

# Developing Management Skills

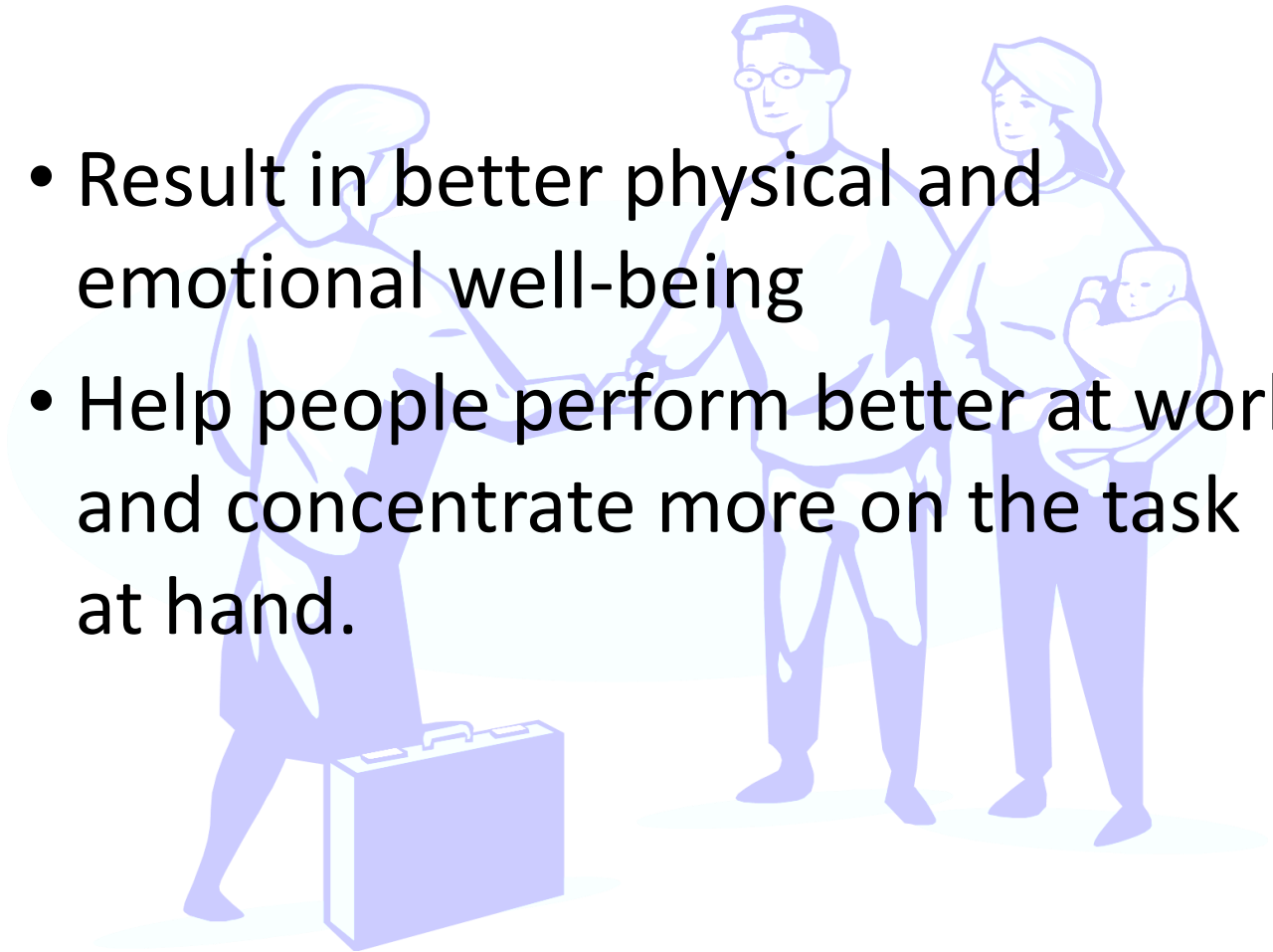
## **Chapter 4:** **Building Relationships by** **Communicating Supportively**

# Learning Objectives

- Build supportive relationships even when delivering negative feedback
- Avoid defensiveness and disconfirmation in interpersonal communication
- Improve ability to apply principles of supportive communication
- Improve relationships by using personal management interviews

# Positive Relationships

- Result in better physical and emotional well-being
- Help people perform better at work and concentrate more on the task at hand.



# Frequent Organizational Problems

- Reliance on technology
- Dominance of e-mail
- Less face-to-face communication



# Problems with Electronic Communication

- Too much information, low quality
- No content to information, lacks meaning
- Interpretation of information depends on relationships with sender

# Communication Problems

“Most individuals don’t seem to feel a strong need to improve their own skill level”





Mail Properties Personalize Message Source

**From:** [REDACTED] 2/4/2013 4:39 PM  
**To:** James.vardaman@msstate.edu  
**BC:** James M. Vardaman  
**Subject:** Test 1

I will be in Jackson tomorrow for the Dixie National [REDACTED] Press Social and [REDACTED] Kickoff, and for the Special Needs Childrens [REDACTED]. On Wednesday I have been invited to address the Mississippi Senate and House of Representatives at the Capitol on behalf of the Dixie National [REDACTED]. I would like for you to please consider letting me move my exam to Friday, as that will be the next day I'm in Starkville. I can get you an official written statement for these dates if you would like.

