GESTÃO CORRENTE

GC 5 – Interpersonal Skills: **Supportive Communication**

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Learning Objectives

- Build supportive relationships even when delivering negative feedback
- Avoid defensiveness and disconfirmation in interpersonal communication
- Improve ability to apply principles of supportive communication
- Improve relationships by using personal management interviews

Positive Relationships

- Result in better physical and emotional well-being
- Help people perform better at work and concentrate more on the task at hand.

COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

"Most individuals don't seem to feel a strong need to improve their own skill level"

Most people believe they are effective communicators and that communication problems are a product of others' weaknesses, not their own

Frequent Organizational Problems

- Reliance of technology
- Dominance of e-mail
- Less face-to-face communication

Problems with Electronic Communication

- Too much information, low quality
- Lacks significance, lacks meaning
- Interpretation of information depends on relationships with sender

The normal is: Focus on Accuracy

- The focus of most communication books and courses is on ***communication accuracy.***
- When accuracy is the focus, attempts to improve communication generally center on improving the mechanics:
  - Transmitters
  - Receivers
  - Encoding
  - Decoding,
  - Sources
  - Destinations
  - Reducing or diminishing noise.

- The most problematic aspect of communication is not lack of accuracy. The major inhibitor to communication is interpersonal communication problems.

SUPPORTIVE COMMUNICATION

Helps the sender communicate accurately and honestly without jeopardizing interpersonal relationships.

Supportive Communication is the ability to build and strengthen relationships that enhance feelings of trust, openness, and support

Two common roles of a Manager: Coaching and Counseling

- Coaching: giving advice, direction or information to improve performance.
  - Coaching focuses on abilities

- Counseling: helping someone understand and resolve a problem him/herself by displaying understanding
  - Counseling focuses on attitudes

Coaching and Counseling

When to Coach

- ✓ Lack of ability
- ✓ Insufficient information
- ✓ Incompetence
- ✓ Subordinate must understand the problem

When to Counsel

- ✓ Personality clashes
- ✓ Defensiveness
- ✓ Other factors tied to emotions
- ✓ "I can help you recognize that a problem exists."

Supportive communication helps overcome obstacles

Defensiveness

- One individual feels threatened or attacked as a result of the communication
- Self-protection becomes paramount
- Energy is spent on constructing a defense rather than on listening
- Aggression, anger, competitiveness, and/or avoidance as a result of the communication

Disconfirmation

- Individual feels incompetent, unworthy, or insignificant as a result of the communication
- Attempts to reestablish self-worth take precedence
- Energy is spent trying to portray self-importance rather than on listening
- Showing off, self-centered behavior, withdrawal, and/or loss of motivation are common reactions

Attributes of Supportive Communication

- Congruent
  - Honest messages, where verbal (statements) match non verbal (thoughts and feelings)
- Descriptive
  - Describing objectively the occurrence, your reaction or other´s, and offering an alternative
- Problem-Oriented
  - Focus on problems and issues rather than people and their characteristics
- Validating
  - Communicate respect, flexibility, collaboration and areas of agreement
- Specific
  - Specific events or behaviors, avoiding general, extreme statements
- Conjunctive
  - Statements flow from what has been said previously
- Owned
  - Taking responsibility for your own statements by using "I.."
- Supportive Listening
  - Appropriate responses, with a bias toward reflective responses

Table 4.2 The Eight Attributes of Supportive Communication

- **Congruent, Not Incongruent**

  A focus on honest messages where verbal statements match thoughts and feelings.

  Example: "Your behavior really upset me." **Not** *"Do I seem upset? No, everything's fine."*

- **Descriptive, Not Evaluative**

  A focus on describing an objective occurrence, describing your reaction to it, and offering a suggested alternative.

  Example: "Here is what happened; here is my reaction; here is a suggestion that would be more acceptable." **Not** *"You are wrong for doing what you did."*

- **Problem-Oriented, Not Person-Oriented**

  A focus on problems and issues that can be changed rather than people and their characteristics.

  Example: "How can we solve this problem?" **Not** *"Because of you a problem exists."*

- **Validating, Not Invalidating**

  A focus on statements that communicate respect, flexibility, collaboration, and areas of agreement.

