

WORKSHOP

**the MPS
program**

52

The McMaster

Problem Solving Program

Unit 52

Interpersonal Skills

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MPS Unit 52

Interpersonal Relationships

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"People skills"- no matter what professional position we consider, people skills will be required. How well do we interact with or relate to others? Becoming aware of and developing these skills may have started very early for you; perhaps they are just starting to be developed. The elements that make up people skills are diverse. Fig 52-1 illustrates some of the components: an awareness of yourself and of the diversity in others; self acceptance and acceptance of others and self confidence. Thus one **first** focuses inwardly on oneself. This Unit assumes that you are aware and proud of your uniqueness, that you have your own personal goals based on principles, and that you proactively use those to guide your life. (Guidance for these are given in MPS Units **3a, 11, 31, 41**). One develops a willingness to risk through self-disclosure to others, a willingness to empathize with others and to risk through caring for others. Mutual trust develops.

The interaction between people includes fundamentals discussed in other MPS units. These include communicating, MPS 48
listening and responding, MPS 26
giving and receiving feedback, MPS 43
assertiveness, MPS 44
resolving conflicts, MPS 45
dealing with difficult behaviours, MPS 46
and anger management, MPS 60.

Relater units include The Unique You, MPS 11, and stress management, MPS 5

For all of these activities, there exist general rules of conduct that are independent of culture and age.

Activity 52-1: Pretest

Consider your interpersonal skills, your awareness of acceptable "rules of conduct" and guidelines about how you interact with others. How aware are you of what you do when you interact with others and the principles you use to guide that interaction? Rate your awareness by placing an x at the appropriate location on the following scale:

Unaware it just happens.		have some awareness		Yes, very aware.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

How skilled are you in applying the principles with interpersonal skills?

Unskilled		have some skill		Yes, very skilled.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Figure 52-1: Components in Developing Interpersonal Skills

