



Cohesion through Communication: Strategies for Connecting Across Divides

Land Acknowledgement Statement

“Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, and the University of Arizona collectively acknowledge that the campuses are situated on the ancestral lands of twenty-two federally recognized tribes located across Arizona. These universities collectively honor the past, present, and future generations of Native Americans, who have lived here for millennia and will forever call this place home. Committed to diversity, the institutions integrate Indigenous knowledge into their practices and strive to cultivate sustainable relationships with Native Nations through education, partnerships, and community service.”





Cohesion through Communication: Strategies for Connecting Across Divides

Nena Bloom, Erin Gill, Amber Martin & Rachel Rice

What Research Administration function are you currently supporting?



- Central Pre-award
- Central Post-award
- Departmental Pre-award
- Departmental Post-award
- Center/Program Administration
- All the things - cradle to grave!
- Other-Central
- Other-Departmental

Cohesion through communication

- Tri-institutional talk!
- Introduce our roles, with whom we communicate, and how we communicate
- Sharing of effective communication strategies and how they interplay in our work
- Time for questions
- Scenarios and discussion



Think about a time when you recently effectively communicated challenging information



Did you use a particular strategy? If so, think about how you used this strategy to communicate this information?





Norms of Collaboration

Annotated

1. Pausing

Pausing before responding or asking a question allows time for thinking and enhances dialogue, discussion, and decision-making.

2. Paraphrasing

Using a paraphrase starter that is comfortable for you – “So...” or “As you are...” or “You’re thinking...” – and following the starter with an efficient paraphrase assists members of the group in hearing and understanding one another as they converse and make decisions.

3. Posing Questions

Two intentions of posing questions are to explore and to specify thinking. Questions may be posed to explore perceptions, assumptions, and interpretations, and to invite others to inquire into their thinking. For example, “What might be some conjectures you are exploring?” Use focusing questions such as, “Which students, specifically?” or “What might be an example of that?” to increase the clarity and precision of group members’ thinking. Inquire into others’ ideas before advocating one’s own.

4. Putting Ideas on the Table

Ideas are the heart of meaningful dialogue and discussion. Label the intention of your comments. For example: “Here is one idea...” or “One thought I have is...” or “Here is a possible approach...” or “Another consideration might be...”.

5. Providing Data

Providing data, both qualitative and quantitative, in a variety of forms supports group members in constructing shared understanding from their work. Data have no meaning beyond that which we make of them; shared meaning develops from collaboratively exploring, analyzing, and interpreting data.

6. Paying Attention to Self and Others

Meaningful dialogue and discussion are facilitated when each group member is conscious of self and of others, and is aware of what (s)he is saying and how it is said as well as how others are responding. This includes paying attention to learning styles when planning, facilitating, and participating in group meetings and conversations.

7. Presuming Positive Intentions

Assuming that others’ intentions are positive promotes and facilitates meaningful dialogue and discussion, and prevents unintentional put-downs. Using positive intentions in speech is one manifestation of this norm.

Using the Norms of Collaboration to inform effective communication strategies

1. Pausing

5. Providing Data

1. Paraphrasing

6. Paying Attention to Self and Others

1. Posing Questions

7. Presuming Positive Intentions

1. Putting Ideas on the Table

About Me: Nena Bloom

- Director of Program Evaluation and Research Support
- Office of the Vice President for Research
- Northern Arizona University
- Work both Pre- and Post-award



What is evaluation?



