# Communication

<u>Duration</u>: 90 min (classroom, excluded exploitations) or 3 hours – self-paced

<u>Learning Outcome</u>: Promote open and conscious communication, to learn about benefits of a "good" communication, to acquire some important communication skills, to learn how to reflect communication

Energizer:

1. Watch the Introduction video
2. Fulfil the task 1
3. Fulfil gamification task 1

Main activity

1. Watch the feedback video
2. Fulfil gamification task 2
3. Fulfil gamification task 3

Evaluation

1. Finish the self-assessment test

Exploitation

1. Fulfil the home task 1
2. Fill in the final part of the module with the homework results and earn points

# The Guidelines for adult education professionals

## Phase 1 Energizer (30 min)

The Module starts with a short introduction video about the importance of an adequate communication, e.g. in business, with neighbours or friends (see the introduction video transcript)

After watching this video, the participants should draw a mind-map. The idea is to collect important communication situations in their life in a first step (At least five aspects). Then, in a second step they should evaluate which situation they need to improve (take a look at own strengths and weaknesses).

Hints and Tips for educators:

> Add further examples to make it easier for the participants to get started - if necessary, a short collection of communication occasions in the plenary is supportive.

> Encourage everyone to use practical situations and not only theoretical solution.

> Advise participants to use a mind-map.

> Strengths and weaknesses could be emphasised e.g. in the mind-map by using green and red colours. This way the evaluation is possible at a glance afterwards.

> Remind participants that they can watch the videos more often and set the speed of Youtube sources slower. Also, you can select automatic translation in the settings there.

Gamification Task 1:

Order – What is the most complicate communication situation?

Business communication – Communication with friends or family – Communication with a partner – Communication with unknown people – Small Talk – Communication about feelings or emotions - Directly addressing improprieties

## Phase 2 Main activity (40 min)

Let's focus on business communication. Watch the Main activity video at first.

Participants can watch the following second video as an example of professional communication with feedback. The video shows good examples and how to improve feedback skills. Take a look how they talk to each other.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKuPf4H34pU

Hints and Tips for educators:

> Use the two videos to introduce the main-activity

> Try to motivate participants to watch the YouTube-video for a second time and see a connection between the first and the present task

> For the discussion part in class the educator can ask for other recommendations or challenges. Participants can share their thoughts about and experiences in communication after watching the video.
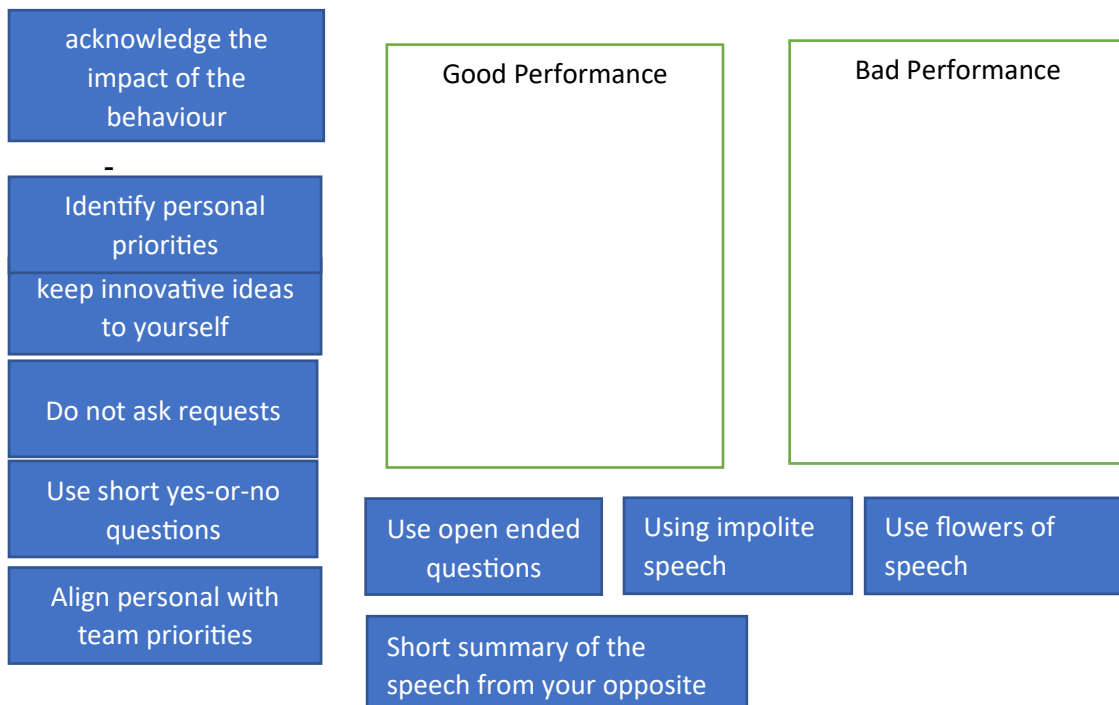
Remind participants that they can watch the videos more often and set the speed of Youtube sources slower. Also, you can select automatic translation in the settings there.

