting to diversity, with each group member sharing a personal experience for each of the steps.
- When finished, have the groups share some of their stories with the class, ensuring examples are provided for each of the steps. Clarify the steps as necessary.

4.5.2 Lecture: Further Understanding Adapting to Diversity

Emphasize that each of us will find ourselves moving back and forth along this process, depending on our experiences with various cultures and people within the cultures. However, being aware of where we are and where we want to be is the first step. Once we have this personal knowledge, we can begin to see and understand the communicative needs of others and ourselves, and move toward developing and refining the skills we need to effectively adapt the elements of communication to those around us.

Module B Handouts

Module B: Effective Communication

1. Identify the components of effective verbal communication.

2. Identify the components of effective non-verbal communication.

3. Recognize the importance of effective listening and responding in effective communication.

4. Adapt communication effectively to diverse situations.

What is Your Communication Style?

Your supervisor gives you an "unsatisfactory" rating on your evaluation. You...
A.	Go home and cry.
B.	Ask your supervisor to explain the rating since you were expecting a better rating.
C.	Rip the evaluation up and say negative things about the evaluator to your colleagues.
D.	Yell at your supervisor and rip the paper up in front of him or her.

Your sister is really angry at you for not returning her calls. You realize that your teenaged son never gave you the messages. You...
A.	Don't say anything about the messages to your son.
B.	Reiterate to your son that it is important that you receive your messages.
C.	Get even by not giving your son a phone message from his coach.
D.	Yell at your son and take away his phone privileges.

Your friend says something that hurts your feelings. You...
A.	Say nothing and hope it doesn't happen again.
B.	Tell your friend that what they said hurt your feelings.
C.	Say nothing to your friend but bad-mouth him or her to everyone you know.
D.	Retaliate by saying something even meaner.

Another paraeducator in the building offers to pick up lunch for you but doesn't give you your change. You...
A.	Assume there was no change.
B.	Ask if there was any change.
C.	Don't say anything to her but stop interacting with her.
D.	Accuse her of trying to rip you off.

You are shopping with a friend and she tries on a dress and asks you how she looks. You think the dress is too small, but she sounds excited about how she looks in it. You...
A.	Smile and say the dress looks cool.
B.	Tell her that you like the dress but suggest a different size.
C.	Tell her she looks great and then go home and laugh about it with others.
D.	Tell her that the dress makes her look like a fat pig.

What is Your Communication Style?
(continued)

Your classmate asks if he or she can copy your assignment. You...
A.   Let them even though you're not really comfortable with the idea.
B.   Tell them you'd rather not, but you'd be glad to help them with theirs.
C.   Let them copy it but be upset about it and start ignoring them.
D.   Tell them you're not a cheater like they are.

You have been a paraeducator for six years in the same school. A new special education teacher takes over as your supervising teacher. She is young and inexperienced, does not appreciate your input, and constantly reminds you that she is "certified" and will make all decisions. You...
A.   Feel miserable but do not do anything about it.
B.   Tell her that when your opinion is not valued, you do not feel you are part of the team.
C.   Feel miserable and complain to others about how you feel.
D.   Shout at her that you are more knowledgeable because you've been there longer.

A friend asks you to give her a ride to pick up her car from the mechanic again but you're afraid you might be late for your son's soccer practice. You...
A.   Do it anyhow, she's a good friend.
B.   Ask her if you can do it after your son's soccer practice.
C.   Agree, but purposefully forget to pick her up.
D.   Refuse point blank by saying, "I do not run a taxi service."

Your neighbor, whose child goes to the same school where you work, complains to you about how difficult her child's classroom teacher is. You personally know the teacher and do not agree with your neighbor's portrayal of her. You...
A.   Quietly listen to your neighbor rant and rave about the teacher.
B.   Discourage her by saying that it is unprofessional for you to discuss a colleague.
C.   Encourage her to confide in you and then pass the information on to the teacher.
D.   Tell her to shut up and mind her own business.

Your friend suggests seeing a particular movie, but you want to see a different one. You...
A.   Go to the movie your friend suggested.
B.   Tell your friend that you really want to see the other movie and try to decide together.
C.   You see the movie your friend suggested, but complain about how stupid it is.
D.   Tell your friend you do not want to go and she can go by herself.

Identifying Communication Styles

Situation One

In a crowded movie theater, the people in front of you keep talking in a fairly loud voice, distracting you. The theater is so crowded that you cannot change seats.

- Response A
    - You do nothing and suffer in silence.
    - Communication Style: _____

- Response B
    - You yell at them, "If you don't shut up, I'll call the manager and have them throw you out!"
    - Communication Style: _____

- Response C
    - You look directly at them, and say, "Your talking is distracting from my enjoyment of the movie."
    - Communication Style: _____

- Response D
    - You kick at back of their seats and throw bits of your popcorn and candy at them.
    - Communication Style: _____

Identifying Communication Styles
(continued)

Situation Two

A school principal often makes announcements over the loudspeaker and interrupts Mr. Nikolai's classroom unnecessarily.

- Response A
  - ➥ Mr. Nikolai tells the principal, "When you make announcements over the loudspeaker while I am teaching, I feel frustrated because my lessons are interrupted."
  - ➥ Communication Style: _____

- Response B
  - ➥ Mr. Nikolai doesn't say anything to the principal but talks about how annoying he is in the teacher's lounge.
  - ➥ Communication Style: _____

- Response C
  - ➥ Mr. Nikolai is furious, thinking how insensitive the principal is. However, he keeps his feelings to himself.
  - ➥ Communication Style: _____

- Response D
  - ➥ Mr. Nikolai says to the principal, "What kind of fool are you, sending messages over the loudspeaker all day? Can't you get organized enough to do them all at once? If you were a good teacher, you'd photocopy the stupid announcements!"
  - ➥ Communication Style: _____

Situation Three

Identifying Communication Styles
(continued)

Santiago is often physically and emotionally drained when he returns home from his day at work. As soon as he comes into the house, his wife shares all the trouble she's had during the day with him. Santiago needs a breather. He doesn't want to listen to anyone for a few minutes. He needs to center himself first.

- Response A
    - Santiago is seething inside while he half-listens to her words. Sometimes he glances at the newspaper while she is talking, hoping she will take the hint. The whole time he thinks, "She is so selfish. If she loved me, she would know how I feel right now."
    - Communication Style: _____

- Response B
    - Santiago storms around the room ranting at his wife, "You are the most selfish person I have ever known! Can't I have a few minutes of peace and quiet when I get home from work without having to listen to your depressing babble? I'm sick of it and I'm sick of you."
    - Communication Style: _____

- Response C
    - Santiago is visibly upset, but says nothing to his wife. Instead, he goes into the family room to watch T.V. As she talks, he progressively turns up the volume on the T.V.
    - Communication Style: _____

- Response D
    - Santiago immediately tells his wife how tired he is and how much he needs a period of quiet before dinner. He asks that, unless there is something very pressing, she wait until after dinner to share the events of the day, adding that he would also like to tell her about his day.
    - Communication Style: _____

Examining Communication Styles

Situation
You are in the media center reading to a group of students. A substitute teacher, whom you do not know, walks up and hands you a pile of paper and says in a demanding tone, "Copy these, right now."

Possible Responses
- Passive

- Aggressive

- Passive-Aggressive

- Assertive

"I"-Messages

"I"-messages are communications that:

- State the speaker's feelings in a nonthreatening or non-accusatory manner.

- Clearly identify the speaker's feelings, interests, and needs to resolve the conflict without placing blame on others.

- Allow for effective communication by phrasing things in a neutral, objective manner so that the listener need not be put on the defensive, as they are not being blamed for anything.

- Permit people to like the person even though they may not like the behavior the person is currently engaged in.

- Organize one's feelings. "I feel...when...because..."

- Must do three things:
  - Report the problem in a factual way.
    - "When you leave the door unlocked..."
  - Describe a concrete effect of a specific behavior.
    - "When you leave the door unlocked, things of mine get stolen."
  - Clearly state the feelings generated by a specific behavior.
    - "When you leave the door unlocked, things of mine get stolen and I feel irritated because I have to replace them."

Using "I"-Messages

Example: You are a paraeducator supporting a student with behavior challenges. An angry classroom teacher yells at you about the student's behavior.

