



Cross-Generational Communication: How to be a Competent Communicator

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Rationale:

Through this training, you will learn how to communicate appropriately and effectively with members of generations that are not yours. We will be reviewing what appropriate and effective communication is while incorporating how to adapt messages based on the age of your audience.

Not only will this cross-generational communication training help you communicate better in your neighborhoods, but it will help you communicate in all areas of your life.

In this session, you will:

1. Identify the preferred communication styles of the four primary generations of adults.
2. Define communication competence.
3. Apply your knowledge to a case study requiring you to communicate competently with members of a different generation.

Discussion Questions: (7 minutes)

- Which of the four generations describes you?
- How consistent are these descriptions with your own experience?
- Which of the four generations do you have the most difficulty communicating with?
- Why?

To be a competent communicator, you must have both:

Appropriate:

+

Effective:

*Not causing others to lose face.
personal goals.*

You meet your

(Spitzberg & Cupach (1984))

Please jot down a personal experience when your cross-generational communication wasn't appropriate and effective.

Please answer these questions as you reflect upon this personal experience:

- Why wasn't your communication appropriate and effective?
 - What could you have done differently?
 - How did this hiccup impact:
 - 1) the situation?
 - 2) your interpersonal relationship with the individual?
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Case Study: (12 minutes)

You are the president of the neighborhood association. Here is the situation that is brought to your attention a few minutes ago:

- The Smiths put an expensive new cedar fence in their backyard while their next-door neighbors, the Johnsons, were away on a family vacation. During a neighborhood BBQ, Ms. Smith told everyone (including the Johnsons) about the fence project. A few days after the BBQ, Mr. Johnson made sure to inform Ms. Smith about where their own property line ended. A few days ago, the Johnsons returned from the trip, only to find that the cedar fence crossed the property line by nearly a foot! The Johnsons are furious with The Smiths, especially since they made a point of speaking about the property line prior to the fence going up. The Johnsons—who just called you in a fit of rage—have accused the Smiths of putting up the fence on purpose. He has now threatened to sue the Smiths for a boundary dispute.
- Your first job is to address the Johnsons' anger.
 - As you approach this task:
 - Come from the perspective of your own generation (identified above)
 - Remember that the Johnsons are in the generation that you identified as the most difficult to communicate with.

- What are your main message points? Why?
 - What are your channels for communication? Why?
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Case Study Discussion: (8-10 minutes)

- Prepare to share your case.
 - We've been discussing a "neighborhood" issue. How can we use this information in other areas of our life?
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Closer: (5 minutes)

THINK and SHARE!!

- Please list ONE thing you learned and want to take back to your neighborhoods and tell me HOW you are going to do it.
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