Professional [REDACTED] season is in full swing in the Southeast right now, but on Feb. 16 I will have my job demands as Miss [REDACTED] Mississippi 2013 fulfilled until I graduate in May. After this next week and a half, I will be able to devote my time to schoolwork. I appreciate your understanding in this matter.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

# Relationships Between Unskillful Communication and Interpersonal Relationships





# Coaching and Counseling

- Coaching: giving advice, direction or information to improve performance.
- Counseling: helping someone understand and resolve a problem him/herself by displaying understanding

# Coaching and Counseling

Coaching: focuses  
on abilities



Counseling:  
focuses on  
attitudes



# When to Coach

- Lack of ability
- Insufficient information
- Incompetence
- Subordinate must understand the problem

# When to Counsel

- Personality clashes
- Defensiveness
- Other factors tied to emotions
- “I can help you recognize that a problem exists.”

# Obstacles to Supportive Communication

## Defensiveness

- One individual feels threatened or attacked as a result of the communication
- Self-protection becomes paramount
- Energy is spent on constructing a defense rather than on listening
- Aggression, anger, competitiveness, and/or avoidance as a result of the communication

# Obstacles to Supportive Communication

## Disconfirmation

- Individual feels incompetent, unworthy, or insignificant as a result of the communication
- Attempts to reestablish self-worth take precedence
- Energy is spent trying to portray self-importance rather than on listening
- Showing off, self-centered behavior, withdrawal, and/or loss of motivation are common reactions

# Supportive Communication

Helps the sender communicate accurately and honestly without jeopardizing interpersonal relationships.



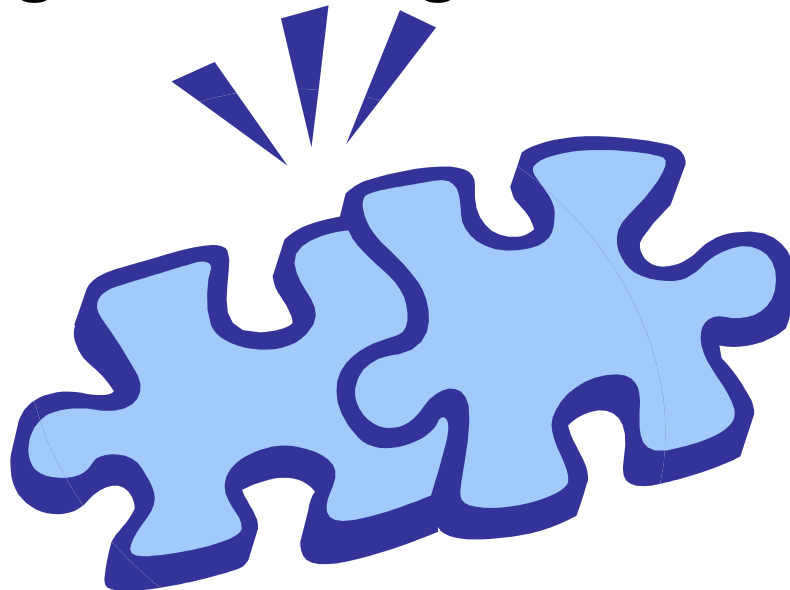
# Attributes of Supportive Communication

- Congruent
- Descriptive
- Problem-Oriented
- Validating
- Specific
- Conjunctive
- Owned
- Supportive Listening



# Supportive Communication

Based on *congruence*: a match between what an individual is thinking and feeling



# Supportive Communication

Is *descriptive* and reduces the tendency to evaluate and cause defensiveness.

# Descriptive Communication

1. Describes objectively the event, behavior, or circumstance
2. Focus on the behavior and your reaction
3. Focus on solutions

# Supportive Communication

Is *problem-oriented* and does not focus on personal traits which cannot be changed.

# Supportive Communication

*Validates* and helps others feel  
recognized, understood, accepted,  
and valued.

# Invalidating Communication

Conveys

- Superiority
- Rigidity
- Indifference

# Validating Communication

- Egalitarian
- Flexible
- Two-way
- Based on agreement

# Supportive Communication

Is *specific* and identifies something that can be understood and acted upon.



# Global Communication

Focuses on extremes and absolutes which deny any alternatives. “My way or the highway!”

# Supportive Communication

Is *conjunctive* and joined to a previous message.



