

Developing gender-sensitive competencies: **Quick tips**



(ADAPTED FROM UNAIDS' COMPETENCIES)

CORE COMPETENCIES

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Introduction

As noted in the United Nations Competency Development – A Practical Guide¹, one of several keys for the success of the United Nations is the strength, quality, and commitment of UN staff members. Staff members should be guided the organizational core values and equipped with core competencies.

Organizational core values are the shared principles and beliefs that underpin the work of an organization and guide the actions and behaviour of its staff. Core competencies refer to

the combination of skills, attributes and behaviour required of all staff, regardless of their level or function. Managerial competencies are the additional skills, attributes and behaviours required of those who manage other staff.

It is of utmost importance that staff members contribute to their maximum potential with high performance and excellence to prepare the United Nations to meet the challenges of the 21st century and its global commitments to human rights for all.

Under the un competency framework, three organizational core values are:

INTEGRITY

Refers to:

- Upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter.
- Demonstrating the values of the United Nations, including impartiality, fairness, honesty and truthfulness, in daily activities and behaviours.
- Acting without consideration of personal gain.
- Resisting undue political pressure in decision-making.
- Not abusing power or authority.
- Standing by decisions that are in the Organization's interest even if they are unpopular.
- Taking prompt action in cases of unprofessional or unethical behaviour.

PROFESSIONALISM

Refers to:

- Showing pride in work and in achievements.
- Demonstrating professional competence and mastery of subject matter.
- Being conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results.
- Being motivated by professional rather than personal concerns.
- Showing persistence when faced with difficult problems or challenges.
- Remaining calm in stressful situations.

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

Refers to:

- Working effectively with people from all backgrounds.
- Treating all people with dignity and respect.
- Treating men and women equally.
- Showing respect for, and understanding of, diverse points of view and demonstrates this understanding in daily work and decision-making.
- Examining own biases and behaviours to avoid stereotypical responses.
- Not discriminating against any individual or group.

As a United Nations staff member, the key commitment is to promote, protect, and fulfill **human rights for all** through adherence to global and regional normative frameworks. Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is a significant element for achieving human rights and human development.

As a United Nations Staff member, committing to **gender equality** and **women's empowerment** calls for:

- Some understanding about gender concepts and theories,
- Knowledge about some gender issues both at the local and international levels,
- Awareness about key international normative agreements and frameworks for promoting gender equality and women's human rights,
- Knowledge of the UN gender-related policies and strategies,

This document is a work in progress. It does not provide an exhaustive list of competencies nor does it provide comprehensive information about UN compe-

- Ability to analyze information, evidence, and socio-political context from a gender-lens,
- Familiarity with methods, tools, and techniques for a gender analysis in order to integrate gender into policies and programmes,
- Knowledge and skills to mainstream gender into communications and advocacy, policies and programmes,
- Engagement with women's and girls' rights and social justice movements and civil society,
- Reflection on self's gendered power practices, perceptions, beliefs and attitudes, and
- Advocacy for gender equality practices at work place as well as in day-to-day life.

This document is intended to provide a series of "Quick Tips" for staff members to help maximize knowledge, skills and potential to contribute to the achievement of the organization's vision and missions.

tencies. It is built upon the UNAIDS competency tips. It is thus considered as a living document that will continue to be strengthened.

Manage your relationships

“ Good emotional intelligence requires being able to manage your interaction with others.

Being able to manage your relationships effectively may be the most crucial aspect of effective teamwork. Relationship management is one of the four main elements of Emotional Intelligence (EI) as explained by psychologist Daniel Goleman. He defines EI as the ability to recognize one’s own and others’

emotions and to use the information to guide one’s thinking and actions.

Good emotional intelligence requires knowing yourself, being able to manage yourself, being aware of others, and being able to manage your interaction with others:

<p>Personal competence self-awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional self-awareness and reflection • Accurate self-assessment • Self-confidence 	<p>Personal competence self-management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional self-control • Transparency • Adaptability • Achievement • Initiative • Optimism
<p>Social competence social awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Organizational awareness • Service 	<p>Social competence relationship management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspirational leadership • Teamwork and collaboration • Developing others • Conflict management • Change catalyst • Influence

Do you have good relationship management skills?

Do you:

- believe helping others is an important part of life?
- regularly think things through before speaking or acting?
- easily understand why other people feel the way they do?
- sense before being told when someone feels troubled?
- expect things to get better in the future?
- not feel threatened by disagreements?
- show interest in things that other people are interested in?
- understand men’s and women’s practical and strategic needs?
- understand power dynamics particularly between men and women?
- If you answered a whole-hearted YES to most of these questions, then you are skilled in managing your relationships. If you answered NO to several of these questions, then your EI in this area is low. The good news is that it

can be improved. Our emotional intelligence can continue to grow throughout our lives.

The team’s overall success depends on each member’s ability to form positive social bonds and manage relationships with fellow team members and others outside the team. This requires you to become aware of, understand, and accept gender and cultural diversities. It is important to show sincere respect and fairness, and support other team members both in public and in private. In other words, by truly caring about the welfare and wellbeing of others, you will be better equipped to manage your relationships effectively.

It is also important to be aware of and understand the dimensions of power in leadership that exist in organizations, particularly gendered power relations. These include “visible” power which is determines who is included and who is excluded in decision making, “hidden” power which exerts influence behind the scenes, and “invisible” power which shapes attitudes and biases. Power dynamics can be shaped by gender, age, race, and ethnicity, and other socio-economic determinants. All of these power dynamics will be present in teams (and all other aspects of organizations). Each of the power dynamics may be enacted in a team by leaders and members, women

and men; the relationships within teams will reflect the power dynamics. Understanding the dynamics, their enactment, and their shifting nature enables teams to work more effectively. For an organization that works to promote gender justice, it is utmost important to transform gendered power imbalance and power hierarchies within the organization.

In addition, Goleman identified the following six skills that contribute to good relationship management:

Inspirational leadership

You need not be the 'official' leader of a team to provide inspirational leadership. In fact, all good team members are aware of when best to lead and when to follow, and are willing to step into an ad hoc informal leadership role as the situation demands. Projecting a contagious sense of optimism and exhibiting exceptional commitment to the mission of the team are examples of inspirational leadership.