Identify
progress



Tell the
story



Communicate
results



Improve



Sustain


Pre-award



Post-award



Effective Communication Strategies – Evaluation Perspective

1. Presuming positive intentions
 2. Paying attention to self and others
 3. Pausing
 4. Using data
- 

Presuming positive intentions



Clarifying roles

Paying attention to self and others



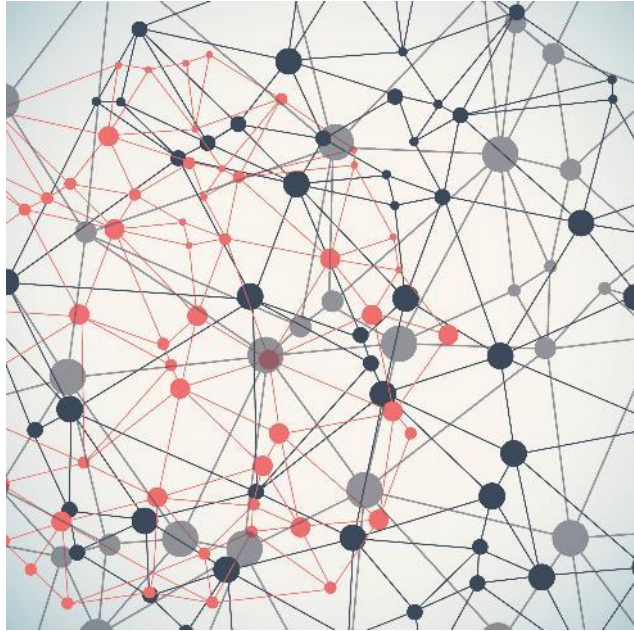
Recognizing sensitivity

Pausing



Listening more than talking

Using data



Funny	"they like comedy se
Likeable/Agreeable	"seems to be someon
Down-to-earth	"By looking at the q like a very down-to-
Outgoing	"The person was ver
Friendly	"The person seemed easy going"
Creative	"enjoys creative outl
Athletic/Active	"he seems atheletic a sports"
Self-Conscious (Appearance)	"Does not really feel on profile."


Ground discussions in data

About Me: Amber Martin

- Grant & Contract Officer Sr.
- Office of Research & Sponsored Projects Administration
- Arizona State University
- Pre-award
- Central Research Office



Communication Strategies – Central Pre-award Perspective

1. Pausing before responding or asking a question
 2. Posing questions
 3. Paying attention to self and others
 4. Presuming positive intentions
- 



Pausing before responding or asking a question

- “You have two ears and one mouth”
- Allowing space to speak, space to absorb
- Does interrupting offer value?



“You have two ears and one mouth”



Allowing space to speak and space to absorb



Does interrupting offer value?