> *"You"-Message:* "You are the teacher and you talk to the special education teacher about this."

> *"I"-Message:* "I can see that you're upset. I'm not sure how to handle that situation. Let me take that information back to the special education teacher."

You've loaned some resources to a colleague. After several friendly reminders, they have not been returned.

> *"You"-Message:*

> *"I"-Message:*

You have made a suggestion. The teacher counters with a rude remark. You feel insulted.

> *"You"-Message:*

> *"I"-Message:*

The supervising teacher is dominating a meeting. You do not like this.

> *"You"-Message:*

> *"I"-Message:*

You feel that the teacher tends to ignore you and treats you in a disrespectful manner.

> *"You"-Message:*

> *"I"-Message:*

Body Language and Facial Expressions

Define body language and facial expression.

Provide examples of body language and facial expressions.

What are some ways in which each of the examples listed above communicate?

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way body language and facial expression are used to communicate? Provide specific examples.

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way body language and facial expression are perceived and understood? Provide specific examples.

Touching

Define touching.

Provide examples of touching as a means of communication.

What are some ways in which each of the examples listed above communicate?

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way touching is used to communicate? Provide specific examples.

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way touching is perceived and understood? Provide specific examples.

Physical Appearance

Define physical appearance.

Provide examples of elements of physical appearance.

What are some ways in which each of the examples listed above communicate?

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way physical appearance is used to communicate? Provide specific examples.

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way physical appearance is perceived and understood? Provide specific examples.

Personal Objects

Define personal objects.

Provide examples of personal objects.

What are some ways in which each of the examples listed above communicate?

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way personal objects are used to communicate? Provide specific examples.

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way personal objects are perceived and understood? Provide specific examples.

Personal Space

Define personal space.

Provide examples of personal space.

What are some ways in which each of the examples listed above communicate?

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way personal space is used to communicate? Provide specific examples.

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way personal space is perceived and understood? Provide specific examples.

Physical Environment

Define physical environment.

Provide examples of elements of physical environments.

What are some ways in which each of the examples listed above communicate?

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way physical environments are used to communicate? Provide specific examples.

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way physical environments are perceived and understood? Provide specific examples.

Time

Define time.

Provide examples of the perception of and use of time.

What are some ways in which each of the examples listed above communicate?

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way time is used to communicate? Provide specific examples.

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way time is perceived and understood? Provide specific examples.

Vocal Qualities

Define vocal qualities.

Provide examples of vocal qualities.

What are some ways in which each of the examples listed above communicate?

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way vocal qualities are used to communicate? Provide specific examples.

How can differences (cultural, gender-based, socio-economic status, religious, educational, age, etc.) among people affect the way vocal qualities are perceived and understood? Provide specific examples.

Listening Inventory

Yes	*No*	*+ or -*		
___	___	___	1.	I frequently attempt to listen to several conversations at the same time.
___	___	___	2.	I like people to give me only the facts then let me make my own interpretation.
___	___	___	3.	I sometimes pretend to pay attention to people.
___	___	___	4.	I consider myself a good judge of non-verbal communications.
___	___	___	5.	I usually know what another person is going to say before he or she says it.
___	___	___	6.	I usually end conversations that don't interest me by diverting my attention from the speaker.
___	___	___	7.	I frequently nod, frown, or whatever to let the speaker know how I feel about what he or she is saying.
___	___	___	8.	I usually respond immediately when someone has finished talking.
___	___	___	9.	I evaluate what is being said while it is being said.
___	___	___	10.	I usually formulate a response while the other person is still talking.
___	___	___	11.	The speaker's delivery style frequently keeps me from listening to the content.
___	___	___	12.	I usually ask people to clarify what they have said rather than guess at the meaning.
___	___	___	13.	I make a concerted effort to understand other people's point of view.
___	___	___	14.	I frequently hear what I expect to hear rather than what is said.
___	___	___	15.	Most people feel that I have understood their point of view when we disagree.

May I Talk to You?

You have a new principal at your school and she wants you to come and speak to her when you have a problem.

You have had an ongoing problem with a student and would like some feedback from an objective person. She welcomes you into her office and five minutes later, as you are getting into the problem, she begins to rearrange her desk and looks at her watch. You ask if another time would be better, but she says, "No," and tells you to proceed with the discussion.

Questions:
What are the nonverbal messages the principal is sending?

How are these nonverbal messages perceived and how do they make you feel?

How should you proceed?

Questions

- Open
  - ➥ Open questions are broad and cannot be answered with one word.
    - ⇉ "What do you think are options are for handling the situation?"

- Closed
  - ➥ Closed questions are specific and illicit specific, narrow, exact answers.
    - ⇉ "How did you handle that situation?"

- Mirror
  - ➥ Mirror questions are reflective, paraphrasing questions that call for further elaboration on the part of the speaker.
    - ⇉ *Speaker:* "I've dealt with a lot of student fights."
      Listener: "So, you are skilled in conflict mediation, right?"

- Hypothetical
  - ➥ Hypothetical questions are designed to determine how someone feels about a given topic or situation, how well they grasp a complex topic or situation, and how they will respond to a given topic or situation.
    - ⇉ "What would you do if the two teachers you work for gave you conflicting instructions for working with a specific student?"

- Probing
  - ➥ Probing questions seek a deeper level of understanding by building on the responses to previous questions.
    - ⇉ *Speaker:* "I don't like this job."
      Listener: "What don't you like about the job?"
      Speaker: "It's hard."
      Listener: "Is the work you're being asked to do difficult?"
      Speaker: "It isn't too difficult, I just don't know how to do all of the things I need to do in order to do the job."

Questions
(continued)

- Leading
  - ➥ Leading questions tend to illicit a desired response by suggesting the correct answer (loaded questions).
    - ⇉ "You work well in teams, don't you?"
  - ➥ Leading questions can be used to determine how committed someone is to a given topic.
    - ⇉ "Being a paraeducator can be challenging. I assume you are interested in taking additional courses, right?"

- Summary
  - ➥ Summary questions verify what has been communicated and what is expected of each party involved, and are often posed as statements.
    - ⇉ "We've covered a lot." *Translation: "Is there anything else that we need to discuss?"*
    - ⇕↗⇨◣ ↓▽ ⇉ "We all know what to do." *Translation: "Do you understand what's expected of you?"*

Feeling Words

affectionate	defeated	frantic
angry	despairing	guilty
annoyed	distraught	grief-stricken
betrayed	disturbed	happy
blissful	dominated	helpful
blue	eager	high
burdened	empathetic	horrible
charmed	energetic	hurt
cheated	enervated	hysterical
cheerful	exasperated	ignored
condemned	fearful	imposed upon
contented	flustered	infuriated
crushed	foolish	intimidated
isolated	pressured	tense
jealous	put upon	terrible
jealous	rejected	thwarted
jumpy	relaxed	tired
kind	relieved	trapped
left out	sad	troubled
loving	satisfied	unfairly treated
melancholy	scared	vulnerable
miserable	shocked	wonderful
nervous	spiteful	worried
OK	stunned	weepy
outraged	stupid	sympathetic
peaceful	persecuted	

Emotions as Obstacles to Listening

What are ideas that trigger strong emotional responses in you?

What are words that trigger strong emotional responses in you?

Who are the people that trigger strong emotional responses in you?

Role Play Scenario:

Adapting Communication

Today, on the playground, you witnessed three boys from the fourth grade shoving around and teasing a boy who you know is in the first-grade. In response, you approached the boys, hollering, "Hey, leave him alone!" A teacher, who is not your supervising teacher, happened to walk by at that moment and took over, stepped between you and the boys, and said to you, "I'll take care of this. You don't know what your doing." All four of the boys were witness to this and began to laugh and point at you. You left the scene feeling embarrassed, frustrated, angry, and belittled.

