

<b>Communication</b>
Module 2
Exercise 2.6

Communication is the exchange of thoughts, feelings, information and ideas between people through the senses.

Good communication involves four important components:

- Actively listening
- Summarising
- Asking searching questions
- Giving feedback

Actively listening = listening in such a way that the other person has the chance to speak and feels stimulated to do so.

- Make eye contact
- Look interested
- Encourage the speaker to continue (and then...?, what happened next...?)
- Ask for clarification if something is unclear
- Keep asking questions
- Summarise the conversation every now and then
- Ignore your own associations, interpretations and opinions
- Keep your emotions under control
- Don't rush the other person
- Don't be afraid of silent pauses

Summarising = to confirm that you understand what the other person means/is talking about.

There are three ways to summarise a conversation:

1. **Repetition:** This happens when you literally repeat part of what the other person has said.
2. **Summarising:** Here, you try to express the common thread running through the conversation. You try to get to the essence of what has been said. A summary often starts with the words: "I'll just sum up..." Or "As I understand from what you've just said, ...".
3. **Paraphrasing:** Here you not only concisely describe what has been said, you also convey what the speaker apparently meant to say. Paraphrasing is therefore more challenging and confrontational than summarising.

Asking searching questions = formulating the right questions so that you can find out exactly what you want to know.

The most frequently-used question types are:

- Open questions
- Closed questions
- Multiple-choice questions

**Open questions** are questions that exercise the least influence on the answer. The person giving the answer is free to determine how he will answer the question and how detailed the answer will be. By asking open questions, you obtain a great deal of information from the person giving the answer.

They invite the person to express his own viewpoint or his own feelings.

Open questions often begin with the words:

With what, what, in what way, how, why.....

**Closed questions** are the opposite of open questions; there is very limited space left for an answer, and answers are often short. In principle, a closed question can be answered with the words “yes, no, often, sometimes or maybe”. By asking closed questions, you can steer a conversation in a particular direction and elicit a definite decision from somebody. You can also use closed questions to verify facts.

Closed questions often begin with a verb.

**Multiple-choice questions** are questions that have a number of possible answers. The question has a closed character; the questioner gives several choices and therefore controls and structures the conversation.