

Priming Strategies - Social Communication - Basic Skills

Greetings and goodbyes

To be a good co-worker, I need to respond when someone greets me. When someone speaks to me, I will _____

(nod, say hello, say _____, look at their face when saying _____, smile, etc.)

When I leave at the end of a class period (or work day), I want my co-workers to think I am polite. I will say goodbye to _____. When I leave I will _____

(wave, look at the face, make specific statements, etc.)

When someone says goodbye to me, I will _____

(wave, look at the face, make specific statements, etc.)

Responding to questions and comments

If someone asks me a question or makes a comment to me and I do not answer, what happens? (Instructor: Put this in words that are meaningful to the individual. Does he care if he appears rude? Does he care if the supervisor is unhappy?)

Someone is making a comment to me if _____

(Hints: They are looking toward me, they are close to me and no one else can hear them, etc.)

Sometimes I do not want to answer questions while I am working.

When someone asks me a question or makes a comment, I can _____

Responding to interruptions

When I am interrupted, I feel _____

Sometimes my teacher or supervisor needs to interrupt me and give me new information.

(Instructor: Identify motivation for tolerating interruption – i.e., keeping job, getting a good grade, etc.)

When I am interrupted, I can _____

(Hints: Ask for a moment to finish a sentence or problem; practice a self-calming routine; use a script card to cope, etc.)

Interrupting others

Sometimes I need information. Sometimes I need to find out what to do.

Interrupting others can make them irritated.

When I need to interrupt someone, I can _____

(Hints: Watch for who is not too busy, ask the teacher when there is a pause, use a script – “Excuse me, can I ask a question?” etc.)

Adjusting volume

There are times when I need to speak softly. These include: _____

There are times when I need to speak loudly to be heard. These include: _____

Instructor: Consider if a voice volume meter would be helpful. Creating a volume meter can be as easy as drawing a line on a page with marks for 1 (whisper) to 5 (yell) and practicing identification of volume.

Help the student self-identify both his own and your volume levels. Help the student identify where to use a level 2 and where to use a level 4.

Maintaining personal space

Sometimes if I get too close to someone, this can make the person feel uncomfortable. If they are uncomfortable, they may not wish to talk to me again.

To make others comfortable, I will _____

(Hints: Keep a distance of an arm's length, avoid touching _____ (specific body parts), shake hands, high five, etc.)

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Entering ongoing conversations

Sometimes I want to join a conversation with others.

1) When I walk up to the people in conversation (or am around others talking), I will watch to see if: _____

(Hints: They ignore me, they look at me as I walk up, they turn away from me, they smile, etc.)

2) If I walk up and I see _____ (signs that I can join), I will then listen to what they are talking about. Interrupting and talking about something else may be rude.

3) After I listen to what they are talking about, I will _____

(Hints: Ask a question, wait for pause in the conversation to say something, etc.)

Selecting conversation topics

Sometimes there is a break or pause in the conversation. When there is a pause, I can bring up a different topic. I like talking about my favorite things. However, conversations work best when others are interested too.

Before I bring up a new topic of conversation, I will _____

(Hints: Think about what I know about the other people in the conversation, identify things that they might want to talk about, ask if they want to talk about _____, etc.)

Showing interest during the conversation

Sometimes I want to keep a conversation going. Besides talking, I need to show that I am interested in the topic (or what the person is talking about). To show that I am interested, I can _____

(Hints: Nod every ____ sentences, look at the person [how often], smile when I agree with something that is said, etc.)

Going with the flow in conversations

Sometimes I get very excited about a topic. I want to tell others all that I know. If I talk too much, others may think I am rude. Conversation goes back and forth. If I talk too long, it may feel like a lecture.

To keep the conversation going back and forth, I can _____

(Hints: Share specific number of details then ask a question, ask if partner wants to hear about the topic, pause after specific number of statements and wait for a response, watch for body language [specific] to determine interest, etc.)

Exiting and closing conversations

Sometimes I want to leave a conversation. If I leave _____ (quickly, without saying anything, walk off, etc.), others may think this is rude. If they think I am rude, they may not want to talk to me again.

When I have to leave a conversation, I can: _____

(Hints: Wait for a break and say "Excuse me, I would like to keep talking but I have to go, sorry!" or other agreed upon statement, etc.)

Responding to compliments and praise

A compliment is: _____

When someone gives me a compliment, I _____

(Hints: What do I do right now? – do I have trouble accepting or am embarrassed [specific behaviors], do I ignore, etc.)

Even if I am uncomfortable, I can _____

(Hint: Say "thank you" and go back to work)

Giving praise & compliments

Giving compliments is one way to be a good co-worker or friend.

Define what to give compliments for (in different settings, to different people): _____

How often can I give compliments? _____

Offering to help

Sometimes I need to keep doing my work tasks.

Identify times that I should keep working by myself. _____

Sometimes I can help someone with their work. My supervisor, teacher or co-workers appreciate me when I help (specify times and activities): _____

I can offer help: _____

Offering suggestions

Sometimes I see how to do a task better than others. I may want to give a suggestion.

Sometimes others see this as a criticism. Criticizing someone can make them angry with me.

When can I make suggestions? _____

(Specify times, activities, identify the behavior of others that suggests that a suggestion is welcome, etc.)

If I have a suggestion, I do not want it to sound like a criticism. I can make a suggestion by saying: _____

(Hints: You could say, "I have an idea of how to make that easier. Do you want to hear my idea?" If they say no, I will go on with my work and say nothing. This will keep them from being angry with me.)

Handling mistakes

I hate making mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes. If I ignore a mistake, what will happen? _____

_____ The best way to handle a mistake is _____

When I make a mistake, I will _____

_____ (Hints: Follow my script card, apologize once and go back to work, etc.)

Since I hate making mistakes, what can I do to prevent mistakes?

(Hints: Ask for feedback at specific scheduled times, check my work after finishing, ask a co-worker to look at my work, etc.)

Asking for help

In school or on the job, there are times when I need some help.

Asking for help is something that everyone does some of the time. I need some help when _____

(*The instructor must help label the problem in specific terms for the student to use in a script.)

When I need help, I feel: _____

Here is what I can do:

(Hints: Raise my hand; write my question on a note to give to the teacher / supervisor; use a script to label what is wrong and to ask for help, etc.)