



## Improving verbal communication

Unclear communication in the workplace may feel like a game of “telephone” where people sit in a row, pass a message down the line and the end message typically varies from the original content.

Words are very important. They can have the power to move, enlighten and educate, yet can also disturb, or even ruffle a few feathers.

Questions to be shared with staff and spark discussion:

Words can change over time and sometimes new ones replace the old ones, or the meaning simply changes because of cultural changes. Can you share a few words that have changed over time and how they have changed? (Example: prior to social media a *friend* was someone you trusted and cared about.)

Tips to Improve listening skills:

1. Think before you speak – It’s important for people to be able to rely on us and trust our message which means making sure we’re communicating is as close to our exact intent as possible.
2. Aim for authenticity – Don’t try to sound smart. It’s far better to come across as authentic rather than ‘smart’.
3. Use small words to deliver big messages – Even if you know the proper definitions and use of big words, industry jargon, or buzz words your audience may not. If your listener does not understand your message you will confuse them and you run the risk of making them feel as though you are ‘talking down to them.’
4. Email niceties matter – don’t get so focused on the business message across in an email that you forget the “niceties” that should accompany the message. Take one last look before you hit send and be sure you included things like “Hello, how are you? Nice to hear from you again” and also closings such as “Looking forward to seeing you. Or - Please tell John thanks for me.”