Posing questions

- To understand
- To coach
- To initiate interaction



To understand



To coach



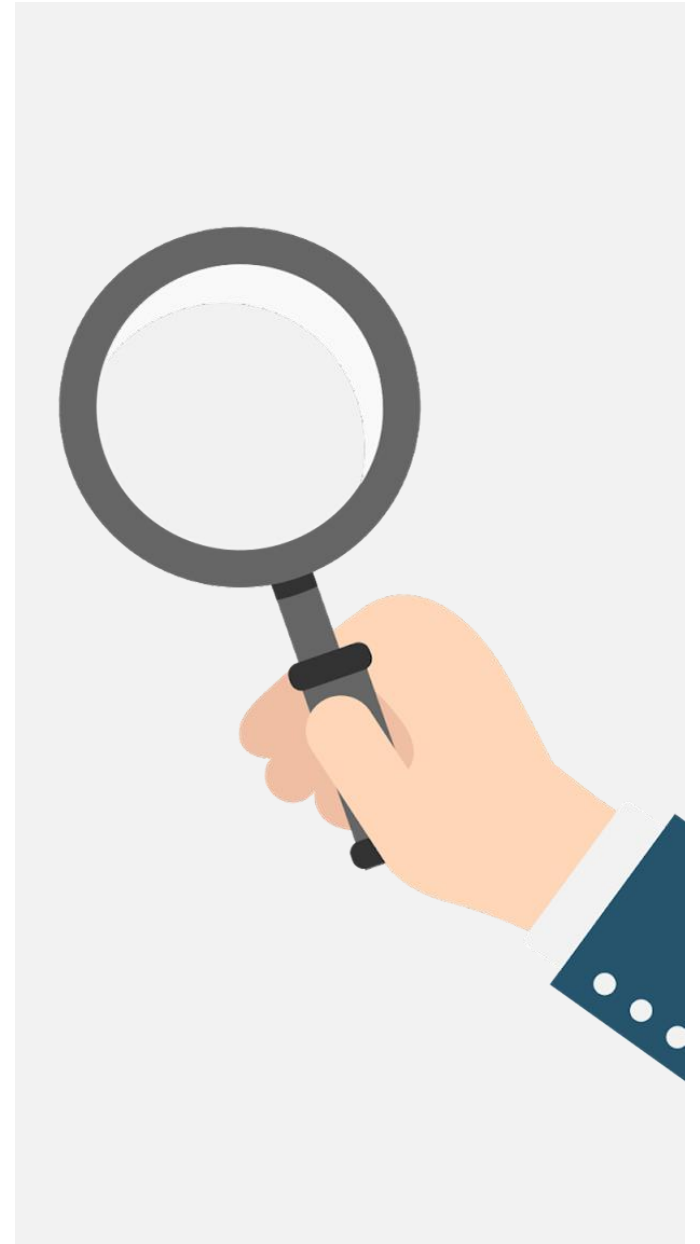
To initiate interaction





Paying attention to self and others

- To assume or not to assume
- Asking questions (part deux)
- Being self-aware



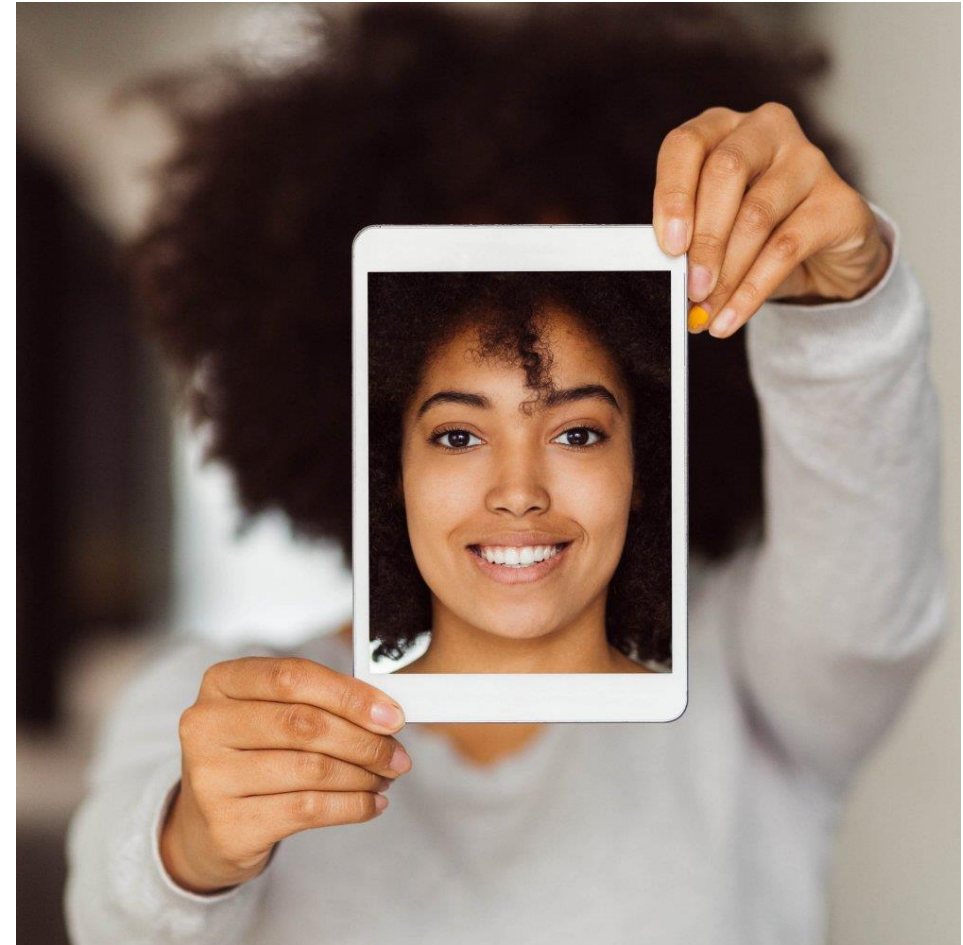
To assume or not to assume



Asking questions (part deux)



