DEVELOPING SKILLS OF NGOS

Presentation and Communication
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Written by
ANDREJA TONC

Edited by
ILDIKO SIMON and CERASELA STANCU

THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
for Central and Eastern Europe
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Tel: (36-26) 504-000, Fax: (36-26) 311-294
E-mail: info@rec.org, Web site: <www.rec.org>

Editing: Steven Graning, Design: Sylvia Magyar, Illustration: Laszlo Falvay

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Overview

Introduction

Non-profit leaders and activists can improve the effectiveness of their organisations by improving their internal and external communication skills. An organisation must express itself clearly to the outside world, while a healthy working environment — one result of successful internal communication — benefits managers, employees and volunteers alike.

External communications involve a delicate balance of information and entertainment, as well as a compromise between wanting to achieve lofty objectives and limitations on time and resources. Learning effective methods of presentation can greatly increase an organisation’s efficiency. The skills presented in this guide can be useful on a daily basis, as well as when preparing messages for broad dissemination. The value of persuasion cannot be overstated.

Communication is the imparting or exchange of information, ideas or feelings. It is not a one-way process since a message must be received in order for communication to take place.

Presentation is a structured communication based on the actual audience’s needs in order to achieve a certain purpose within a given timeframe, where the overall goals are providing information and promoting ideas.

Presentations are a form of communication, and if we can communicate effectively presentations cease to be difficult. But they are far from being simple communication, and they frequently require additional skills of persuasion and influence.

Objective of the Guide

The purpose of this guide is to encourage you to think about yourself. How do you communicate with yourself, with those close to you, with friends, with colleagues at work, with business partners and with donors? This guide offers helpful communication and presentation skills, gives information and examples on how to improve these skills, how to practice them on yourself and to present them to others.

The guide also provides an applicable background and practical tools for leaders and activists to develop their communication and presentation skills.

This guide enables the user to:

- encourage the trainees to assess their potential in developing communication and presentation techniques;
- identify communicational noise and other barriers;
- ensure a mutual understanding between the sender of the message and the receiver;
- strengthen the communication tools to be more effective and fair in different working relationships; and
- understand the relationship between non-verbal and verbal communication.

Skills to be Developed

The training guide provides easily applicable tools to develop everyday communication, avoid conflicts and prepare and conduct presentations for small or large, familiar or unfamiliar audiences.
Acquiring the skills offered in this guide will help the user:

- avoid or overcome communication barriers;
- apply assertive communication techniques;
- achieve the purpose of a presentation by applying the basic rules of effective communication and presentation;
- identify the expectations of an audience or a conversation partner;
- increase the effectiveness of communication by applying verbal and non-verbal techniques;
- plan and use visual aids by considering the rules of human perception; and
- prepare an effective and exciting presentation for any audience.

How to Deliver the Training

The guide should be used in combination with the activities presented in the training toolkit. Most of the guide’s content is designed in a way that can be used as a handout or reader for the participants during the training session. The trainer may, however, adopt it to the specific context and time frame of the training activity.

Ready to Train

Conversation

Participants in a conversation are ready to accept different speaking styles. This could mean posing questions, responding or listening actively. Besides listening, conversation also means thinking about what we hear and what we are going to say. Silence can also be a form of conversation, as can meta-communication (communication about communication). The sidebar offers some popular misconceptions about communication.

Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

**Verbal communication** is a process of transmitting meaning with words in oral or written expression.

- Characteristics of verbal communication:
  - Words are symbolic expression of thoughts.
  - The meanings of the words are agreed upon.
  - Communication makes sense from the verbal context in which words are used.
  - Verbal communication is in large part under conscious control.

**Non-verbal communication** is the transmission of meaning in direct contact by all means that are not verbal. Facial expressions, body movements and tone of voice are all means of communication whose meanings are culturally based. For example, in Bulgaria shaking your head left and right means “yes” instead of “no.”
Difficulties in Communication — Noise

Communication noise is a group of disturbing factors that disrupt communication. It is caused by an inappropriate “channel,” sending an unclear message, or not considering the needs and expectations of the receiver. The following elements contribute to communication noise:

- physical noise — background sounds that hinder communication;
- mental distractions;
- misunderstandings resulting from word choice (foreign or technical terms, colloquialisms);
- lack of concentration;
- prejudice, stereotypes, negative attitudes (towards origins, races, religions, etc.);
- inappropriate expectations;
- emotional pressures;
- social anxieties (being introverted or unsure, having low self-respect, etc.);
- breaking communication etiquette (i.e. when being introduced, when thanking, when interrupted, etc.); and
- manipulation/games (showing interest but wanting to cause conflict; inviting cooperation but wanting to dominate, “yanking someone’s chain”).

Communication Barriers

Communication that hurts includes criticism, condemnation, suspicion, slander, denunciation, blame, teasing, absence of tact, threats, provocation, ridicule, irony and mimicking.

Communication that drives you crazy includes denying expressed feelings, denying expressed wishes, denying what has already been agreed, refusing to share responsibilities, raising and then breaking hopes, word-splitting, projection, accusing somebody else of bad intentions, not considering somebody else’s wishes, repetition, looking for hidden meaning in everything.

