

Communicating with TAFVA

There are many excellent models for engaging in open and constructive communication. The Department of Practical Sunshine and our clients have had a lot of success using the TAFVA model. Of course nothing is one-size-fits-all, but it's worth a try!

T is for Thank

Start by thanking the person for being open to talking to you.

“I’m glad we’re connecting about this.”

“Thanks for taking the time to meet with me.”

“I’m actually really happy you brought that up.”

Why: Whether you’re the initiator or they are, gratitude sets the tone.

A is for Ask

Ask just one clarifying question to identify the topic at hand.

“Do you have any thoughts or feelings about X?”

“How did you learn about Y?”

“Did you know I am still unclear about Z?”

Why: Make sure both parties know what is being discussed. Keep the scope narrow.

F is for Facts

Speak truth. Two to three sentences. Keep opinion and emotion out of it.

“The project has been underway for two months and none of the deadlines have been met. This means that all dependencies are now delayed.”

“The trash is still sitting by the back door. Pickup happens by 6am tomorrow.”

Why: Opportunity to correct misinformation, state things as they are.

V is for Value

Explain why this is important. Give the “why.” One to two sentences is best.

“When deadlines aren’t met, it increases the stress on the team and ultimately impacts our clients.”

“Having the trash sit by the back door makes the whole room smell. We have agreed to share the household maintenance responsibilities.”

Why: Make meaning. Connect to emotion and identify shared values.

A is for Ask (yes, again!)

Either confirm that you answered their question or ask a follow up question to get closer to resolution.

“What do you think about that?”

“How does that match with your understanding?”

Not “Do you understand?” or “Am I clear?”

Why: An open-ended question provides the opportunity for positive continued engagement.

Don’t Forget! Effective communication always requires being mindful of:

- tone, tenor and timing
- non-verbals such as facial expressions, body position and proximity
- power differentials and oppressive systemic norms
- two ears/one mouth=listen 2x/speak

Need help navigating a difficult conversation?

Want to hone your communication skills?

Schedule a session: practicalsunshine.co