

# I. Verbal

Verbal communication is the use of language to transfer information through speaking or sign language. It is one of the most common types, often used during presentations, video conferences and phone calls, meetings and one-on-one conversations. Verbal communication is important because it is efficient. It can be helpful to support verbal communication with both non-verbal and written communication.

Here are a few steps you can take to develop your verbal communication skills:

- **Use a strong, confident speaking voice.** Especially when presenting information to a few or a group of people, be sure to use a strong voice so that everyone can easily hear you. Be confident when speaking so that your ideas are clear and easy for others to understand.

- **Use active listening.** The other side of using verbal communication is intently listening to and hearing others. [Active listening skills](#) are key when conducting a meeting, presentation or even when participating in a one-on-one conversation. Doing so will help you grow as a communicator.
- **Avoid filler words.** It can be tempting, especially during a presentation, to use filler words such as “um,” “like,” “so” or “yeah.” While it might feel natural after completing a sentence or pausing to collect your thoughts, it can also be distracting for your audience. Try presenting to a trusted friend or colleague who can call attention to the times you use filler words. Try to replace them by taking a breath when you are tempted to use them.



# Nonverbal

**Nonverbal communication** is the use of body language, gestures and facial expressions to convey information to others. It can be used both intentionally and unintentionally. For example, you might smile unintentionally when you hear a pleasing or enjoyable idea or piece of information. Nonverbal communication is helpful when trying to understand others' thoughts and feelings.

If they are displaying “closed” body language, such as crossed arms or hunched shoulders, they might be feeling anxious, angry or nervous. If they are displaying “open” body language with both feet on the floor and arms by their side or on the table, they are likely feeling positive and open to information.



Here are a few steps you can take to develop your nonverbal communication skills:

- **Notice how your emotions feel physically.**

Throughout the day, as you experience a range of emotions (anything from energized, bored, happy or frustrated), try to identify where you feel that emotion within your body. For example, if you're feeling anxious, you might notice that your stomach feels tight. Developing self-awareness around how your emotions affect your body can give you greater mastery over your external presentation.

- **Be intentional about your nonverbal communications.** Make an effort to display positive body language when you feel alert, open and positive about your surroundings. You can also use body language to support your verbal communication if you feel confused or anxious about information, like using a furrowed brow. Use body language alongside verbal communication such as asking follow up questions or pulling the presenter aside to give feedback.