

3.2. Quick guide – effective communication strategies

3.2.1. Do:

- Show respect (always, no matter what)
- Stay calm (always)
- Allow venting (to a degree)
- Acknowledge emotions (without saying ‘*I know how you feel!*’)
- Show empathy
- Acknowledge their point of view (without agreeing)
- Find something to agree with
- Paraphrase, or at least echo what they say (to show you are listening)
- Use non-confrontational language
- Listen actively
- Clarify (when unsure)
- Check understandings and manage expectations
- Allow space to think, if necessary
- Admit and apologise (where appropriate)
- Seek resolution (where appropriate)

3.2.2. Do not:

- Argue, defend or deny
- Give excuses (explanations are different)
- Be perceived as being confrontational, verbally and non-verbally
- Be overly formal or bureaucratic in your responses
- Be too informal and be wary of humour as it can be misinterpreted
- Respond to fighting words
- Suggest the person needs therapy or counselling
- Suggest the person is being unreasonable – instead of labelling the person, focusing on your perceptions about the person’s conduct and how that is affecting you is likely to be more effective
- Invade the person’s personal space