How would you adapt your communication style in order to communicate this scenario and your feelings to:

- Your supervising teacher?
  Communication Style (passive, aggressive, assertive, or passive-aggressive):

The Words (write out the actual sentences you would use):

Listening Skills You Would Employ:

Strategies to Achieve a Positive Communication Climate:

The Ideal Physical Environment:

Adapting Communication
(continued)

■   A fellow paraeducator?
Communication Style (passive, aggressive, assertive, or passive-aggressive):

The Words (write out the actual sentences you would use):

Listening Skills You Would Employ:

Strategies to Achieve a Positive Communication Climate:

The Ideal Physical Environment:

Adapting Communication
(continued)

■ Your significant other?
   Communication Style (passive, aggressive, assertive, or passive-aggressive):

The Words (write out the actual sentences you would use):

Listening Skills You Would Employ:

Strategies to Achieve a Positive Communication Climate:

The Ideal Physical Environment:

Adapting Communication
(continued)

- The teacher involved?
  Communication Style (passive, aggressive, assertive, or passive-aggressive):

  The Words (write out the actual sentences you would use):

  Listening Skills You Would Employ:

  Strategies to Achieve a Positive Communication Climate:

  The Ideal Physical Environment:

Adapting to Diversity

Resistance
Resistance refers to rejecting the beliefs and values of cultures other than our own because they conflict with our own. For example, requiring a student who has been injured to seek medical attention even though the student's culture rejects medical intervention, requiring all student's to recite The Pledge of Allegiance regardless of their beliefs, teaching only those ideas that are in line with your beliefs and refusing to teach opposing views, or perpetuating hate crimes and/or speech. This resistance and rejection conveys not only a lack of education on your part, but that you have no respect for or desire to learn about cultures other than your own.

Tolerance
Tolerance is just that - tolerating others. It refers to acknowledging and accepting differences between your own culture and the cultures of others. Tolerance means respecting the rights of others to hold the beliefs they do and behave accordingly, but does not mean that you understand, appreciate or agree with their beliefs. This is often seen when looking at attitudes regarding sexual orientation, religious beliefs, inter-racial couples, political affiliation, etc.

Understanding
Understanding cultural diversity means that you have moved beyond tolerance and seek to learn about the beliefs of various cultures, and recognize that no one culture is better or worse than another. For example, a person who understands diversity may recognize that a given culture is not driven by time and schedules and would not perceive "lateness" as disrespect or laziness, or may be aware that some cultures do not make direct eye contact and would not perceive this as an indicator of moral worth. When encountering such situations, the person who strives to understand would reserve judgement and seek to understand the cultural significance of the behavior.

Adapting to Diversity
(continued)

Respect

Respecting diversity means moving beyond understanding to accepting and appreciating cultures other than our own. This does not mean that your belief system is altered, merely that you respect the belief system of others. For example, recognizing and respecting the practice in some cultures of arranged marriages, vegetarianism, or not directly questioning authority figures without actually altering your personal beliefs and practices communicates a higher level of respect for diversity on your part. Once we are able to respect diversity, we are able to begin to effectively adapt our communication styles.

Participation

Participation is the final step in the process of adapting to diversity. Participation means that you would incorporate at least some of the values and practices of a culture other than your own. Participation requires us to be not only multi-cultural in our practices, but in our language. For example, moving to another country and living there as an active member of the local community for a significant period of time (more than a couple of weeks vacation time); or becoming an active member in a culture present within the dominant culture in which you already live, including communicating in the language, attending social functions, adopting eating practices, perhaps adopting religious practices, and/or celebrating holidays and traditions.

Module B Transparencies

Module B: Effective Communication

- *Identify the components of effective verbal communication.*

- *Identify the components of effective non-verbal communication.*

- *Recognize the importance of effective listening and responding in effective communication.*

- *Adapt communication effectively to diverse situations.*

What is Your Communication Style?

- *"A" responses, you may have a tendency to interact with others in a more passive manner and view their thoughts, feelings, and opinions as more valuable than your own.*

- *"B" responses, you have a more assertive style of interacting with others, respecting the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of others without discounting your own.*

- *"C" responses, you have a more passive-aggressive style of interacting with others, avoiding direct confrontation and getting your needs met through manipulation.*

- *"D" responses, you have a more aggressive style of interacting with others, getting your needs met through manipulation and force.*

People Engaging in Passive Communication...

- *Do not express their emotions, needs, values, or concerns openly.*

- *Rarely involve themselves with others.*

- *Are uncomfortable with people who enter "their space."*

- *May sometimes answer a question with, "Oh, it doesn't matter to me," or, "Do whatever you want."*

- *Communicate nonverbally by shrugging their shoulders, not making eye contact, or speaking in an excessively soft voice.*

- *Communicates that they can be taken advantage of, that their needs are insignificant while yours are important.*

- *May lack self-respect and respect for other people.*

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People Engaging in Aggressive Communication...

- *Block others while denying they are doing it.*

- *Openly expresses feelings, needs, and ideas at the expense of others.*

- *Must win arguments.*

- *Appear to have a "chip" on their shoulder.*

- *Speak loudly and may be abusive, rude, and sarcastic.*

- *Overpower other people to satisfy their need to have their point of view heard.*

People Engaging in Passive-Aggressive Communication...

- *Do not openly express their thoughts, needs, feelings, or concerns.*

- *Act passively, resulting in their problem becoming someone else's problem.*

- *Must win and get their way.*

- *May act in a passive way, getting their needs met by creating an uncomfortable situation for someone else.*

People Engaging in Assertive Communication...

- *Confirm their own needs and self-worth, while simultaneously confirming and maintaining the worth of others.*

- *Expresses their own needs, feelings, and values in a way that defends their point of view, but without abusing or dominating others.*

- *Stand-up for their rights without violating the rights of others.*

"I" vs. "You"

- *"I feel..." vs. "It would be best if..."*

- *"I don't understand..." vs. "It's not clear..."*

- *"I would like..." vs. "You should..."*

- *"I'm upset about..." vs. "You upset me..."*

- *"I suggest..." vs. "You haven't considered..."*

Guidelines for Effective Verbal Communication

- *Be accurate.*

- *Use language that is appropriate for the communication objective and situation.*

- *Qualify statements.*

- *Own your thoughts, feelings, and actions.*

Non-Verbal Communication

- ***Body Language***

- ***Eye Contact***

- ***Door-Openers for Communication***

- ***Silences***

- ***Avoidance***

- ***Personal Space***

Guidelines for Effective Non-Verbal Communication

The PARA Center

- *Monitor your non-verbal communication.*

- *Be careful when interpreting other's non-verbal communication.*

Interpreting Your Score

- *91 to 105: You approve of your own listening habits and are on the right track.*

- *77 to 90: You have some doubts about your effectiveness, and your knowledge of the listening process in somewhat skimpy.*

- *76 and Below: You do not like the way you listen, and your friends and colleagues probably do not think much of you as a listener, either.*

Effective Listening

The PARA Center

- *Selecting and attending to the person who is trying to communicate.*

- *Physically receiving messages, either through hearing or seeing.*

- *Interpreting and understanding the messages we receive.*

- *Responding to the speaker.*

Questions

- *Open*

- *Closed*

- *Mirror*

- *Hypothetical*

- *Probing*

- *Leading*

- *Summary*

Reflective Responses...

- *Don't fake understanding.*

- *Don't tell the speaker that you know how he or she feels.*

- *Are varied.*

- *Focus on the speaker's feelings.*

- *Use the most accurate word that conveys the feeling and emotion of the speaker.*

- *Are empathetic.*

Obstacles to Effective Listening

- *There was too much information presented.*

- *The information presented was difficult for the listener.*

- *Environmental distractions.*

- *The listener is preoccupied.*

- *The listener has preconceived notions about the speaker or topic.*

- *Misunderstandings.*

- *The speaker has hit on one of the listener's emotional triggers.*

- *The listener has ineffective listening skills.*

Module C: Conflict Management and Problem Solving

Interpersonal Skills Academy
Module C: Conflict Management and Problem Solving

A. Lecture: Module Goals

Using the **Module C: Conflict Management and Problem Solving** handout and transparency **(H1/T1)**, review the goals of the module.

1.   Identify characteristics of effective interpersonal relationships in the work place.
2.   Recognize the role of conflict in interpersonal relationships.
3.   Demonstrate effective strategies for resolving conflict between two people.
4.   Demonstrate effective strategies for resolving group conflict.

Goal 1: Identify characteristics of effective interpersonal relationships in the work place.

1.1 Activity: My Working Relationships

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to reflect on the qualities of the various working relationships they have been involved in.

