

## Session 5

### **IMPROVING AWARENESS OF EDUCATORS AND ADULT LEARNERS IN PRISON ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ENHANCING SOCIAL SKILLS RELATED TO 21 CENTURY SKILLS, DURING VOCATIONAL TRAINING (STIMULATION AND MOTIVATION OF PRISONERS TO ENGAGE IN LONG-LIFE LEARNING PROCESS)**

#### ***Purpose:***

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The purpose of this session is to highlight the importance of developing and improving social skills by prison educators during vocational training. Educators will gain knowledge about strategies for greater involvement of adult learners in the learning process, in order to successfully acquire competencies and skills. By presenting certain tools, educators will gain knowledge on how to develop or improve certain social skills of the adult learner related to 21st century skills, which are relevant for the occupation they are being trained for.

**This session will focus on** increasing the awareness of the educators to include development of social skills related to 21st century in their educational and VET programs in prison context. Considering that the success of the VET programs, depends on the inmate engagement and motivation, will be presented a different teacher-tested strategies for boosting of engagement of the adult learners in increasing their knowledge and their social skills during vocational training. Given that there are different groups of adult learners, the educator needs to make an assessment for developing the necessary social skills during vocational training, in order to successfully perform work tasks either in prison or after release. At the same time, the session will show possible exercises for developing and improving social skills related to 21st century skills, which can be used in various professional development programs in prisons.

#### **This session will provide educators:**

- to increase their awareness of the need to develop social skills related to the 21st century, among adult learners during vocational training.
- to acquire knowledge about strategies for greater involvement and motivation of adult learners in the process of learning competencies and skills.
- to gain knowledge on the application of various exercises to develop and improve certain social skills related to the 21st century, applicable in various vocational training programs in prisons.

**Specific goals of the session:**

- to enable an exchange of experiences related to increasing awareness of the educators and adult learners about the importance of developing social skills related to the 21st century, during vocational training in prisons.
- educators to exchange good practices for motivation and involvement of adult learners in the process of learning competencies and social skills
- exchanging ideas between educators for stimulating an exercises, applicable during vocational training with the aim of simultaneously acquiring knowledge, competencies and developing key social skills needed for a specific occupation.

***Thematic units related to 21st Century skills:***

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1. **Promotion of the social skill for 21th century in VET (stimulation and motivation of adult learners to engage in learning)**
2. **Encourage creativity and critical thinking during VET**
3. **Teach collaboration skills during VET**
4. **Foster 21<sup>st</sup>- century communication skills**

***Methods & Tools:***

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*interactive methods (lectures, brainstorming, guided discussion, individual and group discussions)*

***Materials (resources) needed:***

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***Exercise 1: "Forget the Brainstorm. Try the Brainwrite (in English courses)"***

***Exercise 2: „Express yourself through ikebana“ (horticulture course)***

***Exercise 3: „Praise, Criticism, or Feedback“ (vocational training for hairdresser)***

***Exercise 4: „Exercise for teamwork“***

***Exercise 5: "Listening skills"***

***Exercise 6: „Non-verbal communication in the work process“***

## **Assessment:**

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Assessment of the competences can be done using self-evaluation forms or group discussions.

## **Introduction**

Social skills are a package of skills that allow people to communicate, connect and socialize with others. They generally include multiple cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes, such as problem-solving, perspective taking, moral reasoning, self-control, and positive behavioral skills (Ang and Hughes 2002; Spence 2003). They improve the way people present, cooperate, and relate to other, and help them to improve the quality of their lives.

