FIVE-PART COMMUNICATION METHOD

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A client worksheet for clear communication, accurate understanding, and follow-through

Purpose: Slow down a conversation, check that you understand one another, clarify misunderstandings, and identify specific actions that follow from what was communicated.

Speaker A: _____ Speaker B: _____

Topic or issue to discuss: _____

Step	Communication task	Notes / Practice
1 SHARE	Speaker A says what they want the other person to hear. Be specific about thoughts, feelings, needs, or concerns.	What I want you to understand/what I need is: _____ _____
2 REFLECT	Speaker B restates what they heard. Do not argue, explain, defend, or problem-solve yet.	What I heard you say is: _____ _____
3 CLARIFY	Speaker A confirms what was understood correctly and clarifies anything missed or misunderstood.	What you understood correctly is: _____ What I want to clarify is: _____
4 CONFIRM	If Speaker A clarified anything, Speaker B restates the clarification in their own words.	What I understand now is: _____ _____
5 ACT	Speaker B describes a specific, realistic behavior in response—not just a vague promise.	One thing I will do is: _____ When or how I will do it: _____

Reflection and Follow-Through

1. What did we understand better about each other?

_____

2. Was anything misunderstood or difficult to hear?

_____

3. What specific action or change did we agree on?

_____

4. When will we check in about how that action is going?

_____

Key Principle: Communication Leads to Behavior

Understanding someone's message is not the same as responding to it. A meaningful response identifies what the listener is willing and able to do with what they have heard. Some messages clearly connect to a follow up behavior/commitment and some less so, but

either way, any message can include a “step 5” action even if it is simply about what behavior will show that the listener heard and understands what was said.

- Instead of “I'll try to do better,” say: “I will put my phone away when we sit down to talk after dinner.”
- Instead of “I understand you're overwhelmed,” say: “I will take responsibility for dinner on Tuesday and Thursday.”
- Instead of “I'll keep that in mind,” say: “Before making a decision that affects both of us, I will discuss it with you first.”

The goal is not necessarily to agree with everything the other person says. It is to understand the message accurately, communicate respectfully, and identify an appropriate behavioral response.

Practice reminder: Take turns being Speaker A and Speaker B. Move through the steps slowly, and do not skip clarification or behavioral follow-through.