Unfair communication includes stereotyping, putting words in someone’s mouth, constantly changing the topic, making accusations, misusing statistics, interrupting, intimidation, humiliation, provoking feelings of guilt, mocking, ridiculing and ignoring.

Major Elements of Effective Communication

Effective communication hinges on four key elements:

- consistency of verbal and non-verbal communication;
- listening;
- raising questions; and
- assertiveness.

Major Elements of Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

Verbal communication
- Words;
- Context;
- Sentence construction.

Non-verbal communication
- Tone of voice;
- Facial expression;
- Posture;
- Gestures;
- Distancing;
- Volume;
- Intonation.
Consistency of verbal and non-verbal communication

The majority of a message’s content is transmitted through non-verbal language. If the verbal and non-verbal messages are contradictory, people tend to believe the non-verbal message. A good communicator combines the two elements of the communication so that they complement each other and work towards a coherent meaning.

It is important to know that the majority of communication is done without really speaking. Sometimes it is enough to look at a certain person and we know what he or she is “thinking.” Very often we can find ourselves in a situation when we know somebody is angry or hurt, but when asked “What is wrong?” he or she replies “Nothing.” “Are you angry?” “No, I am not angry. Why should I be angry?”

Non-verbal communication could be described as more honest than verbal discourse because it is very difficult to hide (our reactions, facial expressions, movements, body positions, volume, tone of voice, etc).

Listening

Listening is the key element of effective communication. The goal of real listening is to understand what the speaker is trying to express. A good listener sends verbal and non-verbal messages to the speaker that facilitate communication. This is called active listening.

Before learning about active listening, it is important to first look at the forms of non-listening (listed in the sidebar).

People do not listen in the following situations:

- when comparing themselves with others;
- when having a negative attitude toward the speaker (e.g. thinking he or she is boring);
- when giving advice;
- when reassuring;
- when always agreeing;
- when thinking about responses; and
- when looking for hidden meaning.

Active listening refers to a listener’s active efforts to improve communication. Messages are often imprecise and abstract, but the speaker does not realise it. It even happens that speakers are themselves unclear on the thoughts they are trying to express. A basic principle of active listening is sub-questions, and most of all, indirect questions. Direct questions about sensitive and personal topics can provoke discomfort, lead to negative or defensive reactions, distrust, and even to total withdrawal of the co-speaker, and to a complete breakdown of communication. In complicated situations, when it is not clear what a certain person wants or feels, it is a good idea to use indirect questions, in other words paraphrasing or summarising.

Active listening implies that you heard not only what the speaker has said, but that you understand his or her feelings, needs and expectations. Decoding a message is an important part of understanding someone.

Raising questions

Raising questions makes communication effective and instills trust in the conversation partner. It is therefore important to understand the different types of questions and their characteristics.
Open questions
The sentence starts with a question word (Why, Who, What etc.) and allows the conversation partner to answer freely. It provides an opportunity to express an opinion and offer a considered message. A simple example is, “How do you feel?”

Closed questions
The answer to a closed question is simply “yes” or “no.” They guide the conversation partner to provide the answer according to what we expect to hear. E.g., “Are you angry?”

Leading questions
This question sounds open, but the speaker’s opinion is imbedded in the question. The conversation partner is faced with more of an invitation to agree or disagree rather than an interest in information or opinion. A leading question can be considered as much a statement as a question. E.g., “Don’t you think the price of petrol is too high?”

Be careful with “why” questions
Generally people do not have an answer to “why” questions. These open-ended questions tend to provoke defensiveness, rationalisation and spurious reasoning.
When asking “why” questions, it is wise to express curiosity and avoid provocation.

Use “what” and “how” questions to help:
• find a better solution (How do you see this situation?);
• break a problem into smaller pieces (What hurts you in this situation?);
• redefine problems (What is really the problem in this situation? Can you define it in another way?);
• reveal personal expectations (What do you expect from yourself in this situation? How would you like to solve this situation?);
• gauge the readiness to get personally involved (What do you feel you can contribute?);
• receive acceptance of personal responsibility for the problem (How does this situation and its solution depend on you and on your behaviour?); and
• find another way to look at this situation (How are others looking at this situation? What would someone that you highly respect say in this situation?).

Paraphrasing
Paraphrasing is reshaping what has been said to make it more comprehensible. It can be used to give the speaker a chance to confirm or to correct what the listener believes has been expressed. Paraphrasing starts with a phrase like “In other words...” or “So, you’re saying that ...” Beside simply understanding facts it is important to show an understanding of the speaker’s emotions. It can be done by starting a sentence with “It seems to me that you feel... because...” Paraphrasing can be a useful tool for insuring that successful communication has taken place.
When you are actively listening to someone you are sending the following messages:
• I understand your problem.
• I see how you feel because of this problem.
• I will help you think about this problem and help you find other solutions.
• I believe in you, and I believe that you alone can find your own good solution.
For example: Ivan says, “Marko spilled water on my chair and now he is laughing. I will rip up his picture.” The teacher paraphrases: “You are angry at Marko, because now you have to work on your picture again. Let’s see how are you doing with your picture.” Putting the same text into a different context can change its meaning.