Lacking social skills has been associated with problems on various life domains, and research over the past decades has repeatedly linked a lack of social skills with (Dishion et al. 1984; Freedman et al. 1978; Gaffney and McFall 1981; Laak et al. 2003; Larson et al. 2007) difficulties in reintegration and increased risk for reoffending of the inmates. In order inmates to have a better chance to reintegrate in the society, social skills are often targeted in the treatment for inmates. The assumption is that reducing the social skill deficits that led to the initial delinquent behavior will reduce subsequent delinquent behavior and can improve their process of reintegration in the society. The best way of developing social skills is through education, experience, appropriate training, and practice. According to Paulo Freire education can promote many social skills and lasting transformations in a group where teacher and students all learn together and value each and everyone's' existing knowledge, while they research, and discover new facts. Considering that education is a valuable tool for making changes in the lives of the inmates like adult learners, the VET trainings can be used for enhancing their social skills, beside gathering knowledge about a certain vocation. The main goal of implementing educational and VET programs in prison is to acquire basic knowledge, development and improvement of social skills and habits of inmates and obtaining professional qualifications. In that way, it provides the opportunity for inmates to engage in useful activities in the prison context, improves their employment prospects after release, facilitates the process of their personal development and transformation and enhances their prospects of developing the motivation, autonomy and responsibility to gain control over their lives after their release. As Duguid stated, building an ethical or moral dimension into education or VET, is also an important issue for prison education (Duguid, 1992). Therefore, improving or developing social skills should be incorporated in the vocational programs.

Regardless of whether inmate education leads to employment post-release, evidence suggests that completing VET in prison increases self-esteem and self-efficacy,

which relate to an individual's belief in their ability to success and impacts the way an individual approaches goals, tasks, and challenges.

### **1. Thematic unit 1- Promotion of the social skills connected to 21 century skills in the VET programs in prison context (stimulation and motivation of adult learners to engage in learning)**

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The 21st Century Skills are a framework of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that people will need to be successful in the digital age. The 21st century skills bring unprecedented changes every day, from advanced technology to new ways of understanding the world.

There are three 21st Century Skill Categories. Each 21st Century skill is broken into one of three categories:

- **Learning skills**- Also known as the "four Cs" of 21st century learning, these include critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity.
- **Life skills** - Flexibility, initiative, social skills, productivity, leadership
- **Literacy skills** - Information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy<sup>1</sup>

Learning skills (the four C's) teach students about the mental processes required to adapt and improve upon a modern work environment.

Literacy skills (IMT) focuses on how students can discern facts, publishing outlets, and the technology behind them. There's a strong focus on determining trustworthy sources and information to separate it from the misinformation that floods the Internet.

Life skills (FLIPS) take a look at intangible elements of a student's everyday life. These intangibles focus on both personal and professional qualities.<sup>2</sup>

**Generally, educators agree that these skills should be weaved into the education process.** Here is a non-exhaustive list of the most cited 21st century skills.

- Critical thinking
- Communication skills
- Creativity
- Problem solving

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/comprehensive-guide-21st-century-skills>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/what-are-21st-century-skills>

- Perseverance
- Collaboration
- Information literacy
- Technology skills and digital literacy
- Media literacy
- Global awareness
- Self-direction
- Social skills
- Literacy skills
- Civic literacy
- Social responsibility
- Innovation skills
- Thinking skills

Educators need to deeply understand and model the skills that their adult learners should develop. The educators should integrate the 21st century skills into their professional development, as a precursor to growing these competencies in adult learners. To achieve this goal, educators must move away from traditional teaching methods and embrace creative strategies that foster 21st-century capabilities.

Prisons should increasingly focus their curriculums on VET on these skills, to better prepare adult learners for the future. Generally, educators agree that the VET programs must weave these skills into learning experiences of the adult learners,<sup>3</sup>but they can prioritize different 21st century skills depending on what is most important to their vocational training. With the right skills and knowledge, adult learners can make the most of their future opportunities. Not only does teaching 21st-century skills provide students with great life and career opportunities, but it gives them the tools necessary to become more productive citizens of the world.<sup>4</sup>

Learning 21st Century Skills, adult learners gain a better understanding of technology, develop new ways of thinking and problem solving, become more creative in expressing themselves and collaborating with others, and gain a deeper appreciation for digital citizenship.