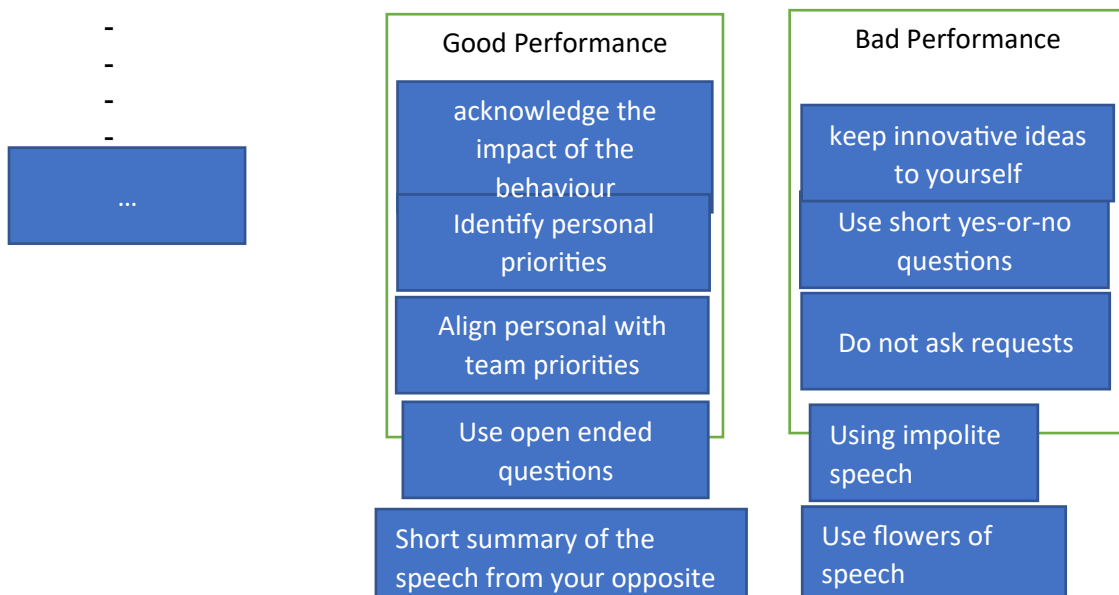In addition - Different interactive tasks could be implemented in the class:

- o Use role plays – one person talks always about the same easy to play topic (e.g. give feedback about being late) and the other switches between different emotions about it. Try to say the same content in different ways and reflect with each other the different reaction and emotions. How does it feel?

Gamification Task 2

After watching the video content, go on to the following gamification task that refers to the video with the business communication. The blue text boxes appear on the screen and must be assigned by the participant to either a good or a bad performance.

| acknowledge the impact of the behaviour | Good Performance | Bad Performance |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Identify personal priorities | | |
| keep innovative ideas to yourself | | |
| Do not ask requests | | |
| Use short yes-or-no questions | | |
| Align personal with team priorities | | |

| Use open ended questions | Using impolite speech | Use flowers of speech |
| --- | --- | --- |

Short summary of the speech from your opposite

Here you can see the solution:

-
-
-
-

...

**Good Performance**

acknowledge the impact of the behaviour

Identify personal priorities

Align personal with team priorities

Use open ended questions

Short summary of the speech from your opposite

**Bad Performance**

keep innovative ideas to yourself

Use short yes-or-no questions

Do not ask requests

Using impolite speech

Use flowers of speech

Gamification task 3

Fill in the gaps – the yellow words are named in the online version. Participants have to fill in the right word in the correct gap. Moreover, there is one free answer.

Diverse – feedback - good communication - of their position – norms – targeted – open – gaps – difficult – cooperation – curious - many tips and rules - practise a bit more - mind-map

When I think about communication I think about _____ (free answer). However, a closer look reveals how _____ conversational situations are in everyday life. Especially the _____ questions are important for a feedback discussion. It is important to align one's own priorities with those of the team members, both for _____ and for good_____. It takes training to give _____ to someone else. That's why you shouldn't let the _____ unsettle you, but train a few in a _____ manner. After _____ situations, ask yourself why your counterpart might have reacted in this way. You may develop an understanding _____, values and _____. Maybe you put the _____ from this module aside, maybe you extend the next exercise all by yourself and_____. After all the _____, don't forget to read the whole text at the end of the task again and be _____ about the last task of the module.

