

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

DURING CONSULTATION

1. Share openly

Share your experience and the impact that that experience has had on you. Share how the experience has made you feel. When you share openly the other person will be able to understand you better.

2. Really listen

Try not to interrupt and not to be thinking about how you will respond. Often people need to be heard before they can start to resolve a problem. Also, pay attention to body language and tone of voice. Much communication is nonverbal. Be open to the idea that you could learn something that would help you to resolve the issue that you are discussing.

3. Take the other participants' perspective

Try to put yourself in the other participants' shoes and try to understand why they do the things they do and feel the way they feel about the situation, even if you still disagree. The way people act is often influenced by experiences that they had in the past and by the need to fulfill basic human needs such as feeling safe, belonging, feeling in control, and feeling good about oneself. Ask yourself what things in the other person's past might be influencing them or what needs s/he might be trying to meet.

4. Focus on the future (not the past)

Be open to agreeing to disagree. Sometimes people can't come to an agreement about what happened in the past, but they can decide how they want to handle things in the future.

5. Don't make assumptions

Don't assume that you know what the other participants' intentions are. Often, we guess what their intentions were based on how it made us feel. So if we were hurt, we think that they meant to hurt us, but that might not be the case. People are complicated and do things for many reasons. It is hard to know what those reasons are.

6. Take Responsibility

It takes two to have a conflict. Though everyone may not have contributed equally, most of the time, everyone has done something that fuels the conflict. Try to identify what you could have done differently and share that. Also, avoid attempts to place blame; when people feel like they're blamed, they become defensive and therefore less willing to listen to your position.

7. Be creative

Because both the tribal representatives and the district have to agree that the consultation is satisfactory and complete, the process and outcomes will have to be acceptable to all participants. Think creatively about solutions that will address all participants' concerns and needs.