**Assertiveness**

Assertiveness is providing feedback to others without criticising his or her personality but expressing dissatisfaction about a given behaviour/situation.

Feedback is an analysis of actions or behaviour that an observer gives to help someone improve. The effectiveness of feedback information depends on how it is formulated and on the relationship between the actor and the critic, and their expectations.

Feedback can be given either as an evaluation for certain behaviour, meaning “you” messages (e.g., “It is not nice that you are late again”), or as a description of experience and the reaction of a speaker to certain behaviour, meaning “I” messages (e.g., “When you started talking about it I was very frightened”). Experience has shown that evaluating feedback often provokes resentment and defensiveness. Description feedback helps receivers understand their place in a particular environment and to change their behaviour according to the relationships they want to develop with other people.

In everyday life people are not very well trained in communication skills and they usually give feedback in indirect ways, using “you” messages. For example, we often hear: “You are making me angry.” It is very hard to tell what the person is really experiencing, and for what reason, as well as how this problem can be solved.

Feedback is extremely useful when presented properly. See Figure 1 for rules on how to form effective feedback. When giving feedback, non-verbal signs are also important, for example tone of voice, posture and gestures, which can support or refute the verbal message.

The major rule for the receiver of feedback information is to calmly listen to what has been said and to refrain from becoming defensive. It is also important to ask for further explanations if something is unclear. Feedback information is not only a way to give support but also to provoke and encourage.

So we can differentiate:

- confirming feedback information — the listener confirms that the sender is on the right track, making progress toward his or her goals; and
- corrective feedback information — the listener provides a response to what the sender is “wondering” in realisation of a certain goal or in doing a certain activity.

Corrective feedback information should be very carefully formulated. It is important to keep in mind that the goal of feedback is not to change the other person but to give your impression.

**“You” and “I” messages**

Usually in “you” messages we are judging the other person. This kind of judging is very dangerous if the communication process runs into difficulties. In that case “you” messages usually lead to resentment and bring out defensive behaviour. In this kind of situation, especially when the behaviour of the other person has a direct effect, “I” messages are much better to use.

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**Active Listening Guidelines**

- Make a commitment to listening and give the speaker your full attention.
- Look into the speaker’s eyes.
- Do not interrupt. (Do not ask “why,” or say “Me, too...”).
- Paraphrase (You might start your sentence with “If I understood you correctly you ...”).
In these messages we are describing:

- certain behaviour that bothers us or in anyway jeopardises us;
- results of that behaviour; and
- feelings caused by this behaviour.

According to some professionals, “I” messages can actually be passive because others are left to do something for us. So if we want to make them active, more direct and in that way more complete, it is necessary for them to know what we want to happen. Figure 2 demonstrates the difference between passive and active suggestions.

Presentation Skills

Although a presentation in its simplest form is any expression of thought or emotion to a receiver of the message, it has come to mean displaying a concept to a group of people with interest in the topic.

The key elements of a successful presentation are subject, time, purpose and audience.

Subject

A presentation can focus on a number of subjects, issues and topics. The presenter and the audience have different relationships with the subject for a number of reasons. There are three situations related to the presenter’s and the audience’s level of knowledge regarding the topic:

- The presenter is familiar, but the audience is less informed.
- The audience is familiar, but the presenter is less informed.
- The audience and the presenter are equally informed.

Rules for Forming Effective Feedback

- **Descriptive** — When we describe our experiences we are giving someone an opportunity to learn something about people in general. When we are judging or trying to interpret something, however, we are increasing the likelihood of defensive behaviour.

- **Concrete** — Always focus on what can be changed and stay away from what could be interpreted as an attack on the person’s character.

- **Constrictive and balanced** — Always consider the possibilities and needs of the receiver.

- **Useful** — Relate advice to behaviour that can be changed. Do not criticise behaviour that a person simply can not change, stammering, for example.

- **Timely** — Feedback is more effective when it relates to behaviour that is recent rather than old.

- **Desired** — Feedback is truly effective only when the receiver wants to hear it. It is most effective when the receiver forms the questions that test the effectiveness of certain behaviour.

- **Checked** — It is important that both the sender and receiver of the feedback information can check the content of the message. This can be done if the receiver repeats in his/her own words how he/she understood the message. In this way we avoid misunderstanding and in this process other members of the team can participate.

Useful Web Sites

- [www.idebate.org](http://www.idebate.org)
- [www.ukans.edu/cwis/units/coms2/vpa/vpa.htm](http://www.ukans.edu/cwis/units/coms2/vpa/vpa.htm)
- [www.public-speaking.org/](http://www.public-speaking.org/)
- [www.mts.net/~infopak/PAGE4.HTML](http://www.mts.net/~infopak/PAGE4.HTML)
Time
The time frame of the presentation is often determined by the audience or an outsider (e.g., management or the organiser of the conference). The structure of the presentation should be developed in a way that the key messages of the presentation can be delivered in varying lengths of time.