In addition to teaching 21st Century Skills in the classroom, prisons should also provide opportunities for adult learners to put their skills into practice.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/comprehensive-guide-21st-century-skills>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.rolljak.com/blog/10-ways-to-promote-21st-century-skills-in-your-class>

*Strategies for educators to improve engagement of the inmates (adult learners) in the process of learning knowledge and skills*

The engagement of the adult learners is the process of learning knowledge and skills, will have positive outcomes in the training. There are strategies that can be used to boost engagement and improve adult learner's knowledge and skills from the VET:

1. Start Your Class with Bell Ringer Activities
2. Teach with Enthusiasm
3. Promote Active Learning Over Passive Learning
4. Make Your Material Relevant
5. Offer Role-Play Examples
6. Play Learning Games
7. Adopt Blended Learning Strategies
8. Incorporate Technology When Appropriate
9. Use Project-Based Learning (PBL)
10. Meet Your Challenges in the Classroom<sup>5</sup>

## **Thematic unit 2 - Encourage creativity and critical thinking.**

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Creativity is a mental process which includes generating new ideas, concepts or associations from existing ideas and concepts. From a scientific standpoint, the products of creative thinking (sometimes referred to as divergent thinking) are considered original and appropriate. Alternatively, the standard concept of creativity holds it to be an act of creating something new.

**Encouraging creativity** and critical thinking together, means creating an environment where adult learners feel comfortable taking risks and thinking outside the box., and history shows that many things we imagine are later actually created.

Educators in the prison can incorporate problem-based learning activities and open-ended questions in their lessons. Additionally, they can provide opportunities for adult learners to work on projects that allow them to be creative and use their critical thinking skills.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> More from

<https://info.aeseducation.com/hubfs/keeping-students-engaged-in-cte-final.pdf?hsCtaTracking=afc2dfffa-29f9-4103-863a-5e07be9a2843%7C93f9b64d-5e85-4a77-8142-81d9263c980b>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.rolljak.com/blog/10-ways-to-promote-21st-century-skills-in-your-class>

## EXERCISE 1 “Forget the Brainstorm. Try the Brainwrite (in English courses)”<sup>7</sup>

### What is brainwriting?

Sharing ideas in groups isn't the problem. When people share ideas out loud in a group a couple of things typically happen that lead to group thinking. Groupthink is the opposite of unique ideas. In brainstorming a lot of the talking is often done by one or two people. And if one person is talking, you're not thinking of your own ideas, you're putting your brainpower into comprehending and assimilating their ideas. Where is the space for your own thoughts?

Early ideas tend to influence the rest of the conversation. This process is called “anchoring”. Brainwriting is an alternative- write first, talk second.

### How to Brainwrite:

Get your students to write down a few rough ideas for solving a particular problem.

Each piece of paper is then passed on to someone else, who reads it silently and adds their own ideas to the page then they pass the page on.

Repeat until everyone or at least a few has had a chance to add. The notes can then be gathered, ready for discussion.

### Think-Pair-Scaffold the Share

Based on the previous exercise, the educator will have the first draft ideas. The educator will post these ideas on a wall.

Pair up students to walk around and look at the ideas. Scaffold how they do this if they aren't used to analyzing things: Set a task – either to rate the ideas or categorize them in some way.

From an English point of view, this also gives the opportunity to repeat key language. Then everyone comes together to share either in small groups or as a whole class.

Objective: this exercise will increase creative thinking, critical thinking. The exercises will give the opportunity to exercise English language, but the students will see connections in

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<sup>7</sup> <https://eltcampus.com/blog/develop-creative-thinking-in-your-english-language-class/>

concepts or images and generate ideas faster and more confidently, so they have material to work with.