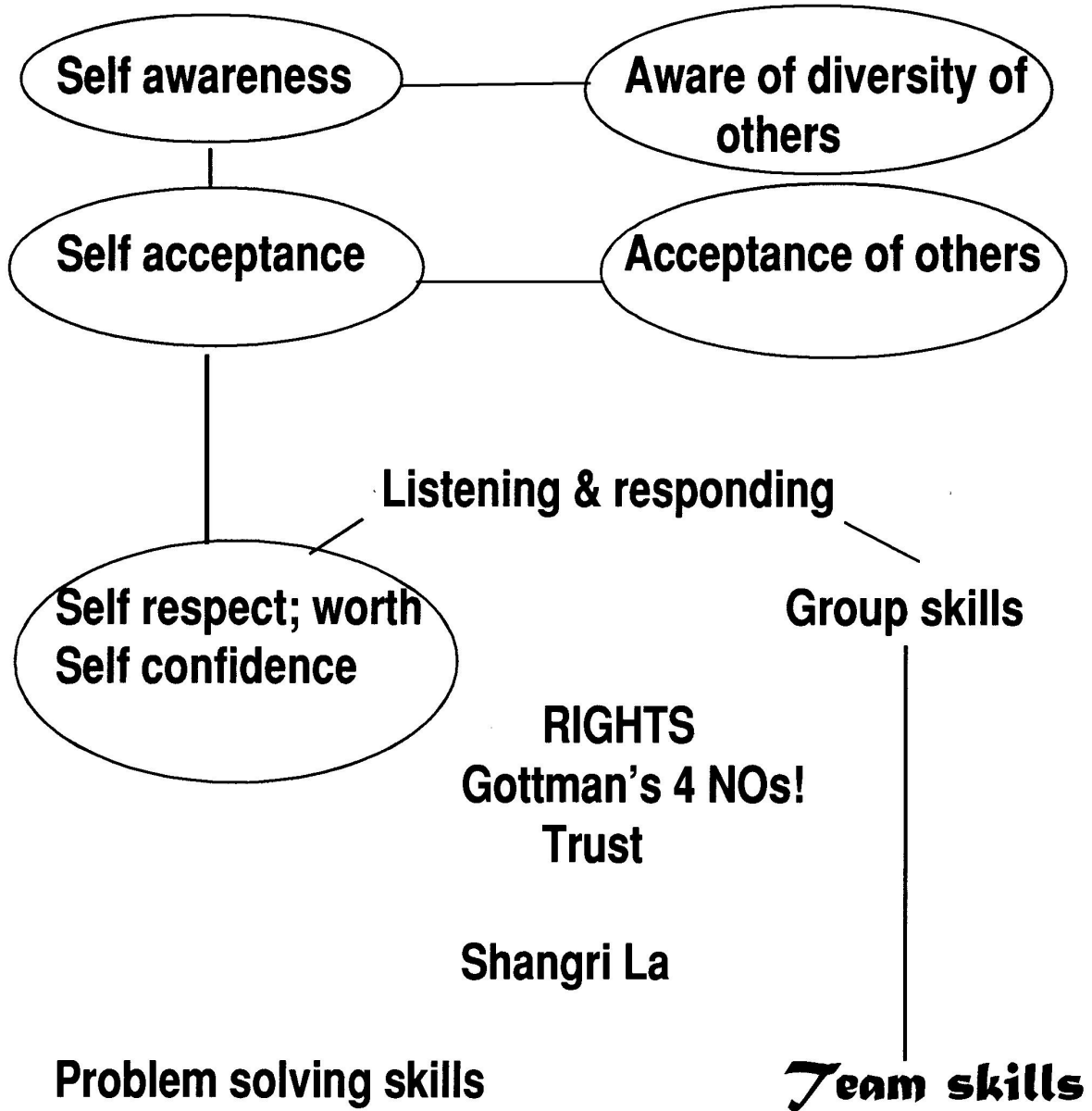
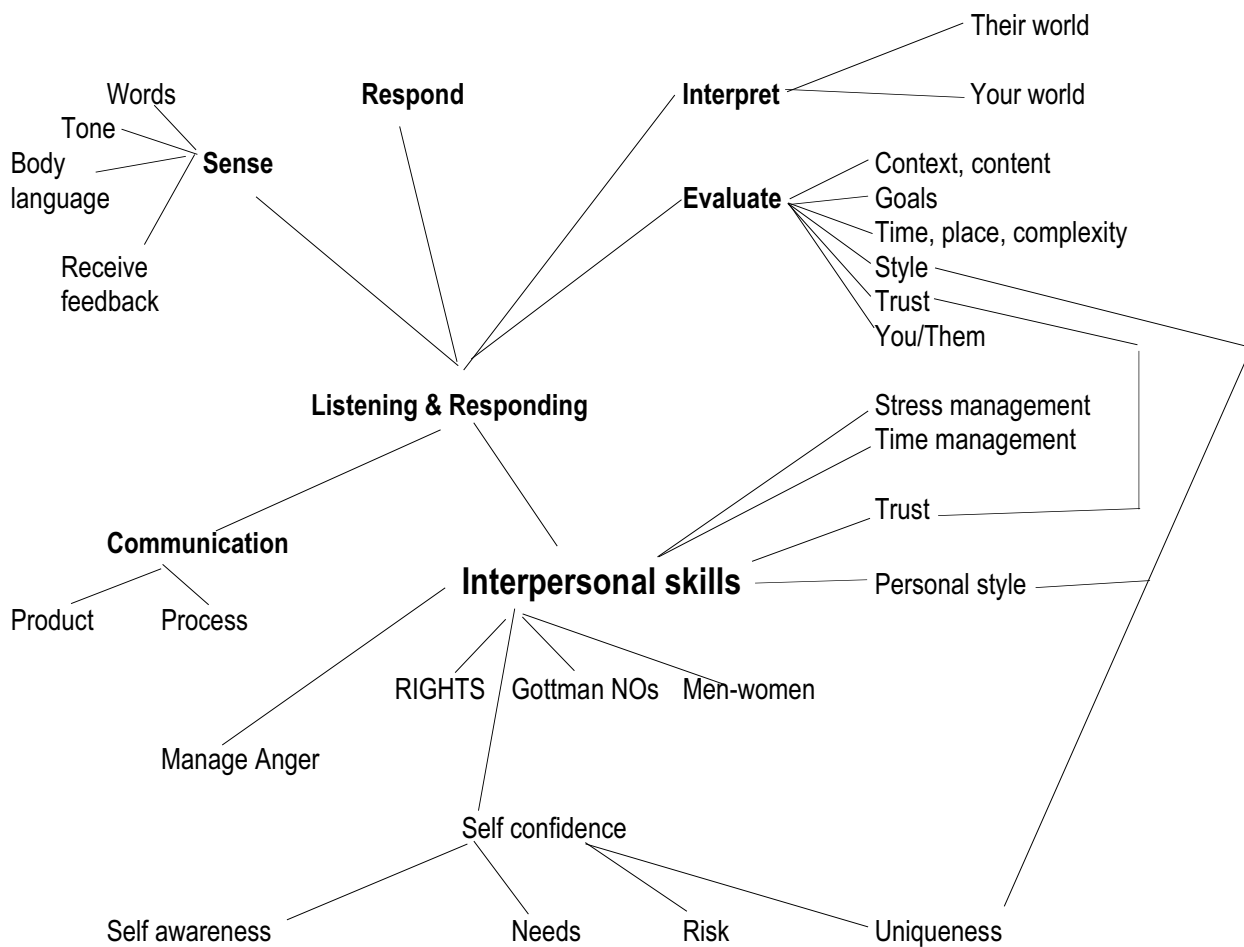