Teamwork and collaboration

A team is more effective than a group when it shows synergy: together the team is able to accomplish more than the sum of what the individuals could accomplish on their own. A team member who excels in this area of EI not only collaborates but fosters collaboration among others on the team.

Developing others

All team members should be concerned with each other's learning and growth, not just the designated team leader. Giving advice and help in a sensitive way to a struggling team member shows emotional intelligence. This is a two-way process that means the giver in one situation may be the receiver in another. Therefore, in addition to developing others, you need to be open to learning from them too.

Conflict management

Emotionally effective team members constructively develop win-win agreements rather than argue with each other. To accomplish this you need to recognize when insistence on your own viewpoint is based on personal ego needs instead of the good of the team. This self-knowledge then must be used to moderate your position to facilitate consensus.

Change catalyst

Someone who manages relationships well is able to take the lead when the team faces challenges that require change. You can help your team adapt to new demands and circumstances by being aware of the emotional impact of the changes on your fellow team members. With this insight, you can provide the understanding and support they need to adjust more easily.

Influence

The sixth area that Goleman identified as important for someone who shows good EI in the area of relationship management is the ability to influence or persuade others. Strong advocacy skills, both orally and in writing, help you communicate with impact and influence the thinking of others. You need to be credible, empathetic, logical, and able to use emotion effectively to win support.

It must be added here that transformational leadership is an important quality for managing relationships and the organization. James Downton¹ defines **transformational leadership** as a style of leadership "where one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Power bases are linked not as counterweights but as mutual support for common purpose." This leadership model requires transformation of domination, hierarchy and inequality embedded within us.

Managing **diversity** (of race, sex, gender, ethnicity, age, education, and more) effectively is important to ensure effectiveness, efficiency, and competitiveness of the organization. Staff members with diverse backgrounds bring unique experiences, expertise, and knowledge to the organization. Therefore, diversity must be embraced and managed effectively.

These relationship skills can be learned and developed over time by both women and men. There is a common misperception that women are more skilled in areas of emotional intelligence. Both women and men do well when they are intentional about enhancing their EI skills. The important point to remember is that the skills are all important for everyone.



Building effective relationships requires learning and practicing the six emotional intelligence skills that underlie it.

Build trust in your team

“ Trust emerges over time through working together and building empathetic relationships.

Without the bond of trust, teams cannot function. Team members must trust each other and they must trust their leader. Trust cannot be learned by study. It must be built through shared experiences in which team members learn that they can rely on each other to deliver as promised, to not let them down, to stand up for them, to be true to their words, and to assure mutual respect.

In his famous book “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People”, Steven Covey says that we all maintain an ‘emotional bank account’ with each other in which we make deposits and withdrawals by our actions. When we treat each other with respect, kindness, courtesy, honesty and keep our commitments, we increase the value of our account and the level of trust increases. The opposite occurs if we are dishonest or disrespectful

through our actions and words that discriminate, or by allowing others to engage in discriminatory and inequitable actions and words. Examples of actions and words that undermine trust include sexual harassment, sexist or racist jokes, and stereotyping others based on gender, race, ethnicity and more. When this happens, the emotional withdrawals to the account reduce the level of trust in the relationship.

Gendered power relations among staff members must not replicate patriarchal power hierarchy where men and women are not equal.

A team built on trust and respect performs better. But trust does not occur automatically. It can neither be mandated nor taken for granted. Trust emerges over time through the experience of working together and building empathetic relationships.

There are four components to interpersonal trust:

RELIABILITY	TRUTHFULNESS	EMPATHY	COLLABORATION
Delivering on routine expectations	Keeping of specific promises	Concern for one another, open communication	Teamwork rather than competitiveness

Rate your team

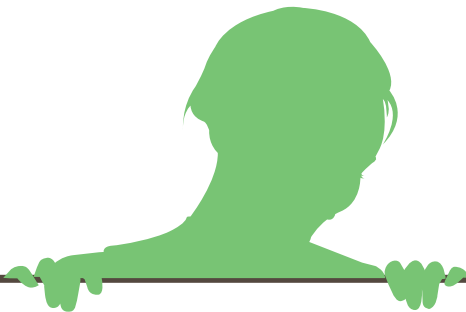
Rate where your team falls on the trust spectrum by checking the appropriate column below.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Some team members are unreliable, and reliability is not held as particularly important by the team.						Everyone on the team is focused in reliability, on always delivering high quality work, on time.
Being truthful is not particularly valued in our team. ‘White lies’ are acceptable and sometimes people say what they think the other person wants to hear.						Being honest and truthful is a high priority for all members of our team. Everyone tells the truth, even when it is inconvenient or difficult.
Our team members view themselves essentially as individuals, showing little interpersonal sharing or caring.						The members of our team truly care for and empathize with one another. When someone is having a hard time, all show concern. We celebrate each other’s joys.
Our team members are competitive, with a desire for winning at the expense of each other.						Our team members are collaborative, so that ‘wins’ are shared and losses or mistakes are borne together.

How did your team do?

Add up your team's points on the four items. A score of 16 to 20 points is excellent. It means your team is cohesive, caring, and trusts one another fully. A score of 12 to 16 means that your team is working on the issue of trust but members do not yet fully trust one another.

Perhaps you need to integrate some new team members, or you have one or two people who are less reliable than the others. These are key challenges to face. If your team's score was 8 or less, trust is a major issue for your team to address. You might try having team members use the short instrument above in a team meeting as a starter for a frank discussion on trust.



To be trusted by others, we also must trust them.



For building trust

An effective team leader exerts assertive direction while maintaining empathetic relationships with all of the team members. A lack of assertiveness can make the manager seem indecisive or weak. Most team members appreciate thoughtful, firm, assertive leadership—as long as it comes from a caring, empathetic manager who takes their feelings and needs into consideration.

1 Reliability

- Be careful not to commit to doing something unless you are sure you will be able to carry it out. Develop a reputation for following through.

2 Truthfulness

- Make a personal commitment to yourself that you always do what you have said. Saying is promising.
- Develop a reputation for honesty, even when it is not convenient. Through your actions and words show that you are a person of integrity.

3 Empathy

- Show concern and care when a team member feels 'down.'
- Sincerely celebrate others' successes. Don't allow envy to creep in.