Purpose
A presentation has two different purposes: manifested and hidden. A manifest purpose is clearly expressed: what we want to achieve by providing the presentation (e.g., an oral report to the management about the performance of the team we manage). But the presentation has another purpose which is not directly expressed, and this is the hidden purpose (e.g., we would like to get more financial resources for our team).

Audience
The audience is the key element of a successful presentation. Knowing who they are, what they would like to get out of the presentation, what their interests are, how familiar they are with the subject, and what their manifested and hidden purposes are, are essential questions to answer before a presentation is prepared.

Rules with regard to the target audience:
- Use appropriate channels and media depending on the size of the particular audience.
- The presentation should appeal to the audience’s interests.
- The knowledge of the topic and learning potential of the audience should be anticipated.
- The vocabulary should be adjusted to the audience so there are no unfamiliar terms or unexplained acronyms.
- The venue and equipment should be adequate and appropriate.
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- The venue and equipment should be adequate and appropriate.

If even one of these rules is broken, the learning process can be severely hindered.

Even an excellent presenter/facilitator/trainer who is an expert on the topic should avoid coming to a presentation unprepared and intending to improvise. A detailed plan of the presentation, appropriate materials and visual aids are essential.
FIGURE 3

Steps in Preparing and Giving a Presentation

CHOOSING A COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

In written form it is easier to:
- present complicated facts (regulations, legal acts, reports); and
- decrease the possibility of expressing negative emotions.

Communicating orally it is easier to:
- use emotions convincingly;
- direct the listener’s attention;
- answer direct questions, solve conflicts and build agreement;
- adjust ideas according to the listeners’ reactions; and
- receive instant feedback.

Combining the two channels allows the speaker to take advantage of the benefits of both forms, but the speaker must insure that they are complementing each other and not introducing contradictions or distractions.

WORKING OUT A PRESENTATION STRUCTURE

Tailoring the topic to the listeners:
- How many listeners are already familiar with the presentation topic?
- How important is this to them?
- What are their opinions and attitudes towards the topic?
- What is the general state of mind of the listeners?

Opening: Tell them what you are going to tell them.
- Greeting, introduction (begin with a surprising or humorous statement, a story or joke related to the topic, a provocative question or an apposite quotation);
- Subject (title/subject of your presentation);
- Objective (the purpose of your presentation);
- Outline (the main points you will cover);
- Timing (length of presentation);
- Questions (when audience can ask).

Delivery: Tell them what you promised.
- Give the title, key message and request for feedback at the end of each part.
- Select information (simple, concrete, vivid).
- Organise the information.
- Emphasise the goal of the presentation.
- Present positive arguments.
- Summarise occasionally.
- Analyse possible objections.

Closing: Tell them what you have told them.
- Signal to end;
- Summary;
- Conclusion;
- Closing (return to the beginning of the presentation/statement, finish with a vivid, positive “picture” or explain to the listeners what your expectations are);
- Invitation for questions.
Presentations and Communication

**Rules**

At the beginning of meetings, workshops and open debates, it is very important to make the rules clear to everyone and call on them when necessary (emphasise how much time there is for presentations, discussions, questions, etc.).

**Materials and Visual Aids**

Rules for preparing materials:

- Make them attractive and easy to read (big letters, bullets, drawings, limited number of colours).
- If possible, use diversified visual aids (flipcharts, overheads, handouts).

**Steps in Preparing and Performing a Presentation**

**Answering questions:**

- Explain that you will answer questions at the end of the presentation.
- Stop periodically during the presentation to pose questions that the audience may have.
- While questions are being asked, look the person in the eye and avoid the temptation to nod and look away.
- If you need to think about a question, repeat or paraphrase it.
- Answers should be connected to what has been said in the presentation.
- Answers should be addressed to all listeners.
- If the question is hostile and aggressive, rephrase it into a neutral or positive form.
- If you do not know the answer, admit it and make a promise that you will look for an answer.
- After you finish with questions close your presentation with a short summary.

**Flipcharts**

Flipcharts are extremely useful visual aids. This is a pad of fairly substantial A1 sized paper that is the modern equivalent of the earlier “newsprint,” consisting of sheets of thin paper. It has several purposes: gathering ideas from the audience, drawing charts or schemes, writing tasks for exercises, putting sticky notes on it, writing out the agenda, drawing pictograms, making sketches or doing other artistic activities.

There are three types of flipcharts according to the time of preparation:

- **Ready made** — the images and writing are prepared before the presentation and no additional writing is involved.
- **Half made** — the visual materials are prepared before the presentation and then supplemented during the presentation.
- **Improvised** — writing and drawing on the flipchart is done spontaneously during the presentation (note: before the presentation, considerable thought should still go into what will go on the chart).
All three of these methods require intense preparation and planning. Great care should be taken as to how the flipcharts will be prepared and displayed. Efforts to make use of the contents of a flipchart will be greatly appreciated by the audience. The sidebar at right offers tips on how to make effective use of flipcharts.

The overhead projector

The overhead projector is the electronic version of the flipchart. There are some important rules to remember when operating an overhead projector during a presentation:

- Point to the transparency on the projector, not at the screen.
- Switch the projector off as soon as you have finished with a slide.
- Remember that switching the projector on and off in swift succession is distracting, so use it sparingly.