Figure 52-2 Interconnects for interpersonal skills



52.1 Guidelines of Conduct

The guidelines consist of fundamental rights that each of us has and avoiding the four NOs..

52.1-1 Seven Fundamental Personal Rights

Hilary Langsford (1984), Cawood (1988) and Helge Rhode (1989) summarize the five fundamental personal rights of all as:

1. We all have the right to be respected by others (to feel good about ourselves and to be treated fairly).
2. We all have the right to have needs and to have these needs be as important as other people's needs. Moreover, we have the right to ask (not demand) that other people respond to our needs and to decide whether we will take care of the other person's needs.
3. We all have the right to have feelings- and to express these feelings in ways that do not violate the dignity of other persons (the right to feel tired, happy, silly, sexy, depressed, lonesome).
4. We all have the right to decide whether we will meet other people's expectations or to act in ways which best suite us, provided we act so that we do not violate other people's rights. (We have a right to say no to people without feeling guilty and have a right to decide how we want to respond to others. We have a right to change our mind or to say we don't know or to ask for information from experts.)
5. We all have the right to form our own opinions and to express these opinions.

I add a sixth and seventh:

6. We all have the right to make a mistake, to forget and to be wrong (and to be forgiven). I have yet to meet a "perfect" person. We should accept ourselves when we make mistakes and forgive others when they do too.

Inferred by these is the seventh:

7. We do not have the right to achieve **our** rights by violating or infringing on the rights of others.

Thus we all have right to choose, to have opinions, to be respected, to have needs and feelings, to make mistakes (and be forgiven) and to accept these rights in others.

These fundamental personal rights are the foundation of all of our interpersonal behaviour. These are crucial to understanding how to listen and respond, how to manage stress, how to cope effectively with anger and how to deal with those difficult behaviours we encounter in life. These rights are the basis of negotiation and assertiveness. They are crucial for "self-esteem".

Because of their importance, we should find a simple memory mnemonic to help us to remember them. The acronym RIGHTS is to remind us of these rights.

R the right to Respected
 I the right to Inform or to have an opinion and express it
 G the right to have Goals and needs and express these.
 H the right to Have feelings and express them.
 T the right to have had Trouble and make mistakes and be forgiven.
 S the right to Select your response to other's expectations.
 and the right to Claim these rights and honor these in others

Activity 52-2:

Consider the scenarios presented in Table 52-1 and identify the fundamental right that is being violated (if there is one being violated). Identify whose right it is and rephrase the response.

52.1-2 Avoid the 4 Destroyers of Relationships; The 4 Nos

Avoid the four destroyers that researcher Gottman found destroy relationships:

Contempt
 Criticism
 Withdrawal and stonewalling
 Defensiveness.

I remember these by recalling the phrase "Did the *contemptuous critter* sit on *de fence* or the *stone wall*?" If you use one of these destroyers once, then you have to give 5 to 12 positives to overcome the damage you did.

Activity 52-3: Fundamental rights and destroyers

Analyze the conversation and identify claiming of rights, honoring rights in others and evidence of the four destroyers.

Two friends Tonya and Marcos are trying to solve a problem. Let's listen in on their conversation. The parts of the conversation are coded to guide discussion.