4 Collaboration

- Offer to help team mates with routine matters, not just the more rewarding, creative work.
- Be sure that your collaboration is offered in a spirit of peer to peer, without any hint of superiority. Help because someone needs and wants it—not because you're better.

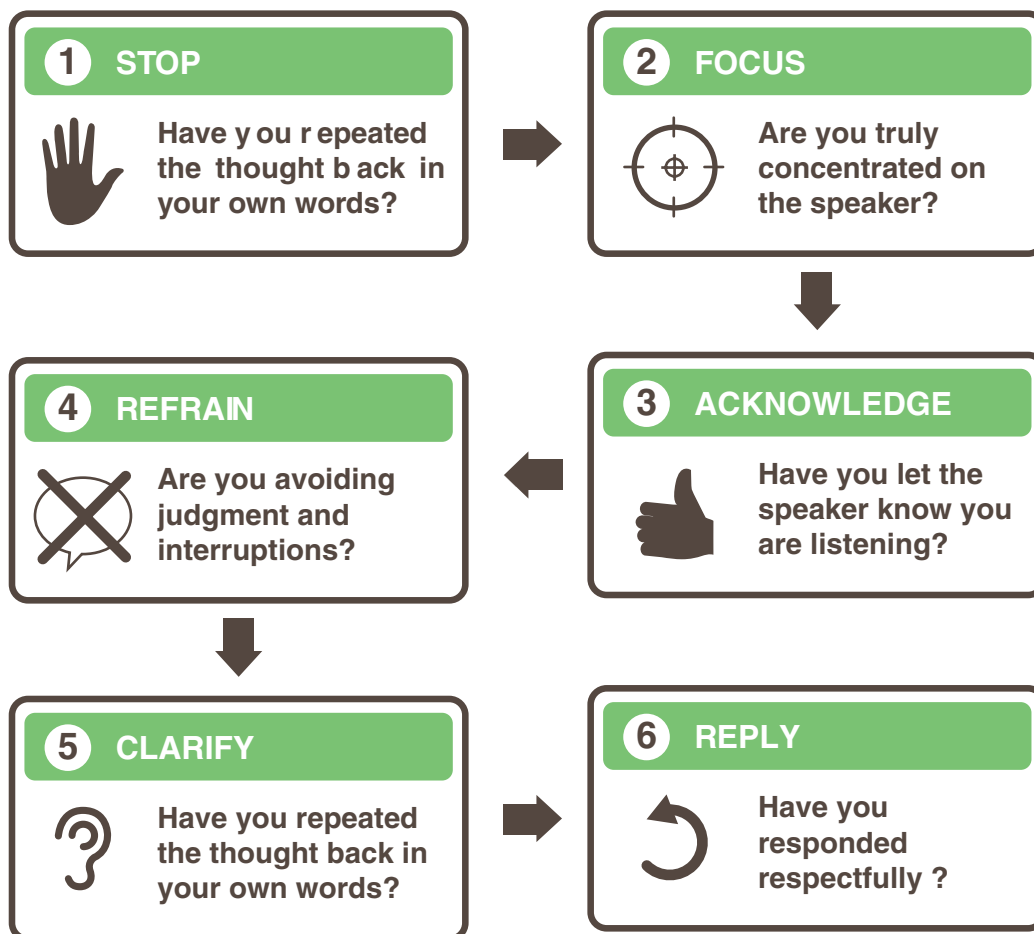
The art of listening in six steps

“ Listening requires that we postpone our own needs long enough to hear the other person.

6 Steps

Have you met people who seem to be naturally good listeners? And others who seem to be somewhere else when you are talking to them? Listening is a skill that can be learned – it is not an inborn trait. Paying passive attention is not the same as listening, which is an active process. It often takes a deliberate

effort to suspend our own needs and reactions, to hold back what we have to say and control the urge to interrupt or argue. The art of listening requires that we postpone our own needs and desires long enough to hear the other person out.



1. STOP | Are you paying attention?

Stop everything you are doing the moment the other person starts talking. Give them your undivided attention. If you are writing or looking away from the speaker you will miss valuable information and send a message through non-verbal behavior that you do not really care about what they are saying. If there are things distracting you, let the speaker know and find a way to eliminate the distractions.

2. FOCUS | Are you truly concentrated on the speaker?

Focus both on what the person is saying and on how he or she is saying it. Stay alert to the nonverbal signals the speaker is sending. Be sensitive to gender and cultural differences in eye contact, distance and physical contact. The speaker probably won't tell you when he or she feels uncomfortable, confused, or frustrated. But if you're able to tune in to the facial expressions, gestures, posture, or periods of silence, you'll better understand the feelings. Reading emotions accurately enables you to interpret what the speaker is saying and, perhaps, why.

3. ACKNOWLEDGE | Have you let the speaker know you are listening?

Convey empathy and show that you are listening by nodding or providing a verbal response such as 'ummmm' or 'uh huh' at the end of a statement. Maintain eye contact while you're listening. Follow the cultural customs of the speaker as to whether you should use intermittent or constant direct eye contact. It is not enough to listen. You need to let the speaker know that you are listening.

4. REFRAIN | Are you avoiding judgment and interruptions?

Wait until the speaker finishes before you comment. Try to withhold any judgment or interruptions, which can sidetrack communication and create tension and conflict. You should ask yourself if you are really listening or simply waiting for your turn to talk. Don't focus on how you want to respond to a particular detail the person has mentioned without hearing the entire message.

5. CLARIFY | Have you repeated the thought back in your own words?

After the person has made a point, rephrase in your own words what you understood. This confirms to the speaker that you truly heard him or her. You might use terms such as: 'So, what I understand is that...' or 'So, what I hear you saying is...' or 'In other words...'

To verify important names and numbers, repeat back the spelling or the number you think you heard to be sure you understood it correctly. This can be particularly important when you and the speaker do not share a mother tongue. If there's anything you're unclear about, ask clarifying questions. Example: 'You said that it didn't work, but I wasn't clear on just what didn't work. Can you tell me more about it?'

6. REPLY | Have you responded respectfully?

After you have acknowledged and clarified what the person has said you may respond. Be sure to first directly address what the other person just said before you move on to counter arguments or other topics. However, in some cases, it may not be best to respond immediately if you need to control emotions or spend more time thinking about your response. If you need to take more time, or delay your response, let the other person know this directly. Also, saying thanks encourages further openness.



