COMPELLING COMMUNICATION:
PROJECTING CONFIDENCE & CREDIBILITY

NCSL SUMMIT
Wednesday, August 3, 2022
1:30 p.m.

HANDOUTS
NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Congruency
- Nonverbal communication is the biggest part of any message.
- If there is a mismatch between the verbal and nonverbal, people will trust the nonverbal.
- Purposeful nonverbals ensure 100% communication.

Presence
- What you know doesn’t matter, if you can’t communicate it.
- Who you are (capable, knowledgeable, empathetic, professional, etc.) makes no impact, if you can’t communicate it.
- How you show up to others—your presence—is communicated nonverbally.

Confident & Credible
- Add weight to your message. If you want people to take you or your message seriously, you need to present yourself and your message seriously.
- Detach (keep yourself separate) from your message. People must be able to trust not only your message, but your motives.
NONVERBAL SKILLS: Authoritative Body Language

Authoritative Nonverbals

- **Body:**
  - Weight evenly distributed over both legs
  - Head is straight
  - Feet point forward

- **Voice:**
  - Flat
  - Curls down at the ends of statements

- **Communicates:**
  - Stability
  - Confidence
  - Credibility

Communicate Confidence

- **Don’t Shrink... Stand Tall**
  - People curl in when nervous or threatened.
  - Staying open makes you look more confident and credible.

- **Don’t Lean... Straighten Up**
  - Straight posture is grounded, solid, and not easily knocked off balance.
  - Straight posture adds weight to your presence and message.

- **Don’t Fidget... Be Still**
  - Nervous tics are a sign you’re in fight-or-flight.
  - A calm body conveys a calm mind.

- **Your posture and movements affect your voice tone even on the phone.**
NONVERBAL SKILLS: Voice Tone & Word Choice

Breathing + Voice Pattern = Tone
- Poor breathing = shallow breaths or holding breath
- Good breathing = full, deep breaths

Poor Breathing + Authoritative Voice Pattern = Angry, Stressed, Demanding Tone
Good Breathing + Authoritative Voice Pattern = Confident, Credible, Definitive Tone

Limiting Language weakens your message and reduces credibility. Examples:
- “I think” = I don’t know
- “I feel” = I don’t think
- “Maybe/might” = I’m unsure
- “In my opinion” = Feel free to dismiss what I say
- “I just thought” = My comments or requests are unimportant
- “Sorry” = I’m at fault

Expert Language adds weight to your message and enhances credibility. Examples:
- “Here’s what we need to do.”
- “In my experience…”
- “I need/expect…”
- “Thank you.”
NONVERBAL SKILLS: Open, Neutral Body Language

To create a safe, neutral presence, separate yourself from the message.

Body Language to Avoid (choose one):
- Crossed Arms = I do not accept you.
- Hands on Hips = I will not back down.
- Hands in Pockets = I have something to hide.
- Fig Leaf = Please don’t hurt me.
- Tension & Stiffness = I feel threatened.

Facial Expressions to Avoid (choose one):
- Biting Lips = I’m nervous.
- Furrowed Brow = I’m confused or angry (or concentrating).
- Raised Brow = That was a surprise!
- Rolling Eyes = You can’t be serious; give me a freaking break.
- Smirk/Sneer = I scoff in your general direction.
- Shaking Head = No.

Open Body Language Communicates:
- I don’t feel the need to protect myself → Confidence
- I’m not going to harm you → Collaboration
- I have nothing to hide → Trustworthiness
NONVERBAL SKILLS: Eye Contact

Eye Contact Myth
- Eye Contact ≠ Respect
- Eye Contact = Engagement & Connection

Eye Contact:
- Makes things personal.
- Connects information.
- Doesn’t allow people to process.

Timing
- When you don’t want to be connected to the information, avoid eye contact.
- When the information is neutral or positive, make eye contact.
- On video calls, look at the camera to simulate eye contact.
- Don’t make eye contact 100% of the time. (That’s staring. Creepy!)

What if I don’t have a visual handy?
- Use a visual from your daily work life. (Form, info sheet, etc.)
- Make one up in the moment. (“May I take notes?”)
- Use an object. (Computer screen, item you’re discussing, etc.)
- Over video, share your screen.
- Over the phone, send a document through email.

In neutral/positive situations, eye contact:
- Demonstrates confidence.
- Invests in the relationship.
- Connects you to the information/interaction.
NONVERBAL SKILLS: Word Choice

Use words proactively to connect or detach.
- If you don’t want to be connected to the information, use third person. (It, they, the organization, the policy…)
- If you do want to be connected to the information, use first person. (I, we.)

THINGS THAT HELP

- Awareness. What messages are you currently sending nonverbally? What would you like to change?
- Practice. Choose one or two things to work on. Once you’ve changed a habit, add more.
- Find an outlet.
  - Return regularly to a safe home base where you can speak freely.
  - Get the words out of your head by journaling, talking to a friend, or talking to yourself (out loud).
  - Get the emotions out of your body by moving your arms (anger) and legs (anxiety), yelling, crying, or breathing deeply.
- Replenish. Nourish yourself with things that make you feel strong, healthy, and happy.