

## Managing Different Styles of Communication

	<b>Linear</b>	<b>Circular</b>
<b>Markers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication is “a straight line” moving to the main point: linear.</li> <li>• Getting to the point is important, and the point is explicitly stated</li> <li>• Not getting to the point is experienced as a waste of time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication is circular, around the main point</li> <li>• The point is indirectly addressed</li> <li>• The point is often unstated b/c the verbal &amp; nonverbal data provide sufficient information for understanding</li> <li>• Stating the point explicitly is experienced as insulting to the other person</li> </ul>
<b>...do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be brief</li> <li>• Preface your remarks: “the point is...”</li> <li>• Be explicit about the main point</li> <li>• Don’t deviate from the main point</li> <li>• Provide only as much information as the other person needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be elegant and flowing with remarks</li> <li>• Avoid prefaces such as, “the point is...”</li> <li>• Embellish remarks with stories, anecdotes</li> <li>• Let stories/examples make the point</li> <li>• Let the other person infer the meaning of your remarks</li> </ul>

	<b>Direct</b>	<b>Indirect</b>
<b>Markers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What one means is stated in a straightforward style and directly</li> <li>• There is no “beating around the bush”</li> <li>• Directness is equated with honesty and respect of the other person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaning is conveyed by subtle means: nonverbals, stories, examples, suggestions, reflections....</li> <li>• Indirectness is equated with politeness and respect for the other person</li> </ul>
<b>...do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect other person’s time; be forward</li> <li>• Don’t create ambiguity or uncertainty by avoiding the point/issue</li> <li>• Be straightforward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect the other person’s feelings</li> <li>• Don’t put the other person on the spot by being too direct</li> <li>• Be polite, take time</li> </ul>

	<b>Low Context</b>	<b>High Context</b>
<b>Markers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication context is assumed to be not known</li> <li>• Things must be explained clearly and without ambiguity</li> <li>• Meaning is expressed precisely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication context is assumed to be known</li> <li>• It is unnecessary to explain meanings precisely</li> <li>• It is insulting to explain and state meaning</li> <li>• Meaning is taken from the context</li> </ul>
<b>...do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always communicate clearly, completely, and without ambiguity</li> <li>• Be concrete</li> <li>• Don’t leave understanding to chance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always respect the other person’s understanding of the situation</li> <li>• Leave understanding up to the other person (no need to explain)</li> </ul>

	<b>Attached (Emotional)</b>	<b>Detached (Unemotional)</b>
<b>Markers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication is carried out with feeling and emotion</li> <li>• Issues are discussed with passion and commitment</li> <li>• Communication is very expressive</li> <li>• Sharing of values and opinions is valued</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication is carried out in a calm and impersonal manner</li> <li>• Objective communication is valued highly</li> <li>• Highly expressive, emotional, or engaged communication is inappropriate b/c this is seen as personalizing the issues and is bias</li> </ul>
<b>...do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State your views with passion and conviction</li> <li>• If you care about an idea, show it!</li> <li>• Bring yourself as a person into the dialogue; show who you are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State your view without passion</li> <li>• Avoid being emotional</li> <li>• Avoid personalizing the discussion – keep yourself (your values, beliefs) out of the discussion</li> </ul>

	<b>Intellectual</b>	<b>Relational</b>
<b>Markers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis is on ideas, which are separate from the person</li> <li>• Disagreement of ideas is acceptable and valued</li> <li>• Disagreement is not a personal attack</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis is on the relationship</li> <li>• Importance is attached to the feelings of others</li> <li>• Issues and ideas are not separated from people</li> <li>• Disagreement of ideas also implies disagreement of the person</li> </ul>
<b>...do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen carefully to the ideas being shared</li> <li>• If you disagree, say so</li> <li>• Even if a person's ideas are wrong, there is nothing wrong with the person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to the person</li> <li>• Be attentive to feelings</li> <li>• Be careful to not hurt the other person's feelings</li> <li>• Understand that an attack on someone's ideas is an attack on that person</li> </ul>

	<b>Procedural</b>	<b>Personal</b>
<b>Markers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis is on policies, rules and procedures</li> <li>• Fairness is ensured by treating people the same, across the board</li> <li>• Communication reflects equality by way of treating others similarly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis is on the person and that person's situation</li> <li>• Fairness is ensured by treating people as unique individuals</li> <li>• Empathy overrides strict rule adherence</li> </ul>
<b>...do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep reminding people of what the rules are</li> <li>• Be fair by treating people alike, regardless of their background</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the circumstances that cause "the concern"</li> <li>• Be fair – treat people according to their circumstances</li> <li>• Be relative; recognize that people are different</li> </ul>

	<b>Physical</b>	<b>Non-Physical</b>
<b>Markers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of gesticulation</li> <li>• Touching – arms, hands, shoulders, knee, etc.</li> <li>• Extended hand shaking/holding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal hand/body movement</li> <li>• Hands, legs kept close to body</li> <li>• Brief, formal contact only</li> </ul>
<b>...do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop some comfort/tolerance with touching</li> <li>• Remain in physical space</li> <li>• Avoid cringing upon contact</li> <li>• Learn to differentiate appropriate cultural contact/display and inappropriate contact/display</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize hand/body movement</li> <li>• Allow for distance – “space”</li> <li>• Avoid “large” presence of self</li> <li>• Learn the formal rules for contact and display and utilize actively</li> </ul>

Primary source: M. Paige, 1997. Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication.  
2001 Kevin. F. Gaw, Ph.D.