



Stony Brook
University

THE OMBUDS OFFICE

*We're here to listen with an open mind.
We're here to help resolve problems fairly.*

stonybrook.edu/ombuds • (631) 632-9200

Confidential *Impartial* *Informal* *Independent*

ENHANCING COMMUNICATION

Use “I” not “You” statements. Own your feelings – avoid putting others on the defensive.

Be assertive. Share your needs and desires. You’ll hopefully get what you need, but not necessarily what you want.

Be flexible. Think creatively.

Be honest, open and trusting as appropriate to the situation. This sometimes involves taking risks or possibly being hurt.

Be sensitive to diversity and diverse cultures. Don’t be afraid to ask and learn. Avoid making assumptions.

Always check perceptions. Have you understood the other person? Ask them by rephrasing what you heard. This will prevent misunderstandings.

Accept compliments. Recognize the positive qualities that others see in you. Say “thank you,” with no “buts.” “Thank you, but _____” is not accepting the compliment.

Be attentive. Listen well – tune in, not out – eye contact is acceptable in many cultures, but not all. Eye contact is a sign of good listening and respect in the Western culture, but it can be perceived as disrespectful in other cultures.

Silence is OK as long as it isn’t used in a passive or withholding manner – such as quiet anger or resentment.

Be respectful. Looking down to check or send texts and emails hinders communication.

Treat others with respect and dignity just as you would like to be treated.

Be diplomatically direct without being insensitive. Stay focused.





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Everyone has his/her own perceptions of how they see the world, the issues, and the problems and possible solutions. They are opinions. Perceptions and opinions are neither right nor wrong. They are not facts.

Remember – we are only human – we will make mistakes, but we should learn from them.

Share feelings. That's sometimes hard to do – most often we share our thoughts – our thinking. It's safer, but it doesn't help the other person to fully understand us.

Be grateful that we have relationships. We can strengthen and enjoy them and together be more productive.

Be positive. Smile 😊

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