## EXERCISE 2 „ Express yourself through ikebana“ (horticulture course)

- **Objective:** this activity will help participant through the preparation of the ikebana to increase their creativity, to be innovative, to learn to work in a team, to learn to manage time properly
- **Time:** 40 minutes
- **Materials:** scissors, kenzan, bowl/vase, flowers, leaves, blades of grass, a branch of twig blossoms

### Exercise

1. After the lecture about preparation of ikebana, divide the participants into small groups.
2. Explain to the participants that they will be able to create ikebana and note that they have the chance to choose a theme and create their own flower arrangements.
3. Give them instruction that they have 30 minutes to prepare the ikebana, but there are no rules or specific steps to follow — teams can shape their arrangements however they like, paying attention to their postures and taking time for self-reflection as they work.
4. Give them examples for some themes (for example winter fall, love, gratitude, nature...)
5. The participants should create ikebana using different materials: flowers, leaves, blades of grass.
6. After the ikebanas are prepared by the groups, ask the representative of the group to explain the inspiration about chosen particular theme and the specific materials for creating the ikebana.
7. Ask them to share the challenges they faced and their satisfaction with the product with other groups.
8. After presenting the ikebanas from all groups, open a group discussion about which ikebana is the most creative.
9. Open up a group discussion about which product is the best.
10. At the end of the activity a commemorative photo should be taken with the most creative ikebana, and with each group and their creation.



### EXERCISE 3 „Praise, Criticism, or Feedback “ (vocational training for hairdresser)

**Objective:** this activity will help participants to determine the differences between criticism, praise, and feedback – not only how to offer it, but how to receive it as well.

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:** One set of “Praise | Criticism | Feedback” cards for each group. Alternatively, three pieces of chart paper – each with one of the words on it.

In a work setting, especially when you work with clients, we give and receive many different types of information and responses. Particularly in the workplaces that work with clients (like hairdressers) to recognize different types of other opinions and different feedback.

#### **Directions for educators:**

Discuss the difference between praise, criticism, and feedback and ask participants for examples of each.

- Praise: an expression of approval
- Criticism: an expression of disapproval based on perceived mistakes or faults
- Feedback: information about a person’s performance of a task – used primarily as a basis for improvement

Divide the group into pairs of two.

Read the following statements aloud – one at a time.

#### **Notes for facilitator:**

It is suggested that the facilitator use different voice tones to truly help participants differentiate the intended meaning of each sentence (which, by the way, can certainly vary).

After each statement, give each pair 10 seconds to decide whether the statement is criticism, praise, or feedback. Someone from each team should hold up the card that represents a collective decision. If chart paper and sentence strips were used, participants could move around the room to match each statement to what they believe to be the correct match.

### **Statements**

1. Mr. Plod told me how much he appreciated your thank you note after you finished his hairstyle. He thought it was a great personal touch.
2. Your Hair Chair is such a mess. Are you sure you are going to make my hairstyle on that chair?
3. I noticed that you've already late with my hairstyle done.
4. How many times do I have to tell you how much to cut my hair?
5. You look great today!
6. I think you would have finished the haircut better if I had the opportunity to better explain to you the idea of how to cut my hair
7. I like the fact that you showed me pictures of different hairstyles for this official occasion, instead of relying only on my own picture.

- With the larger group, discuss the different ways people may react or respond differently to praise, criticism, and feedback. It is inevitable that we will all receive criticism at some point on the job, and the way in which we respond can impact our own attitude and the attitudes of those with whom we work.

- Discuss with the group how they, personally, respond differently to praise vs. feedback vs. criticism.

### **Conclusion**

Take the opportunity to rephrase the way in which any of the above statements were made. How might rephrasing get a different response or reaction?

### **Some tips for responding to Constructive Criticism**

- Stop Your First Reaction. At the first sign of criticism, before you do anything—stop.  
...
- Remember the Benefit of Getting Feedback. ...
- Listen for Understanding. ...
- Say Thank You. ...
- Ask Questions to Deconstruct the Feedback. ...

