

# Workplace Communication

## WA State Employee Assistance Program

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**M**any of us would like to improve our communication at work. Whether it's confronting a coworker you don't see eye to eye with, a supervisor that is difficult to approach, or being able to ask for resources that would help you perform your job better, communication skills are key to a positive outcome. Communication is one of the biggest challenges each of us face in the workplace. Here are some tips to help.



1. **One factor to keep in mind is the tone in which the message is being delivered.** A negative, accusatory, or aggressive tone can put the receiver on the defensive.
2. **Timing is everything.** If you want someone's full attention, make sure to request time in advance.
3. **Don't let fear get in the way.** Taking initiative to ask for things you need means breaking out of your comfort zone. This may be tough at first, but with practice it will become a learned habit.
4. **Write down your requests and focus on your concerns.** Focus on what you can control. The only thing you can control in the dialogue is your behavior and responses.
5. **Be realistic in your request.** If you're asking for a raise or new corner office, those options might not be available regardless of your approach.
6. **Don't wait for your annual evaluation to talk about things.** For example, if you're interested in learning opportunities, ask to schedule a time with your supervisor to discuss it.
7. **Get to the heart of the problem.** Listen carefully to identify the problem, and team up with coworkers to find workable solutions.
8. **Communication is a two-way street.** It's important to communicate your needs but it is also important to really listen to the other person talking. Even if you disagree, give your full attention.
9. **Contact your EAP.** Your EAP can offer confidential support and assistance with communication skills. Your EAP professional will provide feedback and validate your ideas and concerns. The EAP can also find resources to help you make progress.