  Example: "I have some ideas, but do you have any suggestions?" **Not** *"You wouldn't understand, so we'll do it my way."*

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Table 4.2 The Eight Attributes of Supportive Communication

- **Specific, Not Global**

  A focus on specific events or behaviors and avoid general, extreme, or either-or statements.

  Example: "You interrupted me three times during the meeting." **Not** *"You're always trying to get attention."*

- **Conjunctive, Not Disjunctive**

  A focus on statements that flow from what has been said previously and facilitate interaction.

  Example: "Relating to what you just said, I'd like to raise another point." **Not** *"I want to say something (regardless of what you just said)."*

- **Owned, Not Disowned**

  A focus on taking responsibility for your own statements by using personal ("I") words.

  Example: "I have decided to turn down your request because . . . " **Not** *"You have a pretty good idea, but it wouldn't get approved."*

- **Supportive Listening, Not One-Way Listening**

  A focus on using a variety of appropriate responses, with a bias toward reflective responses.

  Example: "What do you think are the obstacles standing in the way of improvement? **Not** *"As I said before, you make too many mistakes. You're just not performing."*

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Effective Listening

- In skills important for managers, effective listening was ranked highest.
- Managers always think they are good listeners
- Individuals usually understand about a fourth of what is communicated.
- Empathy is needed

Responding to Others: Four Types of Responses

Advising

- Provides direction, evaluation, personal opinion, or instruction
- Creates listener control over the topic
- Can produce dependence

Deflecting

- Switches the focus from communicator's problem to one selected by the listener
- Appropriate if reassurance is needed
- Imply that the communicator's issues are not important

Probing (Elaboration, Clarification, Repetition, Reflection)

- Asks questions about what the communicator said
- Used to gather information
- Can appear that the communicator must justify what is happening

Reflecting

- Mirror back to the communicator the message that was heard
- Involves paraphrasing and clarifying
- Could appear that the listener isn't listening

4 Types of Probing Responses

Table 4.5 Four Types of Probing Responses

Type of Probe	Explanation
Elaboration Probe	Use when more information is needed. ("Can you tell me more about that?")
Clarification Probe	Use when the message is unclear or ambiguous. ("What do you mean by that?")
Repetition Probe	Use when topic drift occurs or statements are unclear. ("Once again, what do you think about this?")
Reflection Probe	Use to encourage more in-depth pursuit of the same topic. ("You say you are having difficulty?")

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Behavioral Guidelines

1. Differentiate between coaching situations and counseling situations
2. Use problem-oriented statements rather than person-oriented statements
3. Communicate congruently by acknowledging your true feelings without acting them out in destructive ways
4. Use descriptive, not evaluative, statements
5. Use validating statements that acknowledge the other person's importance and uniqueness
6. Use specific rather than global statements when correcting behavior
7. Use conjunctive statements that flow smoothly from what was said previously
8. Own your statements, and encourage the other person to do likewise
9. Demonstrate supportive listening
10. Implement a personal management interview program characterized by supportive communication

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT INTERVIEW

Table 4.6 Characteristics of a Personal Management Interview Program

- The interview is regular and private.
- The major intent of the meeting is continuous improvement in personal, interpersonal, and organizational performance, so the meeting is action oriented.
- Both the manager and the subordinate prepare agenda items for the meeting. It is a meeting for improving both of them, not just for the manager's appraisal.
- Sufficient time is allowed for the interaction, usually about an hour.
- Supportive communication is used so that joint problem solving and continuous improvement result (in both task accomplishment and interpersonal relationships).
- The first agenda item is a follow-up on the action items generated by the previous meeting.
- Major agenda items for the meeting might include:
  - Managerial and organizational problems
  - Organizational values and vision
  - Information sharing
  - Interpersonal issues
  - Obstacles to improvement
  - Training in management skills
  - Individual needs
  - Feedback on job performance
  - Personal concerns and problems
- Praise and encouragement are intermingled with problem solving but are more frequently communicated.
- A review of action items generated by the meeting occurs at the end of the interview.

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