- Request Time to Follow Up<sup>8</sup>.

### **Thematic unit 3 - Teach collaboration skills**

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In the 21st century, students need to know how to work together effectively. This means teaching them to communicate clearly, listen attentively, and respect others' opinions.

You can promote collaboration by incorporating group work into your lessons and encouraging adult learners to share their ideas with the class.<sup>9</sup>

#### **EXERCISE 4 FOR TEAMWORK**

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One of the most important collaboration skills is the teamwork.

Teamwork involves building relationships and working with other people using several important skills and habits:

- Working cooperatively
- Contributing to groups with ideas, suggestions, and effort
- Communication (both giving and receiving)
- Sense of responsibility
- Healthy respect for different opinions, customs, and individual preferences
- Ability to participate in group decision-making

Learning outputs : Participants will learn about positive teamwork behavior and discover how their own conduct can impact others on a team.

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<sup>8</sup> For more information: <https://www.themuse.com/advice/taking-constructive-criticism-like-a-champ>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.rolljak.com/blog/10-ways-to-promote-21st-century-skills-in-your-class>

## **Thematic unit 4 - Foster 21st-century communication skills**

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In order to maintain good working environment, and also to solve everyday problems, convicted persons need to acquire various working abilities and social skills such as: solving problems in everyday life and at the workplace, accomplishing tasks in a team, the ability for different types of communication, for non-violent resolution of misunderstandings in the work process. Training on communication skills in prisons allows the inmates to have better communication with the environment during their stay and after release, considering that inmates have serious communication difficulties due to specific prison conditions. Because of the isolation from the social environment, after leaving, these programs enable easier integration into society, especially at the workplace.

Given that some life competencies can only be acquired by direct involvement in activities, when it comes to convicted persons, participation in vocational training is a good basis for learning social skills. Instructors who are involved in the training of various trades should be theoretically and experientially educated about the importance of certain social skills for the successful performance of the trades, namely: listening skills, positive non-verbal communication, and an assertive way of resolving conflicts.

The methodology practiced in the training is specific: it is discussed in a circle, in small groups, problems are solved, research and discovery are made, new experiences are gained, and social skills are developed together with craft skills. The training is understood as a joint activity of the instructor and the inmates and is based on mutual trust.

Through professional training, which includes training for active listening, assertiveness and non-verbal communication, the inmates develop and improve: self-respect, self-control, respect for the rights of others, developing responsibility for one's own actions, the ability to make decisions, calmly solving problems and conflicts, communication and interpersonal skills, empathy.

### **Topic 1: ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS AND ADEQUATE NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

**The purpose of the workshop** is to raise awareness of the connection between work and ways of communicating with customers (active listening and non-verbal communication) that contribute to mutual understanding and customer satisfaction.

#### **Methodology:**

Brainstorm = thinking creatively about a topic and list experiences, ideas, strategies etc.

Discuss = lead discussion of the topic, questions or experiences that arise from activities.

Group/2 Groups/3 Groups = involving the entire group/the group split in half/the group split into three.

- Individual = participants work on this activity on their own.
- Invite = invite participants to share, respond, do, or consider something.
- Pairs = ask participants to form pairs. Encourage them to get to know one another by choosing different partners.
- Question = ask for specific ideas, information, or experiences.
- Share = ask for the sharing of ideas or experiences.
- Small group = ask participants to form small groups of about four to eight.
- Task = the leader does something, or has the group or participants do something.
- Triads = ask participants to form groups of three.
- Worksheet = ask participants to write notes for a particular activity in the spaces provided on their worksheets.

Discuss, Invite, Question, Brainstorm and Share simply suggest different ways of engaging participants.

## EXERCISE 5 LISTENING SKILLS

**a) Brainstorming:** Why is it important to have good listening skills in the hairdresser's workplace?

What are the consequences of careless listening?

What do you think a good listener should do?