1.1.1 Steps

- Distribute the **My Working Relationships** handout **(H2)**.
- Instruct the participants to complete the handout by identifying four working relationships they have been involved in that they value highly under the *My Working Relationships* column. These do not need to be current relationships.
- Instruct the participants to describe what it is about that working relationship they value in the *What I Value* column.
- When finished, have the participants break into groups by counting off by three: all 1's together, all 2's together, and all 3's together.
- Have the participants share their responses with their groups.
- Instruct the groups to discuss and list what they see as the essential elements of a positive working relationship.
- When finished, have each group share their list with the class, recording their responses on a blank piece of chart paper.
- After each group has presented, distribute the **Opportunities in My Working Relationships** handout **(H3)** to each participant.
- Instruct the participants to complete the handout on their own by identifying at least two working relationships they are currently involved in that fall short of meeting the essential qualities they identified as a group, listing them in the *My Working Relationships* column.
- Instruct the participants to develop at least two goals for improving each of the identified relationships, listing them in the *Goals for Improvement* column.
- When finished, have the participants share their goals with the class.

1.2 Discussion: Elements of Negative Working Relationships

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding what they see as the elements of negative working relationships, recording their responses on a blank piece of chart paper.

Present and review the **Elements of Negative Working Relationships** transparency **(T2)**, incorporating the class responses. Point out any similarities and discuss any differences. Elements of negative working relationships include, but are not limited to:

- Ineffective Approaches to Communication
  ➥ Passive
  ➥ Aggressive
  ➥ Passive-Aggressive
- Ineffective Listening Skills
- Ethno/Egocentric Attitudes
  ➥ "It's my way, or the highway."
  ➥ The one with the power wins.
- Manipulation
- Dishonesty
- Unprofessional

1.3 Discussion: Elements of Positive Working Relationships

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding what they see as the elements of positive working relationships, referring to and expanding on the elements previously identified in *1.1 Activity: My Working Relationships*.

Present and review the **Elements of Positive Working Relationships** transparency **(T3)**, incorporating the class responses. Point out any similarities and discuss any differences.

- Assertive Communication
  ➥ Assertive communication focuses on creating mutually satisfying solutions.
- Active Listening
- Egalitarian
  ➥ No one person is in control of the relationship, all members of the relationship participate fully in all aspects of the relationship, including every step of the decision making process.
  ➥ The thoughts, feelings, opinions, and beliefs of one member of the working relationship are not believed to be superior or inferior to the thoughts, feelings, opinions, and beliefs of any other member's.
- Respect and Trust
  ➥ The thoughts, feelings, opinions, and beliefs of all members of the working relationship are given equal respect.
  ➥ All members of the working relationship are free to express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions without fear of judgment,

recrimination, or unjust criticism.
- Professionalism
- Understand the Role of Conflict
  - All members of the working relationship understand that conflict in the working relationship is inevitable, but is resolvable.
  - All members of the working relationship are committed to the equitable resolution of any conflict that arises.

Goal 2: Recognize the role of conflict in interpersonal relationships.

2.1 Lecture: The Nature of Conflict

When people with different personalities, backgrounds, communication styles, etc. work together, conflict will be a natural occurrence. Present and review the **The Nature of Conflict** transparency **(T4)**.

- Conflict is natural.
- Conflict is neither positive nor negative, it just is.
- Conflict is just an interference pattern of energies.
- In nature, conflict is the primary catalyst for change. For example, beaches, canyons, mountain ranges, and pearls are all a result of conflict in the environment.
- It's not whether you have conflict in your life, it's what you do with conflict when it arises that makes the difference.

We all have varying responses to conflict. However, in working relationships, it is important that all of the members of the relationship are aware of the different styles each of those involved use and learn strategies that will help in effectively resolving the situation rather than complicating it.

2.2 Activity: What Do You See?

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the how people differ in the way they perceive things.

2.2.1 Steps
- Present the **What Do You See?** transparency **(T5)**.
- Ask the participants to share with the class what they see. Possible responses may be:
  ➥ Arrows,
  ➥ Home plates,
  ➥ Three houses on their sides, and
  ➥ Two images of the letter "k."

2.2.2 Discussion: Perception and Conflict
Point out that it is common for people from varying backgrounds (cultural, socio-economic, education, etc.) to perceive a given situation differently, much like in this

activity. Sometimes, the differences in perception will lead to conflict.

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding experiences in which they have been involved in a conflict that resulted because of differences in perception.

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding ways in which conflict has affected their relationships. Point out that, like in this activity, different people will have different approaches and perceptions of conflict. If handled successfully, conflict can strengthen and build better relationships. Those who approach conflict with an open and committed attitude can help to foster honest, trusting, and productive relationships, in both personal and professional relationships.

2.3 Activity: Perception and Conflict

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the role of perception in conflict.

Note to Instructor: Information for this activity was adapted from Reaching Out: *Interpersonal Effeciveness and Self-Actualization* by David Johnson (1986).

2.3.1 Steps

- Have the participants break into groups by counting off by four: all 1's together, all 2's together, all 3's together, and all 4's together.
- Distribute the **Perception and Conflict** handouts **(H4/H5/H6/H7)** as follows.
  ➥ Group 1: **Perception and Conflict:** *Mirror Image* **(H4)**
  ➥ Group 2: **Perception and Conflict:** *Mote-Beam Mechanism* **(H5)**
  ➥ Group 3: **Perception and Conflict:** *Double Standard* **(H6)**
  ➥ Group 4: **Perception and Conflict:** *Polarized Thinking* **(H7)**
- Instruct the groups to read their assigned topic and to list two examples of the perception pattern.
- When finished, have the groups switch handouts as follows.
  ➥ Group 1's handout to Group 2.
  ➥ Group 2's handout to Group 3.
  ➥ Group 3's handout to Group 4.
  ➥ Group 4's handout to Group 1.
- Instruct the groups to read the handout and examples from the previous group.

- When finished, have the groups switch handouts in the same manner as before, ensuring they each have a new handout.
- As before, the groups should read the topic and examples, and add two of their own.
- Continue switching handouts until each group has provided two examples for each topic.
- When finished, have the groups switch handouts one last time, so that the original groups have their original handouts, as indicated above.
- Have the groups share their topic and subsequent examples for the handout they currently hold with the class.

2.3.2 Lecture: Further Understanding Perception and Conflict

Emphasize that in conflict situations, there are often perceptual distortions regarding your behavior and role in the conflict and the behavior and role of the other people (or person) involved. Such distortions are common and found in most conflict situations, whether the conflict is between two or more friends, co-workers, groups of people, or countries.

2.4 Lecture: Conflict as Beneficial

Present and review the **Conflict is Beneficial…** transparency **(T6)**. Conflict is beneficial:

- If the relationship is stronger, with all parties involved better able to interact and work with each other.
- If all parties involved like and trust each other more as a result.
- If all parties involved are satisfied with the resolution of the conflict.
- If all parties involved have an improved ability to resolve future conflicts with each other.

Point out that while conflict can refer to a fight between two or more people, it can also be used to describe situations in which two or more people have a common goal (e.g., at an IEP meeting) and need to work together to incorporate each person's ideas (whether conflicting or not) to meet that goal.

Goal 3: Demonstrate effective strategies for resolving conflict between two people.

3.1 Activity: How You Act in Conflict

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to examine their own skills regarding conflict.

3.1.1 Steps

- Distribute the **How You Act in Conflict** handout **(H8)**.
- Instruct the participants to complete the handout by reading each statement and evaluating how accurately it describes their attitudes toward conflict.
- When finished, have the participants calculate their score by transferring their ratings for each statement in the space provided, identifying which category (animal group) they scored highest in.
- Distribute the **Conflict Strategies: What Are You Like?** handout **(H9)** and allow the participants time to read through it.
- Have the participants break into groups according to the conflict strategy (animal group) that they use most frequently.
- Instruct the groups to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their conflict strategy.

3.1.2 Discussion: Does Your Strategy Work?

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding the strategy they most often use when dealing with conflict, using the following questions as a guide.

- Is your strategy working for you?
  - ➥ If so, in what ways?
  - ➥ If not, why?
- Would you like to change your strategy?
  - ➥ If so, what would you like to change?
  - ➥ If not, why?

3.2 Lecture: Steps to Resolving Conflict

Present and review the **Steps to Resolving Conflict** handout and transparency **(H10/T7)**.
- Step 1: Pause and take a deep breath.
  - ➥ Take a step back from the situation and let emotions cool down.
  - ➥ Put the conflict into perspective, preventing it from escalating.