# Disjunctive Communication

Occurs when there is,

1. Lack of opportunity for others to speak
2. Extended pauses
3. Topic control

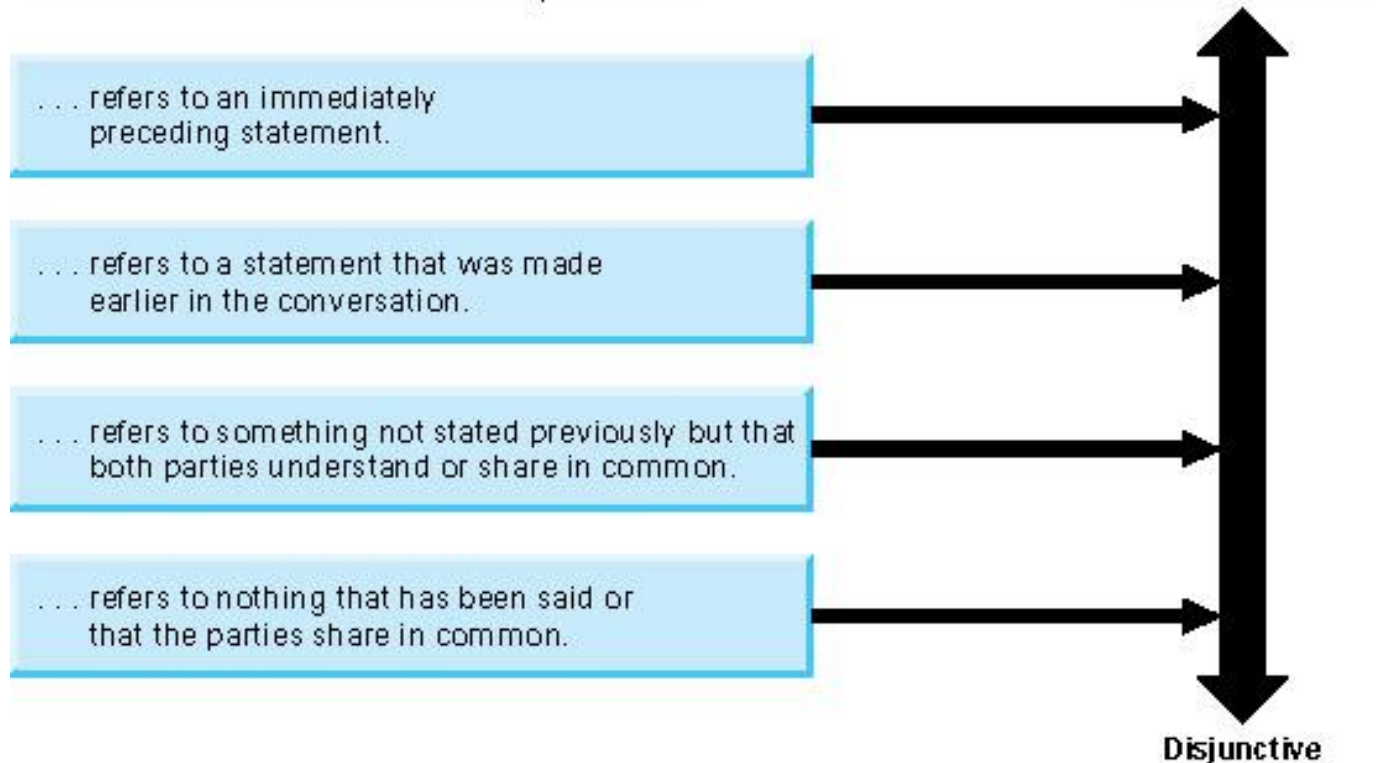
# Interaction Management

Creates conjunction by:

1. Taking turns speaking
2. Management of timing
3. Topic Control

# Continuum of Conjunctive Statements

The communicator's statement or question ...



# Supportive Communication

Is *owned* and acknowledges the source of the idea. Ownership conveys responsibility.

# Disowned Communication

Results in the listener never being sure of whose point of view the message represents.

# Supportive Communication

Requires *active listening* and responding effectively to someone else's statements.



# Effective Listening

- In skills important for managers, effective listening was ranked highest.
- Individuals usually understand about a fourth of what is communicated.

# Responding to Others

- Four Types of Responses
  - Advising
  - Deflecting
  - Probing
  - Reflecting

# Advising

- Provides direction, evaluation, personal opinion, or instruction
- Creates listener control over the topic
- Can produce dependence

# Deflecting

- Switches the focus from communicator's problem to one selected by the listener
- Appropriate if reassurance is needed
- Imply that the communicator's issues are not important

# Probing

- Asks questions about what the communicator said
- Used to gather information
- Can appear that the communicator must justify what is happening

# Four Types of Probes

1. Elaboration
2. Clarification
3. Repetition
4. Reflection



# Reflecting

- Mirror back to the communicator the message that was heard
- Involves paraphrasing and clarifying
- Could appear that the listener isn't listening

# Behavioral Guidelines

- Differentiate between coaching situations and counseling situations
- Use problem-oriented statements rather than person-oriented statements
- Communicate congruently by acknowledging your true feelings without acting them out in destructive ways



# Behavioral Guidelines

- Use descriptive, not evaluative, statements
- Use validating statements that acknowledge the other person's importance and uniqueness
- Use specific rather than global statements when correcting behavior
- Use conjunctive statements that flow smoothly from what was said previously

# Behavioral Guidelines

- Own your statements, and encourage the other person to do likewise
- Demonstrate supportive listening