



**FY23 Quarter 2**

## Encouraging Communication Through Mutual Respect ADR also means “A Dialogue Resource”

### NM Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Bureau

We are a state Risk Management program that works with state employees and their agencies to access workplace mediation, communication-based training and alternative resources to workplace conflict. Our goal is to provide state employees an early resource to resolve conflicts in the workplace.

Visit our website at:  
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**NEW MEXICO**  
GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT



*When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know. But if you listen, you may learn something new.*  
~ Dalai Lama



The ADR Bureau offers online mediation!  
[Click here](#) for a recorded Program Overview to learn about the services we offer state employees at no cost.

### ADR TRAINING COMING SOON:

**Communicating Using Effective Questions**  
2-hour online training (for all state employees)  
December 7, 2022 – [click here for details](#)

**Essentials for Effective Communication**  
2-hour online training (for state employees new to ADR)  
December 8, 2022 – [click here for details](#)

**Human Trafficking Awareness & Response**  
1.5-hour webinar (for all state employees)  
December 13, 2022 – [click here for details](#)

**Building Intentional Listening Skills**  
2-hour online training (for all state employees)  
December 14, 2022 – [click here for details](#)  
December 20, 2022 – [click here for details](#)

**For Our Mediators:**  
Watch your email for special invites to our monthly continuing education workshops. We hope to see you often!

Classes above are FREE for state employees and space is limited.



## 5 Tips for Effective Communication by Maria Sobol, Ph.D.

Did you realize there is one activity we all do every single day that influences every aspect of our lives—work, home, family, friends, leisure time, and even our alone time? That one activity I’m talking about is communication—the way we interact with others, the world, and ourselves directly determine the success of our relationships, our work, and our lives in general. How we communicate in the world has a major impact on virtually every aspect of our lives and most of us don’t even really think about it—we just do it automatically.

***Good communication and relationship-building is one of the most essential elements for enjoying a meaningful life—we are all social creatures after all.***

Given how important this one activity is, it would seem like a pretty good idea to give it some attention and thought, particularly since ineffective or poor communication often results in relationships falling apart and problems in our jobs/careers. Surveys have shown that poor communication is the number one reason couples split up.

Additionally, research has shown that 85% of job success is related to well-developed soft people-skills. We have all been “trained” in communication and relationship-building throughout our lives, though mostly this “training” has involved unintentionally absorbing messages about how to communicate through our family interactions, aspects of our cultural and societal

environment, and from observing others. Few of us have actually intentionally set out to learn how to communicate in any purposeful way. We have just picked up ideas over time and do the best we can.

If you’d like to make some real changes to improve your relationships, find greater success and satisfaction in your work, and increase your ability to manage challenging life situations and transitions in general, honing your communication skills could be an important step in making these changes. Below are some specific ways you can begin to improve your communication and relationship-building skills.

### **Be Present**

This one sounds so simple and it is. But simple does not always mean easy. Being present just means to purposely be aware of what is happening in the moment. So often we are in our heads thinking about something that happened earlier in the day, or planning what we might do later, or telling ourselves a story about what a particular interaction means about ourselves or someone else.

Being present and aware means noticing what is happening in the moment without attaching any sort of meaning to it. The next time you have a conversation with someone, experiment with just noticing your thoughts, physical sensations, and emotional responses without getting caught up in and carried away with them.

# NM ADR NEWS

## Really Listen

So often when we are in conversation with someone, our minds move easily to other places. We often recall a similar experience that we have had, we may feel pressure to come up with a good piece of advice, we may be making a judgment about what the other person is telling us, or our minds may just wander to what we are going to have for dinner.

Notice if this happens and then return to the person who is talking and just try to listen. We can often feel very pulled to respond with advice or to share our own experiences. Practice just listening with a kindness and warmth, solid eye contact, and an open and attentive body posture.

## Seek to Understand

So often our actions and responses to others are driven by some kind of agenda: to be right, to make the other person wrong, to get our point across, or to show off or prove our own knowledge or accomplishments. When our interactions are primarily driven by our own agendas, our ability to really understand and connect with another person's experience is significantly limited.



In your next conversation with someone, try to notice when you feel compelled to offer advice or your own experience. Ask yourself why you want to offer these ideas—see if you can identify an agenda that stems from a need that you have for yourself.

Try asking clarifying questions to gain a deeper understanding of what the person is telling you rather than offering your own experience or advice. This can show the person that you are really focused on and interested in them, which facilitates a stronger connection. A sincere quality connection with another person allows space for and gives rise to more productive discussions and more skillful navigation of interaction. Improved connection also deepens the relationship, which leads to more fulfilling and meaningful life experiences.

## Use Active/Reflective Listening

One of the best ways we can be present, attentive, and show another person that we are listening and wanting to understand is to use active/reflective listening. Reflective listening is a communication strategy in which the listener seeks to understand what the other is thinking and feeling and to convey this understanding back to the person.



You can practice this type of listening by using the following guidelines:

- Focus on the conversation and try to embrace the other person’s perspective without agreeing or disagreeing.
- Use non-verbal communication to mirror the person’s mood and feelings—for example, use a similar tone of voice and facial expression.
- Summarize what the other is saying and repeat back the ideas by using the other person’s own words.
- Stick with the other’s specific ideas without digressing to other topics.
- Listen for the feelings behind the other person’s words and reflect those feelings back to the person.

You can see an example of Active/Reflective listening here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hkn-AKCS2rw&t=11s>



## Practice Silence

As we go through our fast-paced, multi-tasking lifestyles we tend to move quickly to responses that attempt to fix and problem-solve. However, one of the most effective communication tools we can use is silence. Next time you feel compelled to offer a suggestion or idea, try pausing with a couple of breaths and allow a few seconds to pass before saying something.

It can be helpful to take a moment to let someone’s thoughts, ideas, and feelings sink in so that we can reflect on them ourselves and respond in a kind, warm, and present way. In a similar way, waiting several hours or a day to respond to someone in a text or an email can help settle some of the feelings that come up in you and give you time to think about and reflect what will be useful and helpful to facilitate connection with the other person.

Try practicing some of these ideas in your next conversation and see how it goes. You might be pleasantly surprised at how much the discussion can open up and result in you feeling more connected to the other person (and to yourself). You might even get some positive feedback from others about what a good friend, co-worker, or spouse you are.

*Original article found at:*

<https://wellsanfrancisco.com/5-tips-for-effective-communication/>