Being self-aware





Presuming positive intentions

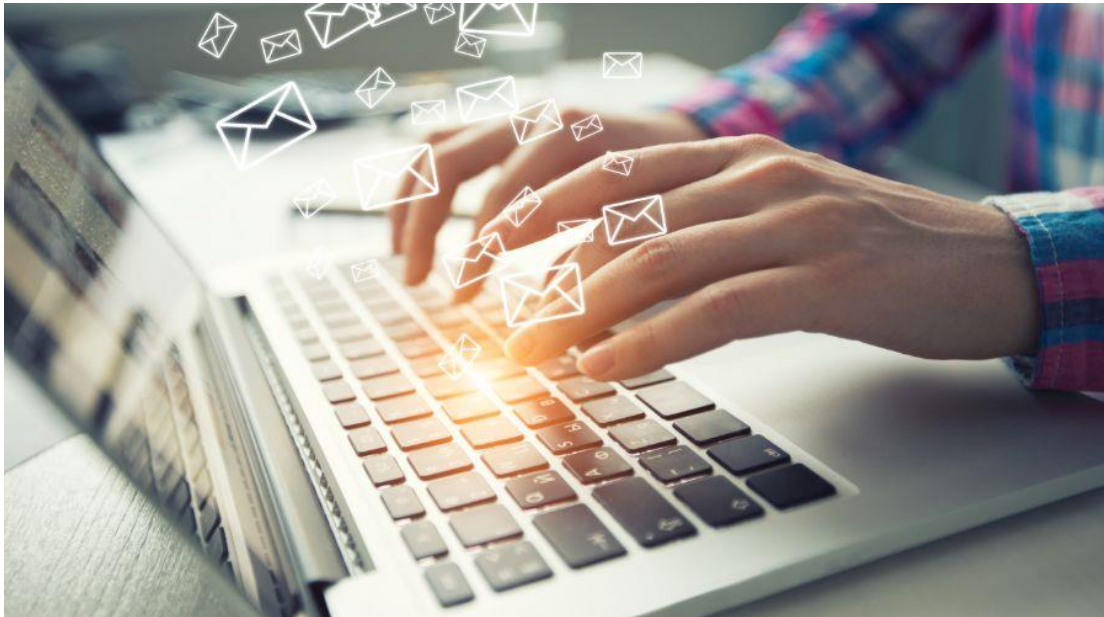
- The contagion of positivity
- Accepting different communication styles
- Workplace vs personal life