Handouts

During a presentation a handout can play different roles. It is a visual aid for those who learn through seeing. After the presentation, the handout can be used as a reminder of the content and the learning points. Figure 4 categorises handouts according to their role and format.

These forms are not mutually exclusive. Some types can be combined to match the concept of the presentation and the needs of audience. Another distinction is how the handouts are distributed.

**FIGURE 4**

**Handout Varieties**

- **Exercise handouts** are used as a framework for individual or group work by the audience. Filling them in is part of the learning activity. Within this category are budget forms, financing profiles for NGOs and questionnaires.

- **Listing handouts** provide a simple list of issues to be addressed during the training. Such a handout can be connected to previous parts of the presentation by repeating themes or information and then asking participants to supplement them with their own ideas.

- **Discussion handouts** provide the first ideas for discussion in the group. The content of the handout provides suggestions or controversial statements rather than information. This can be a drawing, a scheme or a plan that encourages discussion.

- **Mnemonic handouts** are a variation of the listing handout. Mnemonic techniques enable the audience to remember the most important elements of the presentation.

- **Text handouts** provide detailed information about the topic. This type of handout can be completely independent material — it need not necessarily be connected with the training. With careful preparation, this information can even become a separate publication.

- **Support handouts** do not contain the content of the presentation, but they can nevertheless be valuable complements to it. These can be handouts describing individual parts in a role-play, instructions for simulations or directions for warm-up activities or evaluation.

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Tips on Making Flipcharts

- Give each flipchart a title.
- Use thick markers; letters should be visible from 10 metres.
- Use large leading capitals for effect.
- Alternate colours (e.g. one line of red, one line of blue).
- Illustrate your pages with drawings or shapes such as circles, boxes, etc.
- Avoid complete sentences.
- A flipchart is not a Christmas tree — don’t use everything at once.
- Integrate your flipchart with handouts you prepare.
- Use completed pages to show that you take the presentation seriously.
- Avoid markers that bleed through the paper.
- Make notes lightly in pencil in advance (it won’t be seen by the audience).
- Talk to the audience, not to the flipchart.
- Make sure everyone can see the flipchart’s contents easily.
Training Toolkit
Tool 1: In the Other Hand

**Description:** Opening up to new means of communication

**Participants:** Individually

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Materials:** Sticky notes

**Procedure:**

Distribute sticky notes to the whole group and ask participants to sign their names, but with the opposite hand of the one they usually use.

**Discussion:**

Is this a new experience for you? How does it look to you? Have you ever practiced writing with the opposite hand? Can you think of any ways this exercise is connected with communication? Have you ever tried to communicate in new ways?
Tool 2: **Mirror**

**Description:** Raising awareness of non-verbal communication

**Participants:** In pairs

**Duration:** 20-30 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Split participants into pairs and explain that this exercise will help them see what they are doing with their bodies while talking with other people. Make them decide who is going to be a mirror and who is going to tell a story (for example, something that happened in the morning).

2. After two minutes give them a sign to exchange roles. Explain to the “mirrors” that they must reflect the non-verbal signs of the person who is telling the story.

3. After all participants change their roles, group discussion follows.

**Discussion:**

After this exercise it is very important to give participants a chance to say how they felt during the exercise, what they noticed, and what they learned. It is important to talk about both roles. The trainer could then say something about previous experience with this exercise and give a short summary or handout about non-verbal communication. What are we doing while we are talking? What faces do we make? What are we doing with our hands and the rest of our body?
Tool 3: Leading the Blind

Description: Practicing listening skills and understanding how signals are received by other people.

Participants: In pairs.

Duration: 30-40 minutes.

Materials: An empty room and obstacles (desks, chairs, etc.).

Procedure:

1. Divide participants into pairs. Explain that this exercise will help them see how we receive signs from other people, how good we are at this, and also how much trust we are willing to give someone to lead us.

2. It is important to emphasise that the whole exercise is done in complete silence. Verbal communication is forbidden. The whole group participates in pairs. One person from the pair is going to be leading the other — the “blind” person — and after a few minutes they will switch roles. Make sure that participants do not discuss their technique before beginning the exercise.

3. The trainer will make things even more difficult by putting obstacles in the way (chairs, desks, etc.). The leader must avoid these obstacles while taking care of the “blind” person.

Discussion:

After completing this exercise it is necessary to talk with participants about their experience, both as a leader and as a blind person. Have them discuss how they felt and what they experienced. Ask them how they communicated. What sorts of signals did they use and how?
Tool 4: **Group Sculpture**

**Description:** Learning to express emotions with non-verbal communication

**Participants:** Groups of four or five

**Duration:** 40-50 minutes

**Materials:** A list of topics (like happiness, sorrow, anger, etc.)

**Procedure:**

1. Split participants into groups of four or five. Assign each group a theme on which to build a sculpture from their own bodies.