Master the art of listening understand and interpret what you hear this will help to build rapport, reduce conflict and foster cooperation.

Getting your point across

“ Learning to persuade an audience is an important skill in communicating with impact.

Presenting your ideas persuasively is a key part of communicating with impact. If you look at the most successful people in your office, they are probably hard working, competent, dedicated, creative – and good at persuading.

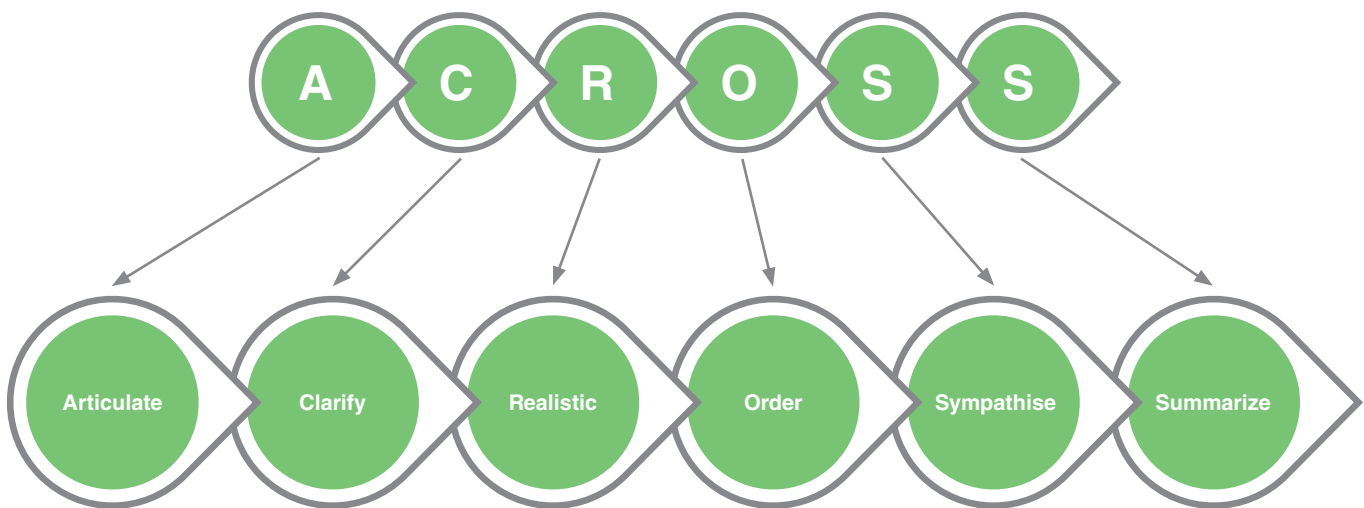
Research has identified several factors that contribute to a speaker or writer’s ability to persuade others.

- People are convinced by others with whom they identify. So, let your audience know what you have in common with them, especially values you share.

- People are influenced by your credibility. So, state your credentials and tell your audience about your expertise in a humble manner.
- Many people are motivated more strongly by possible loss than by possible gain. So, emphasize both what they have to lose by not accepting your ideas rather than only what they have to gain by embracing them.

Remember across

Think of the word ACROSS as an acronym that will help you remember how to get your point across persuasively:



1. Articulate

First, define your message—the main point you want to make. Be sure that you can articulate it simply and directly in a single sentence. Specify the who, what, when, where, why, and how of your message as you set up a convincing argument.

2. Clarify

Go back over your message to be sure it is concise and easily understood. Remove ambiguous content that may be interpreted in various ways. Make sure that all information you present is directly relevant to your conclusion. Simplify, where possible, without sacrificing truly essential data.

3. Realistic

Your supporting points must be realistic and believable. Build credibility by presenting evidence with quotations, examples and data from trustworthy sources. Your audience must see that what you are promoting is based on real world evidence and is feasible for them to accept. The use of data is especially important when addressing issues pertaining to gender equality and women's empowerment, which are not always recognized or understood. Data provides evidence and credibility to your communication.

4. Order

Logical progression is important to making any argument. Be sure you have an introduction, supporting points, and a closing that restates your main message. Whether you will be presenting your message orally or in writing, use numbered points to help your audience follow your thinking. Follow a clear path from the beginning to the end of your presentation without jumping around. The path might be chronological, or progress from cause to effect, or move from what we should do, why we should do it, how we can do it, to who can do it—concluding with a repeat of what we should do. Even if you have presented strong evidence, you won't persuade your audience unless they grasp your reasoning. Presenting a lengthy list of statistics and credible examples without drawing a logical conclusion to your main idea will not be compelling. Show your reasoning step by step.

5. Sympathize

To persuade effectively, you must appeal to your audience emotionally, sensibly as well as rationally. By adding intensity of feeling and passion to the logic of your speech or writing, you will be much more compelling. A completely logical, objective presentation that might change some people's attitudes will not necessarily arouse them enough to take action. In order to convince your audience not only to agree with your ideas but also to adopt them, you must evoke their passion about the organization, their work and their careers.

6. Summarize

Conclude your presentation with a very brief summary of your main point and your strongest supporting arguments. Keep it short; keep it crisp.

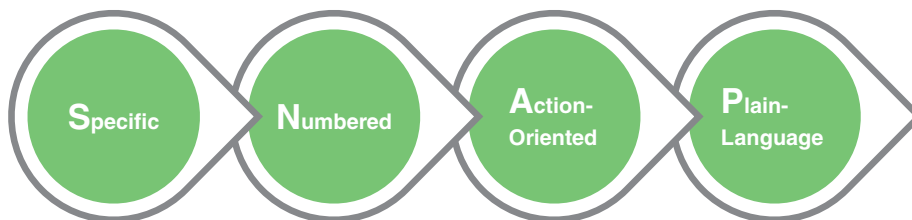


Strong persuasive skills will help you argue convincingly for your ideas.

Brief in a snap

“ If only this person could just get to the point!

We all read through our lengthy e-mails or hear rambling presentations at meetings and think “if only this person could just be brief and get to the point.” Sometimes though, we may be the ones who need to be more concise. This quick tip guide will help you be brief and to the point in writing and when speaking to groups.



