CONTROL TALK

Focus: Communication, Motivation

Time: 10 minutes

Objectives:

1. Understand the importance of word choice in communication

Materials needed:

- None

Introduction:

Are you ever surprised that the message you thought you just verbally communicated was not understood by the receiver? Most misunderstandings result from communication that is vague and ambiguous, or appears hostile and disrespectful. Ineffective communication in the workplace may result in low morale, poor cooperation, marginal productivity, and undercurrents of tension. It is important then to make requests and/or statements that are specific and clear in meaning. Communication should be respectful and framed in a positive manner that does not contain sarcasm or imply threat or intimidation.

Directions:

1. Pair up participants and have them take turns reading and then reworking the Control Talk sentences (provided) so that each sentence is clear, specific, concise, and positive.
2. After 3 or 4 minutes, ask the pairs to discuss with the rest of the group their experience in controlling their talk (i.e. transforming the sentences).
3. You may wish to utilize the questions below to facilitate the discussion.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which one(s) were the hardest to rephrase? Why do you think this is?
2. Did any of them seem familiar to you? How is this so?
3. Of the following three, specificity, positivity, respect, which is easiest for you to accomplish in your communication? Which is the most difficult?
4. How can you improve your communication?
Quick Training Tips

Control Talk Questions
Revise the statements/questions below to create new statements/questions that are clear, specific, respectful, and positive.

1. You should have completed that assignment yesterday.
2. Why didn’t you people follow my recommendations for this project?
3. I don’t understand why you haven’t finished that report yet.
4. You made too many mistakes on this report; you’ll want to apologize to payroll.
5. I want you to meet with me at 3 pm tomorrow.
6. You haven’t provided me with the numbers I need for tomorrow’s meeting; I suppose your dog ate them.
7. You need to do a good job on this project.
8. I can’t help you right now, can’t you see I am busy.
9. You are always complaining about that.
10. Why are you perpetually late for these meetings? Don’t you own a watch?