**b) Role play:**

- We divide them into pairs: one is a hairdresser; the other is a demanding customer.
- This exercise can be carried out while learning some hairdressing techniques. The task is to practice attentive listening.
- We provide a list of what a good listener should do (the list is below).
- To half the group (who will be in the role of hairdressers) and task, them to do the opposite of what they should in contact with the customer (e.g. frown, not look us in the eye, ask us, and answer phone calls, to look at the phone).
- After 5 minutes, the same participants (hairdressers) behave as recommended (according to the list).

**List:**

**1. Listen with your body language:**

- Sit up.
- Lean forward. Keep eye contact.
- Nod. Smile.

**2. React with words:**

- Say, "I understand."
- Say, "I see."
- Say, "I didn't know that."
- Say, "Really?"
- Say, "That's interesting."

**3. Rephrase what you have heard to make sure you understood:**

- Say, "Let me make sure I understand..."

**4. Ask questions:**

- Ask for more information.
- Ask for clarification.
- Ask the speaker to explain or define words you do not know.

**5. Be patient and stay engaged:**

- Don't interrupt.
- Don't tap, shuffle papers, pack up, take phone calls, text or look around.

Taken from: Using Listening Skills, cont., page 12 Unit Eight Keeping a Job:  
Handling Conflict, Communicating & Working with Others

c) Sharing in a group: - **Materials for teachers and guiding questions**

- Question for a participant who was in the role of a customer:  
How did you feel in the first five minutes, and how did you feel in the second five minutes, considering the hairdresser's behavior?  
What is the difference?
- We encourage them to share desirable and undesirable ways of non-verbal and verbal communication of the hairdresser with customers.
- Which of them lead to conflict and which lead to better mutual understanding?

## **EXERCISE 6 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN THE WORK PROCESS**

**a) Filling in questionnaires:** Each participant receives two questionnaires through which they have to evaluate how they communicate non-verbally at the workplace, where one questionnaire refers to negative and another to positive non-verbal communication (the questionnaires are in English and will be placed in the annex).

**b) Once they have filled them in, they share in a circle:** How do we communicate non-verbally? Each participant shares their assessment of their own non-verbal communication and how, according to them, it is desirable to behave non-verbally in the workplace in order for communication to be effective.

## SOMETIMES ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

Facial expressions and gestures communicate as much as – or more than – words. Sometimes we don't realize how much we are expressing non-verbally, and then our actions can get us into trouble or make the other person upset, even if we don't say a word. Have you ever communicated in any of the non-verbal ways listed below? It takes practice to express feelings using words in a manner that is constructive and respectful.

1. **Facial expressions:** The human face is very expressive and can communicate strong feelings without saying a word. Showing disgust or impatience or rolling your eyes when someone is talking is usually considered disrespectful. Have you ever said one thing when your face has shown something else?

2. **Eye contact:** Eye contact is an important type of non-verbal communication. With your eyes alone, you can communicate anger, attentiveness, sadness, or curiosity. Good eye contact shows you are interested in continuing the conversation. Do you look at people when they are speaking to you? Do you express your feelings with your eyes?

3. **Body movements and posture:** Our ideas about people are affected by how they walk, sit, hold our head, stand, etc. The way we move communicates a lot! What do your posture and your movements say about you? Do they communicate the message you wish to send to the world?

4. **Gestures:** We often use our hands when we are arguing or excited. Some gestures are considered disrespectful, like pointing at someone or jabbing a finger when you are angry. Have you ever used gestures to express your feelings when you could have used words instead?

5. **Touch:** We communicate many messages through touch. Touch may be friendly and respectful, such as a firm handshake or a reassuring pat on the back; it can also be unwelcome, inappropriate, or disrespectful, such as a sharp tap on the shoulder, a patronizing pat on the head, or a controlling grip on someone's arm. If ever someone tells you they do not appreciate being touched, you must respect their wishes.