Tonya: "OK, the four reasons why we shouldn't go to the party are (i) 1. we don't have money to go, 2. Michelle will be there and she's a pain. 3. it's at Mike's house and it's too small if a lot of people go, 4. Tony always shows up and he usually gets bombed, vomits and gets abusive. (ii). What do you think? (iii)

Marcos: "I think we should go." (iv) The last party we had at Bills was really great. (v) Remember how much fun we had. (vi) That's also where I met Andrea. (vii). Let's go. (viii)"

Tonya: "Hey! (ix) You've done it. (x) You've zeroed in on only the reasons you like and you haven't even talked about my reasons. (xi)" You didn't even listen to me. (xii)

Marcos: "Don't get huffy about it.(xiii) I'm just trying to make a decision; are we going to discuss this all day? (xiv) My experience tells me it will be fun! So what great insight are you bringing to this problem? (xv) Ms. Smarty. (xvi) Besides your excuse about Michelle is not really a reason for not going. (xvii)"

Tonya: "Now you resort to criticizing my reasons. (xviii) That's not fair (xvix)"

Table 52-1: Some scenarios

Situation:	[Your thoughts:] "your response"	Fundamental right in question
<p>You've had a hard day at the office. You come home and your roommate says: "Your turn to make dinner. Hurry up, I'm hungry and I'm going out tonight."</p>	<p>[Stupid twit. We rearranged the schedule last week. Can't he even read.] "read the schedule twit-face. You're the one who's getting' dinner tonight. Get with it. And don't have sausage again!"</p>	
<p>Phyllis was a superb employee. She organized events; kept a daily diary, always knew who to phone. Her replacement refuses to keep a diary and has no organization at all. He is a whiz with data files and computer processing. Yesterday you telephoned from out of town and asked that he put a list of clients you are to see today on your desk. There is no information on your desk when you come in. When asked about it he said "I couldn't find it."</p>	<p>[This company is going to! in a hand-basket hiring this useless jerk! We'll lose today's sales all on account of him. He should be organized. He probably does this to spite me so that his friend Lorraine has a better sales record this month than me.] "You're just trying to make me screw up these sales. You get that list for me by 10 or I'll kick your butt right out of here."</p>	
<p>The project is not progressing as well as we had planned.</p>	<p>[I'm working 10 h/wk on this darn project and John is only spending 2 h/wk. That fry's me!] "John, when are you going to stop twitting around and pull your weight on this project?"</p>	

52.1-3 Other Guidelines to Interpersonal Shangri La

These six fundamental personal rights provide some general guidelines or rules of conduct. No matter what the occasion or who you are interacting with, consider the following as general guidelines (based on Zigler, Johnson, Lehner and Whetten and Cameron):

1. Everyone is unique, can function from the point of their individual past experience, and is valued because of their uniqueness. Show respect for the person as an individual.
2. The golden rule is still golden: treat others the way you would like to be treated.
3. Look for the good in others; expect the best.
4. If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all.
5. Be loyal first to yourself and then to others.
6. Maintain a sense of humour; keep things in perspective.
7. Cooperation must be earned, not demanded.
8. People don't care how much you know.. just how much you care about them.
9. Show empathy; indicate that you have listened and understood others. Focus the response on being flexible so that you show willingness to listen and try to understand another's views.

52.2 Developing Trust

Trust glues relationships together. Trust is based on integrity, competency and benevolence (not doing anything that will hurt the other purpose).

We build trust by such acts of *integrity* as:

- keeping commitments to yourself and others.
- clarifying expectations that you have of yourself and of others.
- showing personal integrity, honesty and loyalty to others.
- promptly and sincerely apologizing when you know you are wrong.
- honoring the fundamental RIGHTS listed above and avoiding the destroyers.
- taking time to see things from the perspectives of others.
- accepting others "warts and all."

We build trust by being *competent*

- operates within level of competency
- does not claim to be more competent than evidence shows
- knows and correctly identifies areas of competence

We build trust by such *benevolent* acts as:

- not saying ill of the person behind his/her back or when they are not present.

We destroy trust by

- the reverse of the Builders of trust listed above, and
- not meeting commitments.
- selectively listening, reading and using material out of context.
- not accepting the experience of others as being valid.

- asking others to give up their fundamental RIGHTS.
- and such non-benevolent acts as:
- making changes that affect others without consultation.
 - playing the broken record until you've eventually worn them out.
 - subtly making changes in the context/issues/wording gradually so that they are unaware of what is happening until it is too late. They were sideswiped.