- Step 2: Identify the problem and its source.
  - ➥ What do you think the problem is?
  - ➥ What do you think the source of the problem is?
  - ➥ What does the other person involved think the problem is?
  - ➥ What does the other person involved think the source of the problem is?
  - ➥ Working together, come to an agreement about what the problem is, and what the source of the problem is.
- Step 3: Determine your roles in the conflict.
  - ➥ What behaviors are you exhibiting that are contributing to the conflict?
  - ➥ What behaviors are being exhibited by the other person involved that are contributing the conflict?
  - ➥ How are you and the other person approaching the conflict?
    - ⇉ Avoidance
      - ◗ Serves only to allow people to cool off.
    - ⇉ Accommodation
      - ◗ Acts only on the surface and will result in the conflict arising again at some point in the future.
    - ⇉ Compromise
      - ◗ Each person involved in the conflict is willing to give up something in order to achieve a mutually acceptable resolution.
    - ⇉ Competition
      - ◗ Approaching the conflict with a competitive attitude rarely incorporates the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of all the parties involved. The person with the most power or authority in the relationship wins.
    - ⇉ Collaboration
      - ◗ A collaborative approach seeks cooperation and resolution in creative ways and aims to meet the needs of all those involved.
      - ◗ Working with all parties involved, come to an agreement about what the behaviors each party is exhibiting contribute to the problem.
- Step 4: Determine impact of the conflict.
  - ➥ How is the conflict affecting you?
  - ➥ How is the conflict affecting the other person involved?
  - ➥ How does the conflict affect people not directly involved?
- Step 5: Identify the best option available for resolution.

- ➥ Continue as is.
- ➥ Address the problem with those directly involved.
- ➥ Develop new ways to think about the problem.
- ➥ Identify all possible solutions to the problem, allowing each person involved to be fully heard.
- ➥ Weigh the pros and cons of each of the alternatives.
- ➥ Have each person involved identify what they see as the best solution for the problem and why.
- ➥ Come to an agreement about the best solution for the problem, one that meets the needs of all those involved.
- ▪ Step 6: Develop a plan of action.
  - ➥ Determine what will be required in order to effectively implement the solution.
  - ➥ Identify the roles and responsibilities of each person involved in implementing the solution.
  - ➥ Determine the resources required to successfully implement the solution, what resources are available, and how to obtain access to those resources still needed.
  - ➥ Develop a time line for implementation of the solution.
  - ➥ Determine what criteria will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.
  - ➥ Set a time for all parties involved to meet and evaluate the progress being made, the effectiveness of the solution, and any other issues that have arisen related to the original conflict.

3.3 Activity: Resolving Conflict Between Two People

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to gain experience using the steps for conflict resolution as they apply to conflict between two people.

3.3.1 Steps
- ▪ Have participants break into pairs.
- ▪ Distribute the **Steps for Conflict Resolution: *Scenario for Conflict Between Two People* handout (H11)**.
- ▪ With one member of each pair taking on one of the two roles, instruct the pairs to complete the handout by reading their respective roles and working through each of the steps for conflict resolution. The participants may refer to the **Steps to Resolving Conflict** handout **(H10)** as necessary.
- ▪ When finished, have the pairs share their responses to each step with the

class, pointing out those steps which seemed to be more challenging than the others.

Goal 4: Demonstrate effective strategies for resolving group conflict.

4.1 Activity: Hidden Squares

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to begin to think about approaching problems from a different perspective and the individual parts of a given situation.

4.1.1 Steps

- Present the **How Many Squares Do You See?** transparency **(T8)**.
- Give the participants time to count and record the number of squares they see in the image.
- When finished, ask the participants to share the number of squares they were able to see in the image, recording their responses on a blank transparency.
- Using the transparency, review the actual number and breakdown of the squares in the image by tracing or shading the squares with different colors of overhead markers.
  - Total Number: 30
    - One large square,
    - Sixteen smaller squares,
    - Nine squares containing four small squares, and
    - Four squares containing nine small squares.

4.1.2 Discussion: Getting the Right Answer

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding why people saw different numbers of squares, using the following questions as a guide.

- Why don't we always get the right answer?
- What factors prevent us from easily obtaining a correct answer?
  - Possible responses include:
    - We stop at the first answer.
    - We work too fast.
- How is this task like other problems we face?
  - Ensure the participants understand that group conflict involves many smaller parts, which all come together to comprise the whole.
- Why do people in group situations arrive at different conclusions about the same situation?
- What can we learn from this activity that can be applied to group

conflict situations?

4.2 Activity: Resolving Group Conflict

Paraeducators will participate in an activity that provides an opportunity to gain experience using the steps for conflict resolution as they apply to conflict between two people.

4.2.1 Steps

- Have participants break into groups of four.
- Distribute the **Steps for Conflict Resolution: Scenarios for Resolving Group Conflict** handout **(H12)**.
- Distribute four copies of the **Steps for Group Conflict Resolution** handout **(H13)** to each participant.
- Distribute the **Conflict Resolution Observation Form** handout **(H14)**.
- Instruct the group members to each take on one of the four roles for each of the four scenarios, ensuring that each member takes on *Role 4: Observer* once.
- Instruct the groups to complete the handouts by reading their respective roles and working through each of the steps for conflict resolution. The group member in the role of observer should observe and take notes on the process using the **Conflict Resolution Observation Form** handout **(H14)**. The participants may refer to the **Steps to Resolving Conflict** handout **(H10)** as necessary.
- When finished, distribute four copies of the **Post-Decision Questionnaire** and **Constructive Conflict Checklist** handouts **(H15/H16)** to each participant.
- Instruct the participants to complete the handouts on their own, reflecting on each of the scenarios separately.
- When finished, have the group members share their responses with each other, discussing those points that they felt were more difficult than others.

4.2.2 Discussion: Further Understanding Group Conflict Resolution

Engage the participants in a discussion regarding their experiences in this activity. Ask the groups to share their discussions about the process of resolving group conflict.

Discuss the ways in which resolving group conflict varied from resolving conflict between two people, referring to **3.4 Activity: Resolving Conflict Between Two People**. Use the following questions as a guide.

- What were the differences in each of the steps between resolving group conflict and conflict between two people?
- Regarding group conflict resolution, which elements were easier and why?
- Regarding conflict resolution between two people, which elements were easier and why?

Module C Handouts

Module C: Conflict Management and Problem Solving

1.   Identify characteristics of effective interpersonal relationships in the work place.

2.   Recognize the role of conflict in interpersonal relationships.

3.   Demonstrate effective strategies for resolving conflict between two people.

4.   Demonstrate effective strategies for resolving group conflict.

My Working Relationships

My Working Relationships	What I Value

Opportunities in My Working Relationships

My Working Relationships	Goals for Improvement

Perception and Conflict: *Mirror Image*

It is common in conflict situations that both persons believe that they are right and the other person is wrong, that they want a fair solution and the other person does not. Each person feels as though they are the innocent victim under attack by an unreasonable and evil enemy.

Examples:

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Perception and Conflict: *Mote-Beam Mechanism*

In most conflicts, both people are blind to their own acts of viciousness, while being keenly aware of and upset by the behaviors of the other person.

Examples:

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Perception and Conflict: *Double Standard*

Sometimes, both people are aware that they are each engaging in identical behavior and have the tendency to feel that it is fine for them, but not for the other person to do it.

Examples:

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Perception and Conflict: *Polarized Thinking*

Often in conflict situations, both people believe that everything they do is right and everything the other person does is wrong.

Examples:

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How You Act in Conflicts

The proverbs listed below can be thought of as descriptions of some of the different strategies for resolving conflicts. Proverbs state traditional wisdom, and these proverbs reflect traditional wisdom for resolving conflicts. Read each of the proverbs carefully. Using the following scale, indicate how typical each proverb is of your actions in a conflict.