Here you can see the correct solution:

When I think about communication I think about _____ (free answer). However, a closer look reveals how diverse conversational situations are in everyday life. Especially the open questions are important for a feedback discussion. It is important to align one's own priorities with those of the team members, both for good communication and for good cooperation. It takes training to give feedback to someone else. That's why you shouldn't let the many tips and rules unsettle you, but train a few in a targeted manner. After difficult situations, ask yourself why your counterpart might have reacted in this way. You may develop an understanding of their position, values and norms. Maybe you put the mind-map from this module aside, maybe you extend the next exercise all by yourself and practise a bit more. After all the gaps, don't forget to read the whole text at the end of the task again and be curious about the last task of the module.

Hints and Tips for educators:

In the self-learning part participants should reflect on interactive task one after they have finished the gamification task 2/3. Participants may find recommendations or challenges in addition to their previous thought based on the new information from the video. Feel free to add them in your documentation (e.g. mind-map).

# Phase 3 Evaluation (10 min)

Hints and Tips for educators:

3 Points are the most valuable answer.

If you don't want to use the online tool you need to mix the answer options to make it not too easy for participants

Self-evaluation-test:

1. I always give feedback
(1) When I get really upset to vent my anger directly
(2) In a spontaneous and intuitive way
(3) When it is necessary. And at best when I asked for permission

2. Communication is something
(1) That is easily to train in a perfect way
(2) That follows special rules
(3) Very various, where training takes time

3. Thinking about weaknesses…
(1) …is always a reduction of self-confidence.
(2) …is part of the training
(3) …helps you to reflect your communication skills and train special things

4. Requests are
(1) Unfriendly
(2) That you don't get the point
(3) Important for a good performance

5. My communication skills are
(1) Very well developed
(2) I train in each situation, to get better
(3) Work in progress

6. Communication…
(1) …Is the same thing as collaboration.
(2) …Is also an important 21th century skill
(3) …Goes often hand in hand with the 21th century skill collaboration.

7. I think I'm going to train
(1) As much as I can
(2) By watching videos
(3) At first my identified weaknesses

8. While I was doing this module
(1) I thought I already know about the content
(2) I got a different view on communication
(3) I reflected my own communication skills

*24 points in total*

*24-16 = excellent*

*16-8 = acceptable*

*8-0 = maybe you can repeat parts of the module*

# Phase 4 Exploitation (10 min)

As previously announced, the participants are asked to reflect specifically on their communication over the next two weeks. In which communication situation do they get in? What difficulties arise, what went well and what could perhaps be deepened? Start a self-learning-based training.

When selecting the training situations, it is recommended to be guided by the individual strengths and weaknesses already mentioned in this module.

Now as a "homework", collect 5 particularly good formulations in difficult conversational situations such as expressing criticism, bringing up new ideas or deciding to confront your named weaknesses.

Think about verbal communication, nonverbal communication or E-Mail communication.

|    | Situation                   | Formulation                                                                                                                        |
|----|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Ask for quietness and privacy | "I am tired I need some silence and time for myself. Can you talk somewhere else?" - instead of: "Please just leave me alone and be quiet" |
| 2  | …                           | …                                                                                                                                 |
| 3  |                             |                                                                                                                                   |
| 4  |                             |                                                                                                                                   |
| 5  |                             |                                                                                                                                   |
| 6  |                             |                                                                                                                                   |
| 7  |                             |                                                                                                                                   |
| 8  |                             |                                                                                                                                   |
| 9  |                             |                                                                                                                                   |
| 10 |                             |                                                                                                                                   |

Hints and Tips for educator:

Encourage everyone to really pass this situation and not only theoretical solution.

Distribute a piece of paper to each participant before they leave the class (see above). The paper should already give some idea of the task, e.g. it can have a placeholder for the chosen communication situation and 5 lines for the corresponding formulations. You can also use online solutions like "trello board" here.

Participants can write more formulations – but need to choose ten for sharing with the teacher. The participants can also add the formulations to their documentation of the previous exercises, but only the 5 formulations are handed in as "homework". The further reflection from the mind-map is private information that does not need to be shared.

Ask for the formulation within the next days.

They can also discuss their solutions in groups after the collecting phase.

In the online environment: It is only necessary to upload 5 sentences and situations here. If a feedback to these sentences is desired a personal contact to a mentor is an option.

# Literature:

Give Feedback – book recommendations:

https://www.pmcolumn.com/top-feedback-books/

An example that depict iceberg theory a little bit different:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PlPena9gobI

Something about digital communication:

https://ideas.ted.com/4-ways-to-make-people-feel-valued-at-work-hybrid-remote-team/

Something about nonviolent communication:

https://www.vogue.com/article/thanksgiving-dinner-self-care-tips-nonviolent-communication-maha-rose-marshall-rosenberg-new-york-city

Book for nerd to buy:

https://www.amazon.de/Pragmatics-Human-Communication-Interactional-Pathologies/dp/0393710599

Overview 21th century skill communication:

https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/teach-workplace-communication-skills

# Introduction video transcript

*492 words*

Hi! Welcome to our Module called Communication. You think there is nothing more to learn about it? You are probably wrong. Communication is a very important 21th century skill and there is always an option to reflect and train your own skills to get better.