The contagion of positivity



Accepting different communication styles

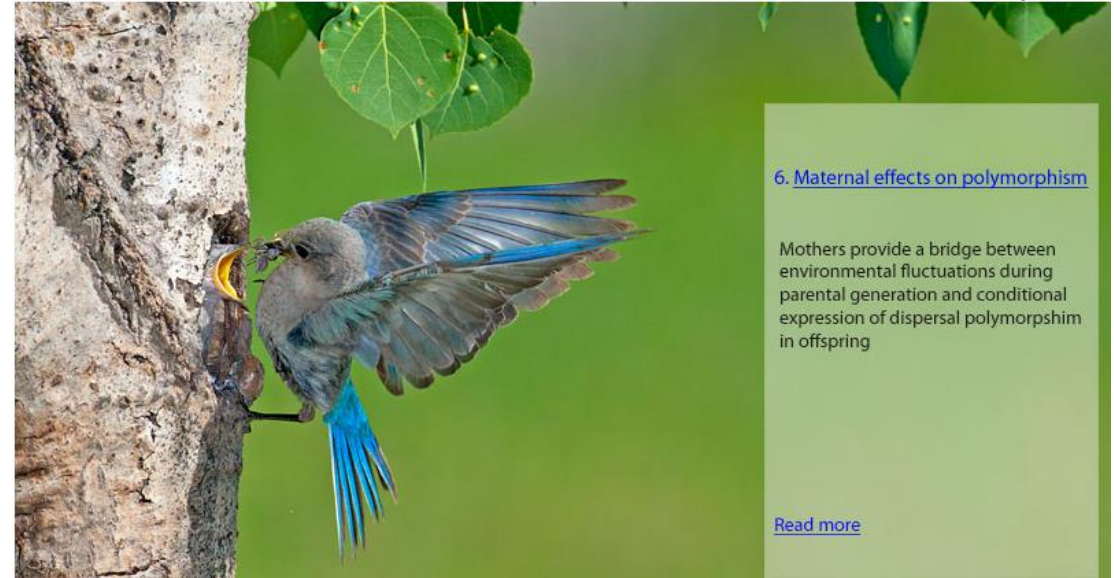


Workplace vs personal life



About Me: Erin Gill

- Senior Research Administrator, Sponsored Projects Services (SPS) Proposal Support Team
- Geosciences and Ecology & Evolutionary Biology
- University of Arizona
- Proposal development, internal routing, submission




Base camp in central Lhasa terrane, Tibet
Photo by Jerome Guynn

About Me: Rachel Rice

- Director, Pre-award and Proposal Support Services
- Central Office: Sponsored Project Services
- University of Arizona
- Proposal Development and Pre-award (AOR)



Communication Strategies – Intra-institutional Perspective (how we communicate with each other)

1. Presuming positive intentions
 2. Pausing <THINK> before responding or asking a question
 3. Paying attention to self and others
- 

Feedback – The Good, the Bad, and the Written

How to give effective feedback without poking the bear





Presenting at a forum

- Not your topic
- Information that needs to be shared
- New policies or protocols
- More work for the collective
- Lack of explanation until this meeting

Unsolicited Feedback



**During the
meeting**



**Difficult
Conversation**



**Intense
Subject
Matter**



**Whirlwind
of emotions**



**Short
staffed;
now must
do more
with less**



**Follow up
emails;
create more
issues**

First reaction...



- Hold the game face to the end
- Multiple email drafts
- Talk to someone on your counsel team
- Scream into the void or a pillow

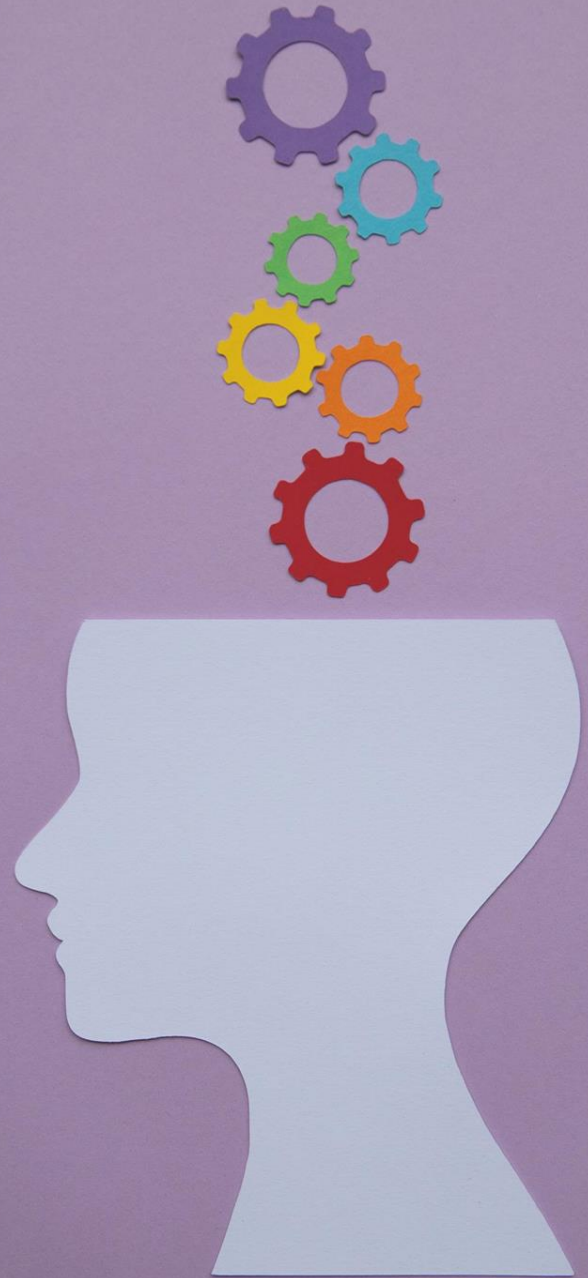
How can we be more
compassionate when
giving feedback?