Score:

5 = very typical of the way I act in a conflict
4 = frequently typical of the way I act in a conflict
3 = sometimes typical of the way I act in a conflict
2 = seldom typical of the way I act in a conflict
1 = never typical of the way I act in a conflict

———— 1. It is easier to refrain than to retreat from a quarrel.
———— 2. If you cannot make a person think as you do, make them do as you think.
———— 3. Soft words win hearts.
———— 4. You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours.
———— 5. Come now and let us reason together.
———— 6. When two quarrel, the person who keeps silent first is the most praiseworthy.
———— 7. Might overcomes right.
———— 8. Smooth words make smooth ways.
———— 9. Better half a loaf than no bread at all.
———— 10. Truth lies in knowledge, not in majority opinion.
———— 11. He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day.
———— 12. He hath conquered well that hath made his enemies flee.
———— 13. Kill your enemies with kindness.
———— 14. A fair exchange brings no quarrel.
———— 15. No person has the final answer but every person has a piece to contribute.
———— 16. Stay away from people who disagree with you.
———— 17. Fields are won by those who believe in winning.
———— 18. Kind words are worth much and cost little.
———— 19. Tit for tat is fair play.
———— 20. Only the person who is willing to give up his or her monopoly on truth can ever profit from the truths that others hold.

How You Act in Conflicts
(continued)

_____ 21. Avoid quarrelsome people as they will make your life miserable.
_____ 22. A person who will flee will make others flee.
_____ 23. Soft words ensure harmony.
_____ 24. One gift for another makes good friends.
_____ 25. Bring your conflicts out into the open and face them directly; only then will the best solution be discovered.
_____ 26. The best way of handling conflicts is to avoid them.
_____ 27. Put your foot down where you mean to stand.
_____ 28. Gentleness will triumph over anger.
_____ 29. Getting part of what you want is better than not getting anything at all.
_____ 30. Frankness, honesty, and trust will move mountains.
_____ 31. There is nothing so important you have to fight for it.
_____ 32. There are two kinds of people in the world, the winners and the losers.
_____ 33. When one hits you with a stone, hit him or her with a piece of cotton.
_____ 34. When both give in halfway, a fair settlement is achieved.
_____ 35. By digging and digging, the truth is discovered.

Scoring:

Withdrawing	Forcing	Smoothing	Compromising	Confronting
_____ 1.	_____ 2.	_____ 3.	_____ 4.	_____ 5.
_____ 6.	_____ 7.	_____ 8.	_____ 9.	_____ 10.
_____ 11.	_____ 12.	_____ 13.	_____ 14.	_____ 15.
_____ 16.	_____ 17.	_____ 18.	_____ 19.	_____ 20.
_____ 21.	_____ 22.	_____ 23.	_____ 24.	_____ 25.
_____ 26.	_____ 27.	_____ 28.	_____ 29.	_____ 30.
_____ 31.	_____ 32.	_____ 33.	_____ 34.	_____ 35.
_____ total	_____ total	_____ total	_____ total	_____ total

The higher the score for each conflict strategy, the more frequently you tend to use that strategy. The lower the total score for each conflict strategy, the less frequently you tend to use that strategy.

Conflict Strategies: What Are You Like?

Different people use different strategies for managing conflicts. These strategies are usually learned in childhood and they seem to function automatically. Typically, we are not aware of how we act in conflict situations, we just do whatever comes natural. But, we do have a personal strategy and because it was learned, we can always change it by learning new and more effective ways of managing conflicts.

When you become engaged in a conflict, there are two major concerns you should take into account:

1. **Achieving Your Personal Goals:** You are in conflict because you have a goal that conflicts with another person's goal. Your goal may be highly important to you, or it may be of little importance.

2. **Keeping a Good Relationship With the Other Person:** You may need to be able to interact effectively with the other person in the future. The relationship may be very important to you, or it may be of little importance.

How important your personal goals and the relationship are to you affect how you act in conflict. Given these two concerns, it is possible to identify five styles of managing conflicts.

1. **The Turtle (withdrawing)**

Turtles withdraw into their shells to avoid conflicts. They give up their personal goals and relationships. They stay away from issues over which conflict is taking place and from the persons they are in conflict with. Turtles believe it is hopeless to try to resolve conflicts. They feel helpless. They believe it is easier to withdraw (physically and psychologically) from a conflict than to face it.

2. **The Shark (forcing)**

Sharks try to overpower opponents by forcing them to accept their solution to the conflict. Their goals are highly important to them, and relationships are of minor importance. They seek to achieve goals at all costs. They are not concerned with the needs of others. They do not care if others like or accept them. Sharks assume that conflicts are settled by one person winning and one person losing. They want to be the winner. Winning gives sharks a sense of pride and achievement. Losing gives them a sense of weakness, inadequacy, and failure. They try to win by attacking, overpowering, overwhelming, and intimidating others.

Conflict Strategies: What Are You Like?
(continued)

3. The Teddy Bear (smoothing)

To Teddy Bears, the relationship is of great importance while their own goals are of little importance. Teddy Bears want to be accepted and liked by others. They think that conflict should be avoided in favor of harmony and that people cannot discuss conflicts without damaging relationships. They are afraid that if the conflict continues, someone will get hurt and the relationship will be ruined. They give up their goals to preserve the friendship. Teddy Bears say, "I'll give up my goals and let you have what you want, in order for you to like me." Teddy Bears try to smooth over conflict out of a fear of harming the relationship.

4. The Fox (compromising)

Foxes are moderately concerned with their own goals and their relationships with others. Foxes seek a compromise, they give up part of their goals and persuade the other person in the conflict to give up part of his goals. They seek a conflict solution in which both sides gain something in the middle ground between the two extreme positions. They are willing to sacrifice part of their goals and relationships in order to find agreement for the common good.

5. The Owl (confronting)

Owls highly value their own goals and relationships. They view conflicts as problems to be solved and seek a solution that achieves both their own goals and the goals of the other person. Owls see conflicts as a means to improve relationships by reducing tension between two persons. They try to begin a discussion that identifies the conflict as a problem. By seeking solutions that satisfy both themselves and the other person, Owls maintain the relationship. Owls are not satisfied until a solution is found that achieves their own goals and the other person's goals. They are not satisfied until the tension and negative feelings have been fully resolved.

Steps to Resolving Conflict

Step 1: *Pause and take a deep breath.*
- Take a step back from the situation and let emotions cool down.
- Put the conflict into perspective, preventing it from escalating.

Step 2: *Identify the problem and its source.*
- What do you think the problem is?
- What do you think the source of the problem is?
- What does the other person involved think the problem is?
- What does the other person involved think the source of the problem is?
- Working together, come to an agreement about what the problem is, and what the source of the problem is.

Step 3: *Determine your roles in the conflict.*
- What behaviors are you exhibiting that are contributing to the conflict?
- What behaviors are being exhibited by the other perosn involved that are contributing the conflict?
- How are you and the other person approaching the conflict?
  - Avoidance
    - Serves only to allow people to cool off.
  - Accommodation
    - Acts only on the surface and will result in the conflict arising again at some point in the future.
  - Compromise
    - Each person involved in the conflict is willing to give up something in order to achieve a mutually acceptable resolution.
  - Competition
    - Approaching the conflict with a competitive attitude rarely incorporates the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of all the parties involved. The person with the most power or authority in the relationship wins.
  - Collaboration
    - A collaborative approach seeks cooperation and resolution in creative ways and aims to meet the needs of all those involved.
- Working together, come to an agreement about what the behaviors each of you is exhibiting contribute to the problem.

Steps to Resolving Conflict
(continued)

Step 4: *Determine impact of the conflict.*
- How is the conflict affecting you?
- How is the conflict affecting the other person involved?
- How does the conflict affect people not directly involved?

Step 5: *Identify the best option available for resolution.*
- Continue as is.
- Address the problem with those directly involved.
- Develop new ways to think about the problem.
- Identify all possible solutions to the problem, allowing each person involved to be fully heard.
- Weigh the pros and cons of each of the alternatives.
- Have each person involved identify what they see as the best solution for the problem and why.
- Come to an agreement about the best solution for the problem, one that meets the needs of all those involved.

Step 6: *Develop a plan of action.*
- Determine what will be required in order to effectively implement the solution.
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of each person involved in implementing the solution.
- Determine the resources required to successfully implement the solution, what resources are available, and how to obtain access to those resources still needed.
- Develop a time line for implementation of the solution.
- Determine what criteria will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.
- Set a time for all parties involved to meet and evaluate the progress being made, the effectiveness of the solution, and any other issues that have arisen related to the original conflict.