2. Give them about 20 minutes for this task. Each group then presents its sculpture and discusses it.

**Discussion:**

After each presentation it is necessary to discuss the way the sculpture was built. How did the talks in the group progress? Did they have several competing ideas? If so, how did they decide on one? Was it hard to perform this exercise? What did they learn from it?
Tool 5: Being a Good Listener

Description: Examining listening techniques

Participants: Groups of three

Materials: Flipcharts and markers

Procedure:

1. Start by explaining the roles of each small group member. One is the listener who tries to encourage the speaker as much as possible. The second is the speaker, who has five minutes to explain a problem in his or her everyday work. The third is the observer, who observes how and if the listener is encouraging the speaker or not.

2. While the speaker is talking, the observer has to watch the listener to see how he or she encourages conversation. After five minutes they switch roles. For the next five minutes the listener becomes the speaker, the observer becomes the listener and the listener becomes the observer. Rotating recurs until all have fulfilled all roles.

3. At the end of the exercise each member of the group has to say what he or she noticed his partner did to encourage conversation. On one board, note the types of behaviour that encourage conversation, and on the other indicate the behaviour that discourages good conversation. Figure 5 contains lists of ways to both encourage and discourage conversation.

Discussion:

Is non-verbal communication helping? What kinds of questions have been asked and what kinds of statements have been made?
Conversation Influences

ENCOURAGES GOOD CONVERSATION

- Looking at the speaker;
- Encouraging the speaker (e.g. by nodding, smiling, etc.);
- Verbal encouragement;
- Showing sympathy, patience and acceptance;
- Showing interest;
- Asking questions as a way of looking for explanation;
- Giving good, concrete and specific advice;
- Allowing the speaker to elaborate without interrupting;
- Avoiding criticism and judging;
- Gaining trust (e.g. everything you say will remain strictly confidential).

DISCOURAGES GOOD CONVERSATION

- Not looking at the speaker;
- Lacking compassion or being unsympathetic;
- Not listening to what has been said and asking questions;
- Criticising and judging the speaker;
- Speaking too much and not listening;
- Arguing;
- Talking about yourself;
- Doing something else while listening, (e.g. going through some papers or looking at nails);
- Ridiculing the speaker, not taking him or her seriously.
Tool 6: **Unknown Item**

**Description:** Selective listening and subjective perceptions

**Participants:** Three volunteers and the rest as a group

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Explain that this game is about identifying the mysterious item. You need three volunteers. These people have to leave the room and agree on a mysterious item that they will describe to the rest of the group.

2. The group will try to name the mysterious item by asking one question of each volunteer when they come into the room and each volunteer can come into the room four times. This means that the group can ask 12 questions altogether.

**Discussion:**

Ask the volunteers how they felt in their roles and the questions they received from the group. Were there good questions the group failed to ask? Which answers helped them and which did not in deducing the nature of the mysterious item?
Tool 7: **Paraphrasing**

**Description:** Examining the pitfalls and benefits of paraphrasing

**Participants:** In pairs

**Duration:** 50 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Each of the partners should tell their best New Year’s Eve celebration story in less than three minutes. The listener should then try to retell the partner’s story, taking no more than a minute. The trainer will watch a clock and clap to signify when the time is up.

2. The teller of the story should then note down what was lost or mistakenly added to the account during the paraphrasing.

**Discussion:**

During the discussion it is important to talk about how well the group did in summarising the stories. Were the summaries accurate or were some things changed? It would be good if a few participants gave their impressions and for the group to give their comments on that.
Tool 8: **Feedback**

**Description:** Learning to use feedback and improving the atmosphere in the group

**Participants:** Individually

**Duration:** 60-70 minutes

**Materials:** Personalised Feedback Form

---

**FIGURE 6**

**Personalised Feedback Form**

Message to ___________________ from ___________________

I respect, I like ______________________________________

I wish this could be different ______________________________________

---

**Procedure:**

1. Every member of the group writes to every other member of the group on the Personalised Feedback Form, describing what he or she likes about that person and what he or she would like this person to do differently.

2. Everyone then receives the messages addressed to him or her. Each participant is invited, but not forced, to read the contents of the note. The trainer may help interpret the suggestions. It is important for the trainer to emphasise during this exercise that it is up to every person to decide what they will do with this note. Will they change their behaviour or not?

**Discussion:**

The final discussion depends on how well the trainer gave instructions and helped the group feel comfortable with the messages received. Also, did the trainer help transform some of the messages successfully and in the right instances?
Tool 9: You and I Messages

Description: Transforming messages to make them more constructive and acceptable

Participants: Small groups

Duration: 40 minutes

Procedure:

1. Break the group into pairs who have not worked together much, if at all. Have the participants write down on a piece of paper one sentence about a situation where someone had attacked, accused or criticised them, but using the “you” message form. They should give this paper to their partner.

2. The partner then should change the “you” message into an “I” message.

Discussion:

At the end every member of the group can share his or her sentence for group discussion. It is important to find out how participants felt when they received their “I” messages. What do they think about them? Can these messages be used in situations when they received “you” messages? Could they be effective?
Tool 10: **Question Why**

**Description:** Understanding the implications of “why” questions

**Participants:** In pairs

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Procedure:**

1. Break the group into pairs and decide who is going to be “A” and who is going to be “B.”

2. “A” asks “B” three questions that start with “why.” “B” listens to these questions, without answering.