6. **Tone of Voice:** The tone of voice we use when we are talking communicates how we feel in a very powerful way, no matter what we are saying. Sarcasm, contempt, disrespect, anger, and boredom can all be communicated with the voice and can greatly impact how the other person feels about what we are saying and how willing they are to listen and work out problems. Do you notice the tone of voice you use when you are talking with others?

7. **Space:** We can make other people uncomfortable by standing too close and invading their personal space. Be careful to never use physical space to communicate aggression or intimidate someone and remember to always remember that people need space around them to feel respected and at ease. How do you feel when someone invades your personal space?

## Topic 2: THE MEANING OF "I AM SPEAKING" AND ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

### Objective of the workshop:

- Acquiring awareness of the importance of an assertive way of communication.
- Understanding the difference between assertive and aggressive behavior.
- Practice of "I speech" as an element of assertive behavior.

### Example 1. Using "I-Messages:"

#### Expressing Feelings without Blaming Others

When you're upset about something, it is easy to blame the other person for whatever happened. But when you blame other people, they often get defensive and feel angry with you. Everyone ends up with hurt feelings and the problem doesn't get resolved.

Use "I-messages" to tell other people what you feel and want, without blaming, judging, threatening, or challenging them. "I-messages" focus on how YOU feel, rather than blaming the person you are talking to.

#### SCENARIO – BLAMING

The teacher asks the students to open their books and start an activity. Jay was looking in his backpack for a pencil and didn't hear what the teacher said. Everybody else is following along and the teacher is asking comprehension questions about the reading. When the teacher calls on Jay, he gets angry and tells the teacher to stop picking on him.

USE AN "I-MESSAGE" INSTEAD!

1. Say what you feel (I FEEL...)  
I feel confused...
2. Tell what the other person did that upset you (WHEN YOU...)  
When you give directions, and I can't find the page we're on...
3. Describe how you were affected (BECAUSE...)  
Because I got lost and fell behind...
4. State what would make the situation better for you (AND I WANT...) or ask the person to help you  
Would you please...

☑ Show two videos to illustrate the "I talk":

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZW1h6rJZ\\_I&list=TLPQMDExMTIwMjPwah4PhTn7SA&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZW1h6rJZ_I&list=TLPQMDExMTIwMjPwah4PhTn7SA&index=2)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWTsH7rBffI>

## **2. Brief presentation on assertiveness**

Aggressive persons provoke aggressive responses and therefore it is important for convicted persons to learn not to retaliate with aggression because it leads to further aggressive behavior, deepens the conflict and is ineffective and may cause conflict with the law.

Unlike an aggressive person, an assertive person believes that disagreements are a normal occurrence and that everyone has the right to their own opinion. Being assertive means standing up for yourself and your rights, expressing your needs and views in a direct, unambiguous, and open way, respecting and not endangering the rights of others.

Difference between the behavior of an aggressive and assertive person

### **A person who expresses feelings in an AGGRESSIVE manner:**

- Yells or screams to get her thoughts or opinions heard.
- Dominates the discussion and doesn't let the other person talk.
- Uses disrespectful, abusive, or insulting language when talking to another person.
- Threatens the other person with revengeful actions or physical abuse.
- May bottle up feelings until she explodes.
- May use physical violence. (It is possible for a person to be aggressive even if he never gets physical).

### **A person who expresses feelings in an ASSERTIVE manner:**

- Takes time to clarify for himself how he feels about the situation.
- Speaks in a firm, clear voice.
- Makes "I" statements.
- Takes responsibility for her own feelings without blaming anyone else.
- Always avoids disrespectful, insulting, abusive and threatening language.
- Offers suggestions and solutions.
- Listens to what the other person says.
- Excuses himself if he needs to. If he feels he can't control himself without acting aggressively, she takes charge by excusing herself and arranging to talk about the problem when she is able to be calm and assertive.