It is important, especially when you learned a new language just now or live in another country with other habits. However, a closer look reveals how diverse conversational situations are in everyday life.

As you will see, this module is about communication and there is another module about collaboration - both aspects often work hand in hand together, e.g. in business context. You work in a team there, so you have to ask for help or collaborate in a regular manner. You have to give feedback to other, perhaps you have to criticize someone. There are many different examples for communication in business or everyday life and many are well known to us and run smoothly.

But communication is not always that easy. A well-known communication approach is the *"iceberg theory"* from e.g. Ruch/Zimbardo following Sigmund Freud in 1974. This depicts that in any communication only a little part is immediately clear to the other person. Let's say above the water and the rest of the iceberg, i.e. the communication situation, is still swimming under the water surface. Awareness of these parts of the iceberg that are not visible at first sight can help you to better understand the reactions of your opposite. For example, values and norms are considered to be a part that is usually under water. Nobody adds to a sentence in a conversation to explain his or her opinion: "and this is my mind because this and this is my value which I grew up with".

In this module, we devote ourselves to tips and tricks to improve our communication skills and consider of what may be underwater.

Before we deepen the topics, each participant should brainstorm on different communication situations as a first task to do. At the end, at least five different communication situations should be named in a mind map. Perhaps there is communication in the family, at work or with friends. The situations can also be defined more precisely, e.g. communication with a boss.

Then, in a second step you evaluate in which situation you need to improve. It is necessary to think about strengths and weaknesses of your own communication skills in each of the five situations. A strength can be, for example, listening well or presenting content in a relevant way. A strong reservation, fearfulness or a very wordy articulation can be an example for a weakness. Of course, some aspects can be mentioned twice depending on the situation.

In order to identify one's own weaknesses and strengths in communication, it often helps to talk to people close to you. You can also think about e.g. ideas, things or rules that may help you to improve weakness. Use these thoughts in your work on your mind map. So, let's start thinking about communication in your everyday life!

# Video for Main-activity

*521 words*

Thinking about communication makes many aspects more conscious - do I perhaps get into misunderstandings less often because of my own strengths, because I present my concerns clearly? Am I perhaps having difficulty communication with a particular colleague because our way of expressing is less well-matched? I invite you to use these thoughts to train your communication over and beyond the module.

In the next step, we will look specifically at communication in a professional context. A particularly important skill in this context is giving feedback. Many people give feedback spontaneously and intuitively. This is not always bad, but it can sometimes lead to misunderstandings with the other person.

An important rule for appropriate feedback is for example, if possible, the willingness of the other person to receive feedback. It can be beneficial to first ask if the person wants feedback on his or her behaviour. Of course, there may also be moments, especially in a professional context, when feedback is necessary and possibly unpleasant. Should this be the case, good preparation for a feedback discussion is helpful and prevents spontaneous complicated statements that promote misunderstandings.

It is usually helpful to keep feedback factual and free of moral judgement. This allows the conversation to continue in a constructive way and to think together about how things can be done better. It takes training to give good feedback to someone else. Especially the open questions are important for a feedback discussion. It is important to align one's own priorities with those of the team members, both for good communication and for good collaboration. The longer you think about giving feedback, the more aspects come to mind. To structure the whole thing a bit, we will now look at the conversation between two people. You can see a reflexion and learn how to optimise one's own feedback and one's own performance in the professional context.

You shouldn't let the number of tips and rules unsettle you. The aim is not to take all the tips to heart after watching this video and completely turn your communication around. Train a few in a targeted manner. I would like to remind you that it is often much more efficient to focus on one or at most two aspects before a particular conversation, to practise them and slowly make them a new habit. After difficult situations, ask yourself why your counterpart reacted in this way. Remember the iceberg theory. You may develop an understanding of his or her position, values and norms.

Take your time to watch the video a second time. See how the two people talk to each other. How they chose their questions and answers. Maybe you can relate it to your initial reflections on communication situations in this module. Maybe you can identify your own strengths and weaknesses or ideally get a suggestion to compensate one of your own weaknesses.

For this reason, we will watch the next video that informs about many possibilities to improve one's own communication behaviour. It is rewarding to work on your strategies and to train. Remember, Communication is one important 21th century skill and will help you to improve your professional performance. So, enjoy the video and your next upcoming feedback session!