Activity 52-4: Trust

Someone requests "Would you please be chair of the upcoming conference. It won't take much work and you are the ideal person to do it" Your situation is that you have been chair of a similar conference before; this would take the equivalent of at least 2 months of concerted effort. You have promised your family to spend more time with them. You are just barely managing to meet your commitments now. The conference will draw many from abroad and being chair would bring you a lot of personal satisfaction as well as increase your visibility and reputation. How do you respond?

Activity 52-5: Self assess trust

Complete the inventory about trust given in Table 52-2.

52.3 Build on another's personal uniqueness

The Unique You and the Unique Them. Each of us has our biases, prejudices and preferences or style. A variety of questionnaires and inventories can be used to help understand preferred styles for managing conflict, making decisions, applying creativity, differing style of conversing, validating ideas, gathering and using data, accounting for facts versus feelings and considering details versus the big picture. Inventories of Johnson and Johnson (1986), Kirton (KAI: 1976), and Jung (MBTI: 1984) are examples of such inventories. Your style is unique; it will differ from others. Accept, respect and improve the quality of your interaction through these differences. Do not let these differences lead to conflict.

We should also recognize the personal tendency or bias to prefer to report interpretation and inferences, instead of "just the facts".

Complete Activity 52-6.

Table 52-2 Trust

Trust is having confidence that you can mutually reveal aspects of yourself and your work without fear of reprisals, embarrassment or publicity.

Trust works both ways: you trust them and they trust you. Trust is not developed overnight, trust takes time to develop. Trust can be destroyed by one incorrect act.

Check your current status

Building your trustworthiness getting them to trust you

	already do this	needs some work	need lots of work	unsure if this is for me
1. Do what you say you will do.	0	0	0	0
2. Be willing to self disclose: don't hide your shortcomings; share yourself honestly.	0	0	0	0
3. Listen carefully to others and reflect to validate your interpretation.	0	0	0	0
4. Understand what really matters to others; do your best to look out for their best interests.	0	0	0	0
5. Ask for feedback.	0	0	0	0
6. Don't push others to trust you more than you trust them.	0	0	0	0
7. Don't confuse "Being a buddy" with trustworthiness.	0	0	0	0
8. Tell the truth.	0	0	0	0
9. Keep confidences.	0	0	0	0
10. Honor and claim the 7 RIGHTS.	0	0	0	0
11. Don't embarrass them.	0	0	0	0

Checking your trustworthiness do they trust you?

	always	most times	sometimes	don't think applies
1. Do they disclose confidential information trusting that you will keep it confidential?	0	0	0	0
2. Do they assign you challenging tasks to do without frequently checking up on you?	0	0	0	0
3. Do they honor your RIGHTS?	0	0	0	0
4. Do they seem to look out for your best interests?	0	0	0	0
5. Honest and forthright.	0	0	0	0
6. Do not leave you feeling that they haven't told you everything about the situation; they seem to be holding back.	0	0	0	0

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Activity 52-6: The unique you

You are on a trouble shooting team with the following people whose personal style are given in the following table. Write in your scores.

	Johnson style for conflict					Jungian			Kirton	
	Withd	Accom	Force	Comp	Negotiate	IE	TF	PJ		SN
You										
Marie	-1	2	-3.5	3.4	9	I	T	J	S	82
Phil	-6.1	1.3	-5.8	0.6	7.5	E	F	P	S	98
Jean	-1.1	3.7	-3.1	2.4	6.7	E	T	J	S	87
Terry	-4.1	3.5	-6.4	1.2	7.8	E	F	P	N	83

1. Where are your blind spots? Describe this in actions. For example, if you are a dominant S then your blind spot might be *seeing the big picture, focusing too much on the details.*
2. Does the team have any blind spots?
3. With whom might you have minimum differences? What are those differences?
4. With whom will you have maximum differences? What are those differences?
5. How can you build on this to trouble shoot efficiently and well.

52.4 Men and Women in Conversation

Debra Tannen’s research on men and women in conversation helps us understand interpersonal relationships. Her findings are summarize in Table 52-3. Figure 52-3 suggests how intimacy is reached.