### **How to deal with aggressive people?**

The most effective way to oppose aggressive persons is:

- To speak in a calm, uniform but confident tone - that is, not to shout, not to show signs of anger and fear, to speak calmly, to show that you are in control of yourself, your emotions and that you are not one may be provoked to react aggressively.

- To interrogate the person and continue
- Try to understand why they are angry – it is important to show the person that they are being listened to and that they are trying to understand their motives.
- Let her know that she is understood.
- To convey a short and clear message - for example: "I understand that this is a solution for you, but, really, I don't want to do it", to make it short, clear, and focused, without spreading the topic and excuses.
- Consistently repeat that short message – however necessary, as long as the person

Although the assertive way of communication does not guarantee us consensus in all situations, it guarantees that the interlocutor heard us and understood our opinions. At the same time, we will feel better, because the feeling that we did our best increases.

### How to become assertive?

Basic elements of assertive speech are:

- Publicly expressing what behavior would bother you;
- Stating the reasons why someone's behavior bothers you, how you would feel then, what you would think about it and how it would affect you;
- Formulation, clear request and what you would like do on that occasion.

Or, more specifically, the steps in assertive speech are explained to them:

**First step:** To describe the behavior of another person or a problem that bothers you. For example: "When you're late for a meeting..." "When you yell at me..."

**Second step:** The feelings associated with the mentioned behavior or problem are expressed. For example: "...I feel angry..." "...I feel humiliated".

**Third step:** Describe the thought, that is, the belief associated with that feeling. For example: "Because I'm late with other commitments.", "...because I think we can calmly talk about the problem...".

**Step Four:** After that, you clearly express what you would like to change. For example: "I would like you to...", "What I want is...".

**Fifth step:** You ask the person what he thinks about your request. For example: "What do you think?", "Do you agree?"

**Sixth step:** We are waiting for the answer. For example: "That's okay, I agree."

At the end, you should thank the interlocutor. For example: "Thanks, I appreciate it." At the same time, the interlocutor should look into each other's eyes, not avoid eye contact, use relaxed gestures, and not show nervousness. A normal, non-emotional tone should be used in communication. We need to sound definite and convincing. What we must keep in

mind, in order to avoid conflict communication, is to avoid talking when we are nervous, angry, etc.

As a method, one can practice assertive behavior in 7 steps, as it is described as the acronym below.

### **Attention**

Capture attention in a way that is of interest to listen to each other. In this way you have wide open space to negotiate and avoid rejection reaction that can occur even when you tell the other that you want to "give a feedback". Most people hate to receive unsolicited feedback but accept it because it is "politically correct".

### **Situation**

Describe the situation briefly. Specify when, where and under what conditions the interaction occurs. Be brief and specific.

### **Emotion**

Tell yourself what is for the emotional impact of the situation. Be also very concise.

### **Reaction**

Explain the behavioral response as a result of the emotion you feel. Make reference to the consequences of emotion felt.

### **Test**

Test your level of concern of the party by offering them a solution that you think or asking his opinion. Do not start with the idea that your solution is the only right one. If the solution comes from him, he is more likely to put it into practice, according to persuasion law called the law of consistency.

### **Involvement**

Get involved with the other in finding a method for monitoring the progress of the new behavior. Ask him what he could do because it requires that the new behavior to be easily reproducible, and to give you feedback to help further.

### **Valorization**

Thank the interlocutor for listening and that he is willing to accept the new terms. Show him that your relationship with him is valuable and important.

### **Conclusions**

Assertiveness is a useful communications tool. Its application is contextual and appropriate in all situations. Using sudden assertiveness may be perceived as an act of aggression by others.

The presentations and watching the videos will allow instructors to understand the essence of assertiveness, the importance of assertive communication to improve the work skills of convicted persons, and with personal training, they will acquire skills on how to incorporate it into their professional development programs.

**Further reading:**

- <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/21st-century-skills>.
- <https://www.rolljak.com/blog/10-ways-to-promote-21st-century-skills-in-your-class>.