Dr. Elisha Goldstein's *The Now Effect*

- Leader in mindfulness psychology
- Encourages to T.H.I.N.K before we speak





**T.H.I.N.K of these 5
questions...**

T.H.I.N.K.

T: Is it True?

H: Is it Helpful?

I: Is it Insightful?

N: Is it Necessary?

K: Is it Kind?

T: Is it True?

Is the feedback being provided factual or an emotive response?





H: Is it Helpful?

Is the feedback being provided lighting things on fire or adding chaos?

I: Is it Insightful?

Is the feedback being provided giving perspective or a more accurate understanding?





N: Is it Necessary?

Is the feedback being provided going to add value?

K: Is it Kind

Is the feedback being provided leading with empathy?



If all else fails... think of Aretha:

“You better think, think about what you are trying to do to me.”

~Aretha Franklin





Please raise your hand in the room or post in the chat if you have any questions.

The rubber meets the road - practicing our learning



Reflect on the following scenarios (handout / pdf): Which communication strategies would you use?

- ❖ Scenarios 1 & 2
 - in-person attendees discuss & virtual attendees observe
- ❖ Scenarios 3 & 4
 - virtual attendees discuss & in-person attendees observe
 - virtual attendees, please either unmute or use the chat

Scenario 1:

You are a central office Post-award administrator with a hefty inbox. You try to respond to or acknowledge all emails within 48 hours. However, you have a departmental colleague who demands quick responses. You've noticed that if you don't respond to their emails within 2-4 hours, they forward the email to your supervisor and CC you. This has slowly soured you on this colleague, but you would like to reach a middle ground with them.

Which communication strategies would you use?

Scenario 2:

Your work group has weekly meetings where you all catch up on any department and research administration updates. During these meetings, one of your colleagues has the habit of taking the spotlight, talking over others and changing the topic frequently. You've heard rumblings of others being annoyed with this colleague, and you're increasingly weary of these weekly meetings because of this colleague.

Which communication strategies would you use?



Scenario 3:

You are a central office Pre-award grant and contract officer who frequently interacts with a departmental research administrator (RA). A deadline of April 1st 2pm was set for a proposal you and the RA were assisting with. At 3pm you realized the deadline was 2pm instead of 5pm, and you notify the RA. The RA calls you immediately, yelling at you for ruining this proposal submission and not mentioning that the deadline was at 2pm.

Which communication strategies would you use?

Scenario 4:

A faculty member who is the principal investigator (PI) for the first time on an NIH proposal has reached out to you, a department research administrator, for guidance on how to begin building the proposal. They seem overwhelmed, and though the deadline is in three months, they have contacted you every day for three weeks with questions and documents for review. It is a busy NIH season, so you are overwhelmed by this one professor.

Which communication strategies would you use?

Thank You!

**Be sure to complete all 3
TURAC surveys for a chance
to win a **\$25 gift card!****