3. “B” then asks “A” three questions that start with “why.” “A” listens without answering.

4. A discussion follows with each pair about how they felt when they heard the questions. Did they want to answer them?

5. After the discussion the trainer explains how to transform “why” questions into questions that start with “Did you …?” “It seems to me that …”, “What do you think …?”

6. After a short lecture and discussion, “A” and “B” ask the same questions as before, only this time as transformed versions. It is now permitted to give answers if the receiver feels inclined.

**Discussion:**

How did the transformed versions change the way you felt? Did you see any changes in the person asking the questions? in the person being asked?
Tool 11: **Is That Really Me?**

**Description:** Examining speaking and presenting tendencies

**Participants:** Ideally the whole group can participate depending on the group’s size and the time remaining, but at least five volunteers should give a presentation.

**Duration:** Depends on the size of the group. Presentation preparation: 15 minutes. Giving a presentation and filming it: two minutes per participant. Watching the video and discussion: 5-7 minutes per presentation.

**Materials:** A speaking podium (or equivalent), video recorder, video camera and TV.

**Procedure**

1. Explain to the group that they are to each prepare a presentation of two minutes maximum about something they know well.

2. Every presentation is then filmed.

3. After filming the presentations, the group watches it together and comments on what worked and what could be improved.

4. If time restrictions make it impossible to see all presentations, choose several volunteers. Presenters can use any available tool that can improve the presentation.

5. At the end the whole group will review all presentations one by one and discuss them.

**Discussion:**

After reviewing one presentation the same presenter will have time to tell what he or she thinks about the tape, what could be improved, etc. The rest of the group then offers their opinions about what they liked and what should be improved. At the end of each discussion the trainer offers feedback, opinions and recommendations.
Tool 12: Presentation Aids

Description: Identifying presentation aids

Participants: Groups of four or five

Duration: 60 minutes

Materials: A prepared flipchart with listed presentation aids, blank flipcharts, markers and tape

Procedure:

The purpose of this exercise is to make participants think about things they can use when doing a presentation. In this way participants are actively involved in the training through the creation of personal materials. We can do this exercise in two ways — using small groups or the notice-board technique.

Working in small groups

1. Each group gets one tool they can use as a presentation aid, for example a video camera.
2. They have to talk about it — how they can use this tool, in which cases, what are its advantages and disadvantages.
3. After discussion participants should write down on a flipchart all ideas and comments and present their work to the larger group.

Notice board technique

1. Trainers should prepare flipchart papers and spread them around the room.
2. Each flipchart paper will contain the name of one presentation tool (e.g. “video camera,” “slides,” “overhead projector,” etc.) Also, flipchart papers should be divided into a few sections such as “what is the tool used for,” “advantages,” “disadvantages,” “recommendations” and so on.
3. Each small group gives their opinions on every tool.
4. The trainer should identify a signal to warn groups that it is time to move to another “notice board.”
5. Groups should spend five minutes at each board and we recommend a maximum of five notice boards.

Discussion:

After finishing either of these techniques each group should give a short presentation about what they added for every tool. This is followed by a short discussion and the trainer’s observations.
Appendix: Using Flipcharts and Overheads

ADVANTAGES:

- **Transportable.** The flipchart can be easily rolled up, and the easel can be collapsed so that both can be transported easily.
- **No power required.** Unlike the overhead projector, slide projector, video player, etc., no power supply is required, making it more mobile and less susceptible to power failure.
- **Adaptable.** It can be used as a blank sheet on which items can be added or as a prepared sheet whose contents can be disclosed in a variety of ways.
- **Any paper usable.** The “flipchart paper” itself need not be a commercial flipchart; any large sheet of paper can be used.
- **Easy to use.** Few basic skills, other than clear writing, are required.
- **Retainable for reference.** Each sheet used can be torn from the flipchart pad and retained as a poster on the presentation room wall.
- **Usable for immediate recording.** No preparation is necessary if it is to be used as a large jotting pad during a presentation session.
- **Postable anywhere.** Sheets of paper, even the A1 size of the normal flipchart, are relatively light and can be posted on walls, doors, cabinets, and even curtains, using a dry, reusable adhesive such as Blue Tack.

DISADVANTAGES:

- **If badly prepared, can look unprofessional.** A poor appearance can disturb the audience and undermine the presenter’s credibility.
- **Not durable.** Paper doesn’t last long, which reduces the value of the aid if it is important enough to be retained and reused.
- **Easily torn, dirtied and dog-eared.** Although portable, it is also easily damaged in transit or in storage.
- **Special techniques difficult.** There are some special techniques relevant to the use of flipcharts and these can take a certain amount of skill and dexterity. For example, a disclosure approach using covering cards held by Blue Tack or paper clips can be used, or constant reference back and forward to various sheets can be helped with folds and clips; both these techniques can go wrong very easily.
OVERHEADS

ADVANTAGES:

- **High visual impact.** Because the image is projected by a light source, the visual impact can be high compared with a rather dull flipchart.
- **Usable in light.** Unlike slide and film projectors, the room does not need to be darkened, allowing the presenter to maintain continuous eye contact with the learning group.
- **Large image.** The projected image can be large, the actual size limited only by the size of the screen or projection area, the light intensity of the projector and the type of lens used.
- **Widely available.** In many locations this equipment is almost as freely available as flipcharts; if it is not available where required, it is easily transportable, particularly the models specifically designed to be portable.
- **Used sitting or standing.** Some presenters prefer to sit while presenting, others prefer to stand and/or walk about; the overhead projector permits either method of use, although it was designed for the presenter to be seated beside it.
- **Professional production.** Projected materials can have a very professional appearance, whether they are made skillfully by hand, by commercial photographic techniques, or, more commonly now, as a computer graphic.
- **Slides easily portable.** The acetate slides used with the projector, whether mounted in card frames or in transparent folders, can be carried easily in a folder, briefcase or slide carrying case.

DISADVANTAGES:

- **Power required.** Unlike, for example, the flipchart, an electric power source is required. Under most conditions this will not be a problem, but power failures still occur and sometimes power sockets aren’t compatible with the plug.
- **Older versions noisy.** Older (or modern but cheaper) overhead projector models are cooled by a fan that can be noisy.
- **Condition variable.** Although, as mentioned in the list of advantages, overhead projectors are found in many locations, many are older, well-used models that can be in poor condition.
- **Head position can obscure.** Part of an overhead projector is the angled mirror mounted at the top of a column; this head can obscure part of the screen image from some parts of the group unless particular care is taken in seating arrangements.
- **Key stoning.** Key stoning occurs when the top of the projected image is wider horizontally than the base, usually the result of a too acute angle of projection. The effect is disturbing and can sometimes be difficult to rectify.
- **Crowded slide encouragement.** An acetate sheet from which overhead projector slides are produced can tempt the presenter to include too much material on one slide. A major advantage of the overhead projector is its ability to make an impact; overcrowding lessens the effect.
Sample Workshop Agenda
How to Deliver the Training

This sample agenda is intended to further help you tailor a training event on developing presentation and communication skills using different elements of this manual and toolkit. The exact use of it, in combination with other activities, should be based on what you know about the expectations and experiences of your trainees, as well as on the time available to carry out the training activity. In addition to the training topics, the sample agenda proposes activities that can provide interactive elements to your training event.

Sample Workshop Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 1 Introduction</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Express and clarify expectations</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda overview</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarify training plan and methods, relating them to expectations of trainees</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 2 Communication is…</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>Present approach to topic</td>
<td>Tool 1: In the Other Hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication is…</td>
<td></td>
<td>Present more concrete information about what communication is</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing activity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarify key elements of the topic</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 3 Verbal and Non-verbal Communication</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce main differences between verbal and non-verbal communication</td>
<td>Tool 2: Mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal and non-verbal communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>Give overview of verbal and non-verbal communication</td>
<td>Tool 3: Leading the Blind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing activity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Practice means of non-verbal communication</td>
<td>Tool 4: Group Sculpture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sample Workshop Agenda continued

#### Part 4 Communication Breakdown

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Present communication noise and barriers</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing activity</td>
<td>Have participants share experiences in communications</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### Part 5 Effective Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Present main elements of good communication</td>
<td>Short presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active listening</td>
<td>Provide knowledge and skills about active listening</td>
<td>Tool 5: Being a Good Listener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Providing knowledge and skills about feedback</td>
<td>Tool 6: Unknown Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You” and “I” messages</td>
<td>Providing knowledge and skills about “you” and “I” messages</td>
<td>Tool 7: Paraphrasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing activity</td>
<td>Discuss the skills each participant would like to improve and write up main points</td>
<td>Tool 8: Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tool 9: You and I Messages</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### Part 6 Principles of Leading Conversation

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<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Discuss what makes a conversation</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles of leading conversation</td>
<td>Present key elements of conversation</td>
<td>Short presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing activity</td>
<td>Share examples of successful and unsuccessful conversations</td>
<td>Tool 10: Question Why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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#### Part 7 Presentation Skills

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Introduce key elements of successful presentations</td>
<td>Short presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing activity</td>
<td>Discuss key elements and summarise main points</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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</table>
### Part 8 Preparing and Giving Presentations

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<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Present main steps in preparing and giving presentations</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public speaking</td>
<td>Practice giving presentations at a speaking podium/rostrum</td>
<td>Tool 11: <em>Is That Really Me?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing activity</td>
<td>Summarise important comments and messages, writing up main points</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Part 9 Presentation Aids

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Short overview of main presentation aids</td>
<td>Short presentation by trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation aids</td>
<td>Make a list of the most common presentation aids</td>
<td>Tool 12: <em>Presentation Aids</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing activity</td>
<td>List the advantages and disadvantages of three main presentation aids</td>
<td>Discussion and closure of this session</td>
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### Part 10 Training Closure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal plan</td>
<td>Have each participant make a personal plan for improving communication and presentation skills</td>
<td>Individual work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Gather feedback from participants and evaluate the training</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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