Steps for Conflict Resolution: *Scenario for Conflict Between Two People*

Paraprofessional

I am Sara Tilson, and I have been a paraeducator for almost 20 years. I started working in an elementary school and did lunchroom duty, monitored the playground, and helped the teacher in the classroom. About 18 years ago, the principal asked me how I would feel about working in a new program, something called Special Education. I've been here since before PL 94-142. I've worked in several special education classes, everything from programs for kids with severe and multiple disabilities to resource rooms. I've seen teachers come and go. I'm still around because I love working with children. I've also made a lot of good friends in the building, and over the years I've had a chance to learn about what does and does not work.

I've worked with some really great teachers and some that were not so good. In some cases, I was the one who had to do all the dirty work or the jobs that bored them, even though my title is Instructional Assistant. They were being "good" to me by treating me as an equal with the same responsibilities, even though I'm paid far less. The folks that really drive me crazy are the ones "who had all the answers" and expected me to follow their rules to the "T." Despite these problems, if they were willing to take time to get to know me and discuss their expectations, we were usually able to work out our differences and get along well.

This year I've been assigned to work with a new teacher fresh out of college with no experience and lots of new theories and bright ideas, Mrs. Burrell. On the first day of school, we met and she outlined what she wanted me to do. Basically, as I see it, she expects me to return to the status I had when I first started working 20 years ago! I am supposed to escort the kids to the lunchroom, the playground, speech therapy, etc.; keep the attendance records; do the toileting; keep the room neat; and, generally stay out of her way. She does let me play records and tell stories during rest period.

Now, she has developed a "new" program plan for James and all of a sudden has asked me to help implement it. I don't think it's going to work because Mrs. Arthur tried something similar last year and had to change it several times. (Mrs. Arthur was one of the best teachers I've ever worked with, great sense of humor; always included me in the fun things; changed diapers herself once in a while because she believed that toilet training was part of the instructional process; asked me what I thought about her ideas and what was going on in class; and when I talked, she listened.)

I'd like to speak to Ms. Burrell about James, but I've got a couple of problems. She hasn't asked me what I think and really seems more interested in trying her theories than in hearing from me. In fact, if I had to describe her, I'd say she is very dictatorial. Besides, the older I get, the nicer it is to just do my job and go home rather than taking orders from someone who doesn't know half as much as I do about teaching. On the other hand, with a few minor changes, the goals and activities she's planned would probably work.

Steps for Conflict Resolution: *Scenario for Conflict Between Two People*
(continued)

Teacher

My name is Anne Burrell, and this is my first teaching job. My undergraduate degree is in early childhood education and I have a Master's in Special Education. I have had some teaching experience, but only as a student teacher. I've really been looking forward to being in charge of my own classroom, and putting the techniques I've worked so hard to learn to work. There was on thing, however, that no one prepared me for when I was in college - that is that I would be expected to supervise someone old enough to be my mother who also has more than 20 years experience. (I do think I'm lucky to have an aide to help out with all of the little things that have to be done in the classroom so I can spend a lot of individual time with the students.)

I really feel that as the teacher, I am the person who is responsible for what goes on in the classroom and that I will be held accountable for the good and the bad. That is why after thinking it over, I decided that the best way to use my aide was to have her do the non-instructional chores and clerical duties. Since Sara is so much older that I am and really has a lot of experience, I decided that it was very important to establish myself as the authority figure. This isn't always easy because working with Sara can be a little intimidating. She really gets along well with the other teachers in the building, and they all rave about her and tell me how lucky I am to have her.

There is a child in the class who seems to fit an almost textbook picture of a syndrome that I've read about - but have never seen. I'm sure that he will benefit from a new technique that has been developed to cope with such a youngster and his behavior. I have laid out, in great detail, the type of interventions that I want to use and have started to follow the program. I've decided, however, that if it is going to work Sara is going to have to be involved as well because everything has to be done consistently and systematically.

When I asked her to help implement the program - she didn't ask any questions or say anything - she just smiled a Mona Lisa smile. Later that day she started telling me about how terrific Mrs. Arthur was and what good ideas she had. She's done this before and I'm getting a little tired of it. In any event, I'm really more concerned about James and meeting his needs. I'd like to talk to Sara about it. But I don't want her to think I don't know what I'm doing and I certainly don't want to diminish my authority in the classroom.

Steps for Conflict Resolution: *Scenario for Conflict Between Two People*
(continued)

Step 1: *Pause and take a deep breath.*

Step 2: *Identify the problem and its source.*
- What do you think the problem is?

- What do you think the source of the problem is?

- What does the other person involved think the problem is?

- What does the other person involved think the source of the problem is?

- Working together, come to an agreement about what the problem is, and what the source of the problem is.

Step 3: *Determine your roles in the conflict.*
- What behaviors are you exhibiting that are contributing to the conflict?

- What behaviors are being exhibited by the other person involved that are contributing the conflict?

- How are you and the other person approaching the conflict?

- Working together, come to an agreement about what the behaviors each of you is exhibiting contribute to the problem.

Steps for Conflict Resolution: *Scenario for Conflict Between Two People*
(continued)

Step 4: *Determine impact of the conflict.*
- How is the conflict affecting you?

- How is the conflict affecting the other person involved?

- How does the conflict affect people not directly involved?

Step 5: *Identify the best option available for resolution.*
- Identify all possible solutions to the problem, allowing each person involved to be fully heard.

- Weigh the pros and cons of each of the alternatives.

- Have each person involved identify what they see as the best solution for the problem and why.

- Come to an agreement about the best solution for the problem, one that meets the needs of all those involved.

Steps for Conflict Resolution: *Scenario for Conflict Between Two People*
(continued)

Step 6: *Develop a plan of action.*

- Determine what will be required in order to effectively implement the solution.

- Identify the roles and responsibilities of each person involved in implementing the solution.

- Determine the resources required to successfully implement the solution, what resources are available, and how to obtain access to those resources still needed.

- Develop a time line for implementation of the solution.

- Determine what criteria will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.

- Set a time for all parties involved to meet and evaluate the progress being made, the effectiveness of the solution, and any other issues that have arisen related to the original conflict.

Steps for Conflict Resolution: *Scenarios for Resolving Group Conflict*

Scenario 1

Role 1: Special Education Teacher

- You have given specific instructions and adaptations to the paraeducator regarding Mary's Language Arts class.

Role 2: Paraeducator

- The Special Education teacher has given you specific instructions and adaptations for Mary's Language Arts class. However, the Language Arts teacher has decided that they are not appropriate and she wants you to do something different. You need to somehow meet the needs of the student and work within the directions of both teachers.

Role 3: Language Arts teacher

- You have seen the instructions and adaptations given to the paraeducator by Mary's special education teacher and feel they are inappropriate. You have given alternative instructions to the paraeducator.

Role 4: Observer

- Complete observation form.

Scenario 2

Role 1, 2, & 3: Paraeducator

- There are several paraeducators that work with the same student, Bill. Three of you disagree about how best to motivate him to use his communication device. You need to agree upon how to get Bill to successfully use his device with all of you.

Role 4: Observer

- Complete the observation form.

Steps for Conflict Resolution: *Scenarios for Resolving Group Conflict*
(continued)

Scenario 3

Jason has begun to exhibit some aggressive behaviors through out the day. At a team meeting the behaviors are brought up. The team needs to determine what is causing the behaviors and develop an appropriate course of action to address the behavior.

Role 1: Team Member 1
- You are adamant that Jason be suspended from school.

Role 2: Team Member 2
- You feel that Jason should not be suspended, but should still recieve some form of punishment in order to learn that his behavior is inappropriate.

Role 3: Team Member 3
- You would like to be able to manage Jason's behavior without coercion by emphasizing personal responsibility and self-discipline.

Role 4: Observer
- Complete observation form.

Scenario 4

A meeting is held to determine goals for Magdelena, whose primary language is Spanish and is new to the school. None of the participants in the meeting have come with a preconceived notion of what the plan should look like.

Role 1: Magdelena's Classroom Teacher

Role 2: A Paraeducator Who will be Working with Magdelena

Role 3: Magdelena's Parent

Role 4: Observer
Complete observation form.

Steps for Group Conflict Resolution

Step 1: *Pause and take a deep breath.*

Step 2: *Identify the problem and its source.*
- What do you think the problem is?

- What do you think the source of the problem is?

- What do the other people involved think the problem is?