Specific

Clearly identify what you want to communicate

Keep it to a single topic if possible. If there are more issues to discuss, clearly separate them. Identify all the important points by focusing on the who, what, why, where, and how of each item. Remember, you want to keep it concise. Let the person you are talking or writing to know the topic or key point in the first sentence or two.

Numbered and short

Keep your message short and clear by numbering or bulleting points

- Try to put all your main ideas as bulleted or numbered points.
- Arrange points in sequential order according to activity. For example:
 1. Read document
 2. Correct errors
 3. Send back to me
- Use simple sentences with only one thought. Avoid complex sentences with multiple clauses.
- Keep sentences short by removing all unnecessary words. You want the message to be understood the same way by everyone.

Action oriented

Use action verbs in all sentences

Every time you convey a message, whether orally or in writing, you need to clearly state what you want or expect the listener or reader to do. Use action verbs to send a clear and short message. Bad example: ‘Please let me know what you think of this document so that I know if it meets your expectations’ (Wordy and indirect without an action verb). Good example: ‘Please tell me if this document meets your expectations’ (Clear, concise, and direct, with an action verb)



Plain language

Keep it simple, remove meaningless phrases, use inclusive and gender sensitive language, avoid jargon and acronyms

- First, keep it simple. Do not use language that requires a dictionary for someone to understand or jargon and acronyms that are only understood by a few. Remember, you work in a place where the working language is not the native language of every person in your office therefore using wording that is accessible to everyone is important. Using inclusive and gender sensitive language supports the values of the organisation.
- Remove meaningless phrases from your messages. Examples include:
 - o due to the fact that
 - o as a matter of fact
 - o for all intents and purposes
 - o all things considered
 - o as far as I am concerned
 - o for the most part
 - o in a manner of speaking
 - o at the end of the day
 - o for the purpose of
 - o in my opinion
 - o at the present time
 - o in order that



Test yourself

See if you can revise the following paragraph of actual ‘United Nations-speak’ by using the SNAP guidelines to make it brief, clear, and concise. Then read our suggested revision, which is an 80% reduction.

The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, recalling the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the development of the United Nations system, reaffirms the importance of the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development, through which the General Assembly establishes key system-wide policy orientations for development cooperation and country-level modalities of the United Nations system, and underscores that development assistance by the United Nations should be in alignment with national development plans and strategies, in accordance with United Nations mandates, and reaffirms the need to strengthen the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency as well as its capacity to address effectively, and in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, the full range of development challenges of our time. (135 words)

Our S.N.A.P. revision

The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations reaffirms the commitment of the United Nations to address current development challenges in full alignment with national development strategies. (28 words)



Use the SNAP guidelines every time you prepare to make a point orally or in writing. Make sure that your message is Specific, Numbered, Action-oriented, and uses Plain language.

Continuous learning at work

“ **Make sure your feedback is always clear, candid and constructive to motivate and build confidence.** ”

One way for a staff member to demonstrate the Applying Expertise competency is to continuously update their professional knowledge and skills. Increase your value to the organization by becoming an avid learner.

When we contemplate ‘learning’ many of us immediately think of attending workshops or training courses of some kind. While these are useful ways to learn new skills or refresh our knowledge, there are many informal opportunities for self-development. Many of these are more readily available and often equally as effective as formal training, or even more so.

How you can be a continual learner?

Do a needs self-assessment

Analyze what you need to learn. What are your strengths? Where are the gaps between what you know and what you need to know, what you can do and what you need to be able to do? Look at your last Performance Evaluation Report for ideas. Ask a trusted colleague to help you see what you can’t recognize in yourself. We can all benefit from such a ‘reality check’. Be aware of ways in which you may hold stereotypes about yourself that may limit your horizons for new learning opportunities. After your self-analysis, put together a plan to move forward.

Practice “Kaizen”

Improving yourself is one of the best ways to contribute to the organization and promote your career. The Japanese call it kaizen—a philosophy of continuous improvement. Applied to the work environment, kaizen is the relentless search for a better way to do things. Applied to people, it’s a commitment to keep reaching higher, pushing to do better and always striving to increase the value of what you have to offer. Developing your skills, knowledge and performance little by little, day after day, will add up to a lot of learning over a period of years.

Team up

You may want to enter an informal learning partnership with a colleague or define your learning plan with your supervisor. Perhaps there are people in your office who would like to practise new skills together. It’s best to define clear objectives for such team learning, along with a way to measure your progress and accomplishments. Then you can disband and reorganize for another objective if there is interest.

Get feedback

When it comes to learning a new skill, there is no better way to improve than to ask someone to evaluate your performance, attitudes, and behaviors, give you feedback, and then for you to act on their suggestions. Whether you are learning how to use a new software program or developing a new idea, practice plus feedback will enable you to learn much faster than by working exclusively on your own.

Practice reflection

We all learn best from experience. But some of us have many experiences without much learning! The key to learning from your experience is reflection and evaluation—a conscious attempt to identify the lessons you gained from recent experience. Some people keep learning journals in which they jot down notes and ideas. Others set aside a specific period of time each week to reflect on the ‘big picture,’ and what they have learned. The important thing is to make reflection a regular part of your work life.

Personal reflection and critical examination of your attitudes and behaviors at work, such as your personal uses of power, ways of communicating with others, and attitudes toward your co-workers and the organization can provide you with self-knowledge about unconscious bias and/or stereotypes you may hold. The use of a journal provides an opportunity for private self-reflection from which you can learn and track your progress toward awareness, understanding, and change.

Examine privilege and power

Since we work for an organization committing to promote human rights and gender equality, it is of utmost importance that staff members continue to examine gendered-self, privilege and power exercised by individuals or groups. Transformation towards gender justice is a continuous learning journey that demands deconstructing power imbalance. Staff members must be conscious of how we are exercising our privilege and power, and what we can do to transform patriarchal practices and beliefs.

Try something new

Especially if your work is becoming routine and you feel you are not being challenged, consider asking for responsibilities in a new area. Offer to help someone on an interesting project. Sometimes changing your everyday routine may also open new opportunities for growth and development.

Use your network

E-mails and social networking makes it possible for you to connect with friends and colleagues around the world. Don't hesitate to consult your counterparts, including those in other countries, and ask for their advice and counsel. Most will probably be more than willing to share their knowledge and expertise.