Figure 52-3: Reaching intimacy:

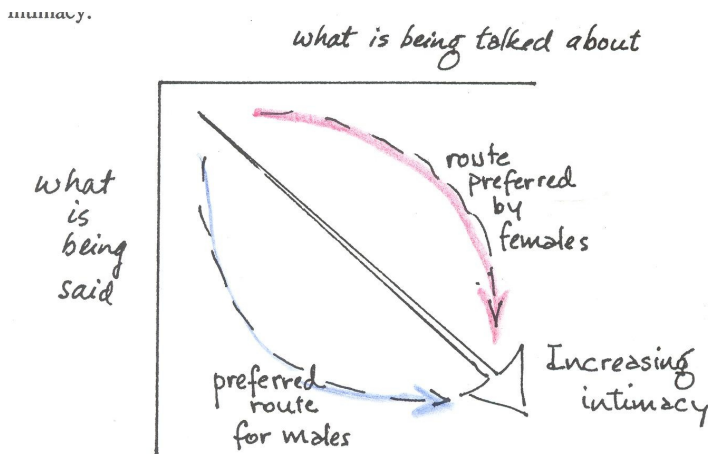


Table 52-3: Tannen's findings

Scenario	Male	Female
general	to establish rank and rating of him relative to the rest: one-upmanship. do you respect me? exchange information.	to establish closer relationships; do you like me? build relationships.
negotiation: use conversation to	a) figure out what to do: b) make a decision, c) establish personal independence; offer advice and solutions	a) understand the situation: b) reach consensus, c) to become close and intimate.
asking questions:	a) talk for information; tend to give information b) tend to talk in "Do.." commands	a) talk to express their thinking; tend to give praise b) tend to talk in "Let's..." "Maybe..." proposals.
relationships:	held together by doing activities together	held together by talking and sharing feelings.
	worried about persuading others about his knowledge	worried about offending
listening:	expects to be quiet and attentive with few interruptions	expects active, interactive listening where interruptions shows "I'm listening."

52-5 Summary

Interpersonal skills include a strong self awareness, an astute ability and willingness to understand others and see things from their viewpoint, self-confidence and a willingness to risk interacting with others and the basic skill of listening and responding. Some key fundamentals include the fundamental RIGHTS of all, avoiding the use of Gottman's 4 NOs. Some guidelines for interpersonal Shangri La are given about how to communicate with one another.

A model of trust is presented; the implications of the unique you are outlined. The differences between men and women in conversation are given.

Details are given about self-awareness, self-confidence, listening and the various skills in responding in other Units in the MPS program.

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Fig 52-12: Overview of Interpersonal Skills

Glenview IL.

Zig Ziglar (1986) "Top Performance" Berkeley Books, New York.

Fig 52-13: Summary

52: Interpersonal Relationships		
DISCOVERY		
	Discovered	Application

Table 52-6: Some Example Responses: from Whetten and Cameron p 224 ff

Content and context:

Subordinate: "As a manager, you are supervising my work so closely that it is becoming disruptive".

Some Possible Responses:

a. Acknowledge:

1. tracking and following:

"OK"

2. postpone/close out:

"We can discuss this later. Right now I have to go to a meeting."

"Thank you for telling me how you feel."

b. Seek/Ask:

3. understand/reflect:

"You are annoyed because I check up on you so often".

4. probe, information/ opinion seeking:

"Can you tell me specifically what it is that I do to cause you to feel that way?"

"Why do you say that?"

"Would you please elaborate?"

c. Give:

5. evaluative/ advise:

"That's because you are not experienced enough to perform by yourself".

6. confront/collaborate:

"I see it another way. You seem hesitant to accept suggestions in spite of your past mistakes."

7. confront/stop:

" Sharon. I supervise closely to help you grow in the position. I'll discuss this further during your performance review next week."

assertive. this can take a variety of forms for example," opinion giving assertive response:

"I try to supervise all newer employees in my department closely".

assertive expression of feelings:

"when you make mistakes, I find it frustrating because of the amount of time that I have to

spend checking your work after you hand it in."

8. aggressive:

"I'm the boss and it's my choice as to the amount of supervision I give you."

9. reinterpret/ analyze:

"You seem to feel a need to work more by yourself".

10. pacify/ supportive:

"There's no need to worry about your performance. You're doing fine."

11. withdraw:

"Excuse me, I have an appointment."

"Let me think about what you've just said."

Energize:

12. compromise:

"If you will put double check your work before you hand it in, I'll cut down my supervision to once per day".

13. collaborative or problem solving:

"Let's work together to see how we can solve this situation".

14. divert:

"Your statement reminds me of my feelings about the manager I had in my first job who used to ..."