- What do the other people involved think the source of the problem is?

- Working together, come to an agreement about what the problem is, and what the source of the problem is.

Step 3: *Determine your roles in the conflict.*
- What behaviors are you exhibiting that are contributing to the conflict?

- What behaviors are being exhibited by the other people involved that are contributing the conflict?

- How are you and the other people approaching the conflict?

- Working together, come to an agreement about what the behaviors each of you is exhibiting contribute to the problem.

Steps for Group Conflict Resolution
(continued)

Step 4: *Determine impact of the conflict.*

- How is the conflict affecting you?

- How is the conflict affecting the other people involved?

- How does the conflict affect people not directly involved?

Step 5: *Identify the best option available for resolution.*

- Identify all possible solutions to the problem, allowing each person involved to be fully heard.

- Weigh the pros and cons of each of the alternatives.

- Have each person involved identify what they see as the best solution for the problem and why.

- Come to an agreement about the best solution for the problem, one that meets the needs of all those involved.

Steps for Group Conflict Resolution
(continued)

Step 6: *Develop a plan of action.*

- Determine what will be required in order to effectively implement the solution.

- Identify the roles and responsibilities of each person involved in implementing the solution.

- Determine the resources required to successfully implement the solution, what resources are available, and how to obtain access to those resources still needed.

- Develop a time line for implementation of the solution.

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- Set a time for all parties involved to meet and evaluate the progress being made, the effectiveness of the solution, and any other issues that have arisen related to the original conflict.

Conflict Resolution Observation Form

Behaviors	Role 1	Role 2	Role 3
Contributed ideas and opinions.			
Asked others for their ideas and opinions.			
Emphasized mutual goals.			
Empahsized win-lose competition.			
Asked others for proof, facts, and rationale.			
Used paraphrases and summaries.			
Cirticized and disagreed with the ideas of others.			
Differentiated positions.			
Integrated positions.			
Other			

Post-Decision Questionnaire

To what extent did the other members of the group listen to and understand your ideas?

Not at All   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   *Completely*

How much influence do you feel you had on the group's decision?

None   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   *Quite a Bit*

To what extent do you feel committed to and responsible for the group's decision?

Not at All   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   *Completely*

To what extent are you satisfied with your group's performance?

Not at All   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   *Completely*

How much did you learn about the issue under discussion?

Nothing   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   *Quite a Bit*

Write two adjectives describing that way you feel now.

Constructive Conflict Checklist

T F 1. There was no winner or loser, only a successful, creative, and productive solution.

T F 2. The cooperativeness of group members outweighed their competitiveness.

T F 3. Disagreements among member's positions were initiated.

T F 4. All members actively participated in the group discussions, sharing their information, conclusions, and perspectives.

T F 5. Every member's contributions were listened to, respected, and taken seriously.

T F 6. Effective communication skills were used, including paraphrasing, effective listening skills, "I"-messages, etc.

T F 7. Issues and problems were viewed from all available perspectives.

T F 8. Group members criticized ideas and positions, not individuals. Members disagreed with each other while confirming each other's competence.

T F 9. Group members viewed disagreement as an interesting situation from which something could be learned, not as personal rejection or a sign that they were being perceived as incompetent or ignorant.

T F 10. There was appropriate pacing of differentiation and integration of member's positions. Differentiation took place first, followed by integration.

T F 11. Emotions were allowed and members were encouraged to express them.

T F 12. The rules of rational argument were followed. Members presented organized information to support their positions, reasoned logically, and changed their minds when others presented persuasive and convincing arguments and proof.

T F 13. The arguments of all members were given equal consideration, regardless of how much formal power a member had.

Module C Transparencies

Module C: Conflict Management and Problem Solving

- *Identify characteristics of effective interpersonal relationships in the work place.*

- *Recognize the role of conflict in interpersonal relationships.*

- *Demonstrate effective strategies for resolving conflict between two people.*

- *Demonstrate effective strategies for resolving group conflict.*

Elements of Negative Working Relationships

- *Ineffective Approaches to Communication*

- *Ineffective Listening Skills*

- *Ethno/Egocentric Attitudes*

- *Manipulation*

- *Dishonesty*

- *Unprofessional*

Elements of Positive Working Relationships

The PAR·A Center

- ▪ *Assertive Communication*

- ▪ *Active Listening*

- ▪ *Egalitarian*

- ▪ *Respect and Trust*

- ▪ *Professionalism*

- ▪ *Understand the Role of Conflict*

The Nature of Conflict

- *Conflict is natural.*

- *Conflict is neither positive nor negative, it just is.*

- *Conflict is just an interference pattern of energies.*

- *In nature, conflict is the primary catalyst for change.*

- *It's not whether you have conflict in your life, it's what you do with conflict when it arises that makes the difference.*

What Do You See?
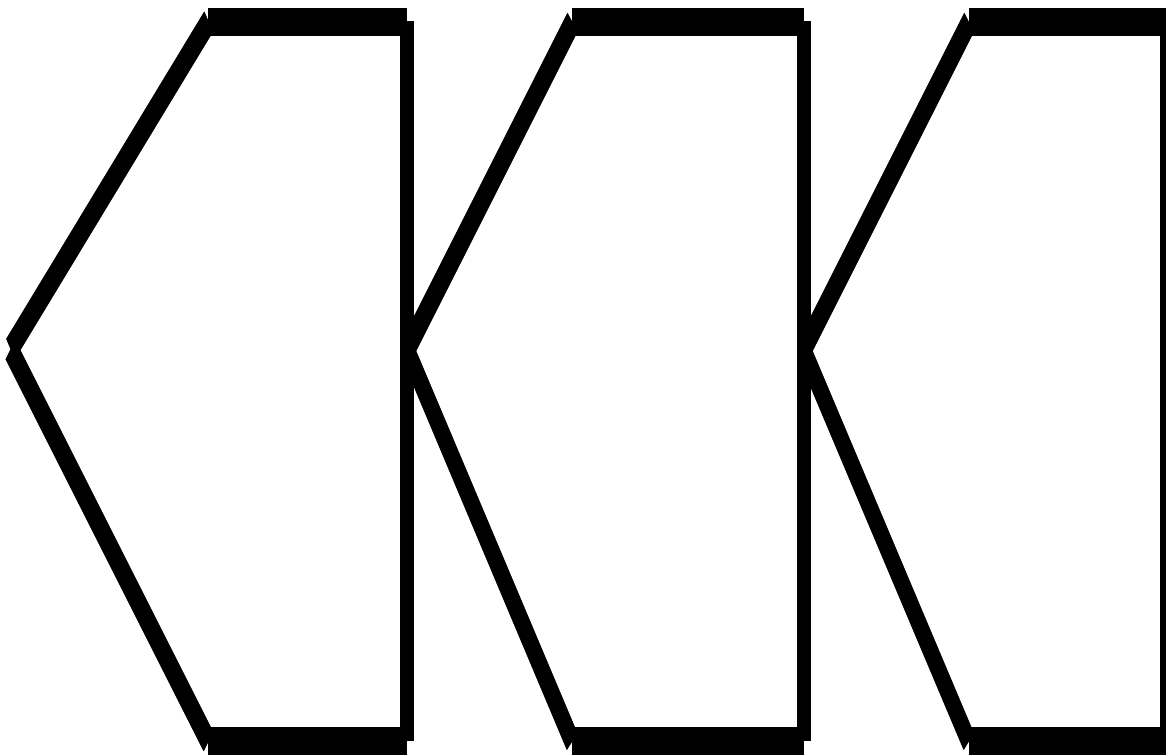
Conflict is Beneficial…

- *If the relationship is stronger, with all parties involved better able to interact and work with each other.*

- *If all parties involved like and trust each other more as a result.*

- *If all parties involved are satisfied with the resolution of the conflict.*

- *If all parties involved have an improved ability to resolve future conflicts with each other.*

Steps to Resolving Conflict

- *Step 1: Pause and take a deep breath.*

- *Step 2: Identify the problem and its source.*

- *Step 3: Determine your roles in the conflict.*

- *Step 4: Determine impact of the conflict.*

- *Step 5: Identify the best option available for resolution.*

- *Step 6: Develop a plan of action.*

How Many Squares Do You See?

The PAR²A Center

Interpersonal Skills Academy
Resource List

Interpersonal Skills Academy
Resource List

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