Learn online

While completing formal coursework online is an option, it is even easier, cheaper and more accessible to simply do an internet search on a topic about which you want to learn more. Be sure to verify the sources to ensure that they are credible and reliable. One way to remember what you've read is to take notes and maintain an online journal of the topics you've researched. This will also provide you with a way to let others know, e.g. your supervisor, of the initiative you have taken.



Recognize and take advantage of the many opportunities that exist for informal learning.

Transforming patriarchy is a continuous journey that requires self-critical examination of how privilege and power is used.

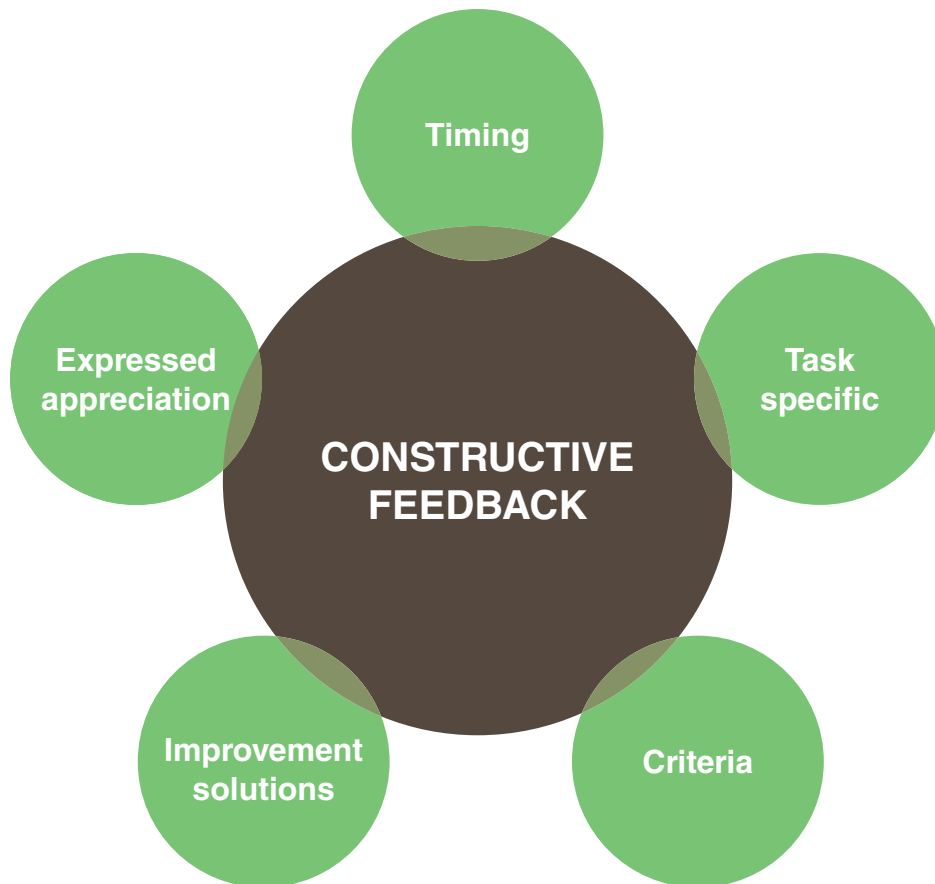


Get feedback to get results

“ Feedback helps you to stay committed to excellence.

The Delivering Results competency requires us to exceed minimum performance requirements by emphasizing results over activities. It’s about having a real commitment to excellence. To ensure that we deliver results consistently, we need to rely on more than our own opinion of our work. That means soliciting, paying attention to, and acting on the feedback that we get from others—especially our immediate supervisor and colleagues.

Feedback helps you learn from your successes and your failures. Unfortunately, few people—supervisors included—know how to give feedback effectively. But if you understand constructive feedback, you can do certain things that will help you get what you need to grow.



Five things to remember about getting feedback

Since many supervisors are not experts at giving useful feedback—whether positive or negative—you should initiate and guide the process to ensure that you get useful information. Feedback is intended to focus on work and work-related be-

havior, and not upon personal aspects that are unrelated to either of these. Feedback based upon gender or cultural differences that are irrelevant to work performance is inappropriate.

When asking for feedback, use the five following hints:

1. Timing: When should you ask for feedback?

- Ask for feedback soon after your performance, while what you did and how you did it are still fresh in the mind of the person you are asking for feedback.
- Make sure there is sufficient time available for the person you are asking to reply in depth. For example, don't stop your supervisor in the hall hurrying to a meeting to ask for an opinion on the presentation you just made.
- Be sure there is sufficient time for your feedback provider to:
 - o Comment on your strengths
 - o Identify areas for improvement and what better results would look like
 - o Discuss solutions to achieve that level of performance

2. Task specific: What particular task or activity do you want evaluated?

The more explicit the feedback, the more useful it will be. So be specific in your request by saying exactly what task or activity you'd like feedback on. If there were multiple tasks, discuss them one by one. If you ask how you did in general, such as 'on the project,' you are likely to receive only generalities as feedback—which are not very useful.

3. Criteria: What does 'good' look like?

Be sure you have clear performance criteria so that you know exactly what your supervisor expects as 'good'. Get clear, measurable specifications of what is expected. If your boss is anticipating a ten-page technical report and you write a two-page qualitative situation analysis, you have a performance criteria problem. If you are not sure of the criteria, ask. Try open ended questions such as: Can you expand a little more on that, please? Or what would a good example of that be?

4. Focus on improvements: How can you improve your performance in the future?

After you have discussed the criteria for 'what good looks like,' you need to talk about how to get there. You might raise some possibilities and then ask for recommendations from your supervisor or your colleagues. This accomplishes three objectives. First, you are demonstrating initiative and understanding of your role by identifying different approaches to improving your performance. Second, you are showing interest in others' point of view and recognizing his or her expertise. Last, you are reaching agreement about your performance and how you will improve it.

5. Showing appreciation: Remember to thank your supervisor and colleagues for the feedback.

Thanking others for providing feedback shows that you welcome constructive criticism. It also will help ensure future feedback sessions to improve your performance. Perhaps most importantly, it will encourage mutual respect.



Empowering is not patronizing. Empowerment calls for transforming power-over, and strengthening power-to, power-with, and power-with.



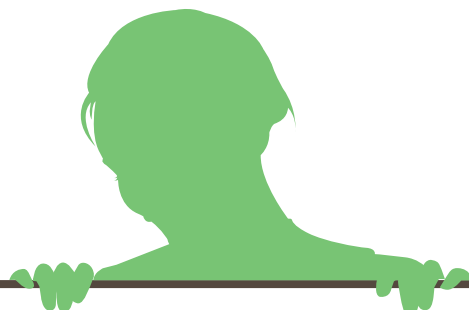
Be a self-starter

“ Innovating can be as simple as asking ‘what if?’ and giving it a try.

SELF-STARTER refers to an energetic person with exceptional initiative; a highly active, innovative and motivated person

Managers often describe the kind of people they want working for them with terms like self-starter, innovator, or someone who shows initiative. They know that these people will require less oversight and are more likely to go beyond minimum requirements to deliver results consistently.

The most successful managers use questions to help staff members open up and share their feelings. However, you must know the right questions to ask and how best to ask them.



For being a self-starter

If you are someone who finds it difficult to take initiative, you may want to consider trying some of the following suggestions:

- 1 The next time someone else on your team takes initiative, ask yourself what stopped you from being that person.**
Was it the lack of a good idea? Was it not wanting to stand out from the group? Was it an unwillingness to invest the effort that would be required to follow through? Was there a concern about discrimination – that your initiative would not be valued? Is there a lack of self-confidence or self-esteem that stopped you from taking initiative?
- 2 Look around. Do you see something important that is not being done or could be done better in a different way?**
Spot an opportunity even slightly related to your area of responsibility and seriously consider taking advantage of it.
- 3 Try taking small risks to improve your productivity or performance**
Limited experiments with new behaviours will help you be more self-confident and comfortable as a self-starter. Remember that small steps and lots of practice can lead to long-term changes.
- 4 Think about the rewards of being a self-starter.**
Wouldn't it be motivating to contribute something valuable to the organization and its mission? How about making your work more interesting and satisfying? Or demonstrating that you have potential for larger responsibilities? These thoughts can increase your motivation.
- 5 Seek a mentor who can help you see opportunities for taking initiative and guide you in ways to do this effectively.**
Mentors can also help identify opportunities for you. Sometimes gender norms and stereotypes can prevent women from leading and taking initiatives. This requires the organization to change its organizational culture to promote equal opportunities and access to both men and women, and provide support to women and those who are marginalized to show their leadership

It is easy to generalize about ‘taking initiative’. But what are the behaviours that actually demonstrate that someone is doing it? To be a real self-starter, you need to:

Innovate

A spirit of innovation is often what sparks the self-starter. Remember, the person who does a job usually is in the best position to know how it might be done better. So the next time you’re doing a routine task, think of a new way to streamline the process or enhance the level of service to your client. Innovating can be as simple as asking ‘what if?’ and giving it a try.

Take risks

A self-starter doesn’t hold back, but is willing to take a sensible chance when needed. Of course, risk taking can be carried too far. But taking initiative requires a willingness to put yourself on the line. Taking calculated risks requires self-confidence balanced with a realistic understanding of the limits of your knowledge and abilities. Accept, however, that risk taking is seldom comfortable.



Do your homework

You will be more successful as a self-starter if you have your research done, your facts correct, and your reasons well prepared. Know costs and benefits and gain buy-in from those who will be affected by your ideas. Be prepared to back up your claims. Effective self-starters build credibility and trust by showing that their initiatives are based on firm planning and not just a bias for action.

Capitalize on opportunities

A self-starter continually scans the environment, looking for opportunities that others may have missed. One way to take initiative is by looking for ways to improve current work processes, services and systems. It is often staff members ‘in the trenches’ who are best able to spot opportunities—rather than those higher up the hierarchical ladder

Take action

A self-starter doesn’t just have ideas; he or she acts on those ideas. It’s certainly easier to wait for someone else to tell you what to do and when to do it. But to show initiative, you must take chances, see opportunities, make decisions, and act on the decisions you make. Be willing to experiment by doing something different.

Persevere

Staff members who excel at showing initiative must persist in supporting the ideas and actions in which they believe. There will always be entrenched policies and procedures, and people comfortable supporting the status quo. To continue your efforts against the reservations or ‘pushback’ from others requires commitment to your ideas and even a degree of courage.

There may be gender or cultural differences that influence your thinking about and/or self-confidence in taking initiative; or taking initiative may take different forms than those mentioned here. Discussing these differences with someone you trust can be of value in gaining comfort and confidence in self-starting behaviours.



Delivering results, requires all of us to find ways to be self-starters.

Adapt to change by understanding your own change style

“ By recognizing and understanding your own typical reaction to organizational change, you will be able to deal with it more effectively.

Coping with change is a challenge because it is unstoppable and is happening all the time. Change is an inevitable reality of the workplace, and we must be prepared to respond in ways that benefit both the organization and ourselves— regardless of our usual personal response to change. People react to change in very different ways. A change that seems devastatingly threatening to one person may be just an annoyance to another and even welcomed by someone else. How we respond to change is determined to a large extent by our individual personality characteristics. By becoming aware of our typical response to change, we can better cope with the changes in our workplace.

Promoting and working for gender equality and human rights for all inevitably involves change and shifts in

power, particularly ‘power-over’. Change for gender equality creates many opportunities for more fair and equitable organizations. Thus within the organization, we anticipate that change for gender equality will be a constant and progressive factor, making it all the more important that all people in the organization understand their tolerance for change, accept change as positive, and work together to advance the goals of the organization. Transformation towards gender justice demand that we let go of our privilege and power bestowed on us by patriarchy. This is difficult, particularly for men and those who benefit from the unequal power hierarchies. However, as an organization working to advance gender equality, its staff members need to practise what we preach. Change must happen within first and foremost



Identify your change style

Check the statements below that describe your typical feelings when a workplace change takes place:

	✓
1. Not again! Never mind, I suppose I can adapt to doing it this new way.	
2. Hey, at last...this new way sounds like it should be a real improvement.	
3. Hmm...This change actually may provide some good opportunities.	
4. I'll never be able to do it the new way; I just don't pick up things fast; I'd better start looking around for a new job.	
5. Sigh...change seems to be a way of life around here. Oh, well.	
6. No way is that ever going to work! Maybe if several of us get together, we can keep this change from happening or undermine it somehow.	

These statements reflect three attitudes that are characteristic reactions to change. People generally tend to reject, tolerate, or welcome change. By knowing your own typical reaction, you can consciously consider alternative responses that may be more successful the next time change happens.

Change embracers

The person who welcomes change often is someone who requires the constant stimulation that change brings. These are the innovators who enable the change to take hold and prosper in the organization. Unfortunately, Change Embracers may be less than compassionate toward Change Rejecters, and convey an attitude of superiority or disdain.

Suggestions:

If you are a Change Embracer, you might:

- Continue to enthusiastically support organizational change and innovation, but with empathy and understanding for your colleagues who find it difficult.
- Help the Change Toleraters and Change Rejecters see how both the organization and their own interests will benefit, so that they too can support the change.

Change toleraters

If you checked items 1 and 5, you are likely to be someone who tolerates change even though you would probably prefer to operate the old way. You are moderately flexible and adaptable, and have confidence that you'll be able to master new ways of doing

Suggestions:

If you are a Change Tolerater, you might:

- Examine the change thoroughly and try to identify positive aspects of which you will be able to take advantage.
- Be sure your cynicism doesn't rub off on others, even though you feel 'here we go again'. Give the new way a fair chance to work

Change rejecters

If you checked items 4 and 6, you may be a Change Rejecter. Certain types of people truly essential to the organization tend to be in this category. Reliable, dependable, steady, habitual, process-oriented people often find change very unsettling. A person who has invested heavily in an established, proven way of working will be understandably upset at having to make changes. In some cases, change will be seen as loss or addition of power – both of which can cause fear about the change. Withdrawal, worry, sadness and anger are typical emotional responses.

Suggestions:

If you are a Change Rejecter, you might:

- Ask yourself if you are 'catastrophizing'—unconsciously exaggerating the change to be bigger and more harmful than it actually is. See if there could be some aspects to the change or some possibilities within the change that might be positive after all.
- Refuse to huddle with other Rejecters, building on each other's negativity and sense of doom and gloom. Instead, talk to the Change Embracers to better understand what they see as the encouraging potential of the change.



We all react to change in different ways. Do you reject, tolerate or welcome change?

How accountable are you?

“ Gender equality is everybody’s business and accountability

Each of us is responsible for helping build an organizational culture where accountability is valued, expected, recognized and rewarded. In this kind of culture, we and our colleagues are committed to achieve quality results based on personal and professional responsibility. We use resources in the most cost-effective way, and we reduce costs whenever possible. We never allow our personal interests to influence actions or decisions. Creating a culture that supports this kind of accountability takes commitment and dedication.

In the work to promote gender equality, we are particularly accountable to women and girls, and those who are in a disadvantaged position. It is vitally significant that what we do will advance the human rights agendas (particularly women’s human rights) as stipulated in international agreements such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights, CEDAW, ICPD, & Beijing Platform for Action.

Accountability requires:



Rate yourself on your contribution to a culture of accountability

For each statement below, see if you can think of a clear, specific example of your own behaviour. (“I always do that” is not specific. “Last Tuesday in Pierre’s office when I told…” is a specific example. Broad generalities do not count.). For each item check the YES column if you have an example and the NO column if you don’t.

	Yes ?	No?
1. I am aware of and regularly consult international agreements and instruments for human rights to guide my work.		
2. I include gender and power analysis in planning, designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating my projects and/or programmes.		
3. I regularly reflect on and check whether or not my actions, practices, and words reinforce gendered power imbalance, gender stereotypes, and privilege.		
4. I can clearly state what I accomplished last week, and admit what I intended to do but did not get done.		
5. I can identify one specific challenge that our team faces and describe my individual responsibility for dealing with that challenge.		
6. I can clearly state at least three of my priorities for this month in line with my commitment to the team’s goals and my own strengths and weaknesses.		
7. I can give a specific example of a way I either reduced costs or used our resources in a particularly cost-effective way.		
8. I can identify a time when I consulted relevant rules and regulations either in print or online, to verify that I was following them.		
9. I can state exactly which tasks I am responsible for carrying out.		
10. I can give a specific example of a recent time when I kept a promise to the team or a colleague despite considerable difficulty.		

How did you do?

If you were able to say YES to all 10 items, you are doing well! But you should not feel discouraged if you were not able to say YES to all items: total personal accountability is an ideal to aspire to. The purpose of this exercise is to help you objectively assess your actual behaviours in the area of accountability and to discover opportunities for improvement.

You may want to do this exercise with your team. Have each team member identify the items for which they had to answer NO. If several of you had difficulty with the same item, form a small group to talk about it. Perhaps you can devise a solution that will enhance the team's overall accountability.

Creating an environment of accountability

What do all of the behaviours on the inventory have to do with accountability? All of them contribute to a work culture that nurtures, supports and expects individual acceptance of responsibility for one's decisions and actions.

- **Priorities**

When everyone agrees on individual and team priorities, you and your team members are less likely to work at cross purposes, duplicate work, or be in conflict with one another. When priorities are transparent and accepted by the group, members feel accountable for producing quality work that addresses those priorities.

- **No territoriality or blaming**

While feeling ownership for one's own work is important, and contributes to accountability, a feeling of territoriality is ownership taken to an extreme. Someone who is territorial does not share important information with others. Accountability requires accepting responsibility for your own mistakes. This is much easier when you know that others are not pointing fingers or undermining you.

- **Risk taking and asking for feedback**

In an atmosphere of trust, we are willing to take sensible risks, knowing that measured risk-taking is the way progress is made. Failures are seen as opportunities for individual and organizational learning and improvement. By asking for feedback, we can measure our success and know what needs to be changed.

- **Carrying your fair share, using resources wisely, following regulations, and avoiding influence**

When you carry your fair share of the workload, use resources responsibly and transparently, adhere to regulations, follow guidelines, and do not let your own personal interests influence your work, you set an example for other team members. Together, you and your team build a culture that supports accountability.



It takes the contribution of each of us to create a strong culture of accountability at the organization.

Developing gender-sensitive
competencies:

Quick tips

(ADAPTED FROM UNAIDS' COMPETENCIES)

