

Communication Checks: A Self-Quiz

Parents and children use lots of different strategies to communicate with one another. Which of the following communication strategies do you find yourself and your adolescent using with each other. Please indicate how often both you and your adolescent (child) use each specific strategy (1= little; 2 = a lot).

Communication Method Do you....:	Parent	Child
1. Use the words “always” and “never”	1 2	1 2
2. Yell, shout, raise your voice	1 2	1 2
3. Tease (make fun of the other person) or mock the other person	1 2	1 2
4. Use big words	1 2	1 2
5. Repeat your opinion over and over	1 2	1 2
6. Threaten (to use punishment)	1 2	1 2
7. Call the other person names	1 2	1 2
8. Interrupt	1 2	1 2
9. State the other person’s opinion	1 2	1 2
10. Give short, unhelpful responses like “Uh huh” “I don’t know”	1 2	1 2
11. Asking a question in a way that makes it sound like the other person has done something wrong	1 2	1 2
12. Make suggestions	1 2	1 2
13. Make demands (commands, requests which require action)	1 2	1 2
14. Argue over small points	1 2	1 2
15. Talk very little, remain silent, refuse to talk	1 2	1 2
16. Talk a lot	1 2	1 2
17. Talking as though the other person didn’t say anything	1 2	1 2
18. Joke	1 2	1 2
19. Praise, compliment	1 2	1 2
20. Ask what the other person would like	1 2	1 2

Communication Strategy Do you...:	Parent	Child
21. Make accusations or blame others	1 2	1 2
22. Use put-downs or criticisms	1 2	1 2
23. Exaggerate how bad things are	1 2	1 2
24. Lecture, preach, or give long sermons	1 2	1 2
25. Talk in a sarcastic tone of voice	1 2	1 2
26. Avoid using eye contact	1 2	1 2
27. Fidget, move restlessly, or gesture when being spoken to	1 2	1 2
28. Think you can read the others' mind or state someone's opinion	1 2	1 2
29. Get off topic	1 2	1 2
30. Make demands or commands, or order others around	1 2	1 2
31. Dwell on the past, tell "war" stories	1 2	1 2
32. Monopolize the conversation	1 2	1 2
33. Threaten or try to manipulate	1 2	1 2
34. Call someone names, swear	1 2	1 2
35. Argue a lot	1 2	1 2
36. Ignore the other person	1 2	1 2
37. Sit with your back to the person	1 2	1 2
38. Use inappropriate hand gestures, threats	1 2	1 2
39. Other:	1 2	1 2
40. Other:	1 2	1 2

Adapted from: Robin, A. L., & Foster, S. L. (1989). Negotiating Parent-Adolescent Conflict: A Behavioral-Family Systems Approach. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Note. This is meant to help facilitate discussion during sessions. It is not an assessment device.

Communication Obstacles and Alternatives (Skills)

<i>Obstacle</i>	<i>Skill/Alternative</i>
Talking through a third person	Talking directly to another person
Accusing, blaming, defensive statements	Making I statements (I feel ____ when ____ happens)
Putting down, zapping, shaming	Accepting responsibility, I-statements
Interrupting	Listening, raising hand or gesturing when wanting to talk, encouraging speakers to use brief statements
Overgeneralizing, catastrophizing, making rigid statements (“never listens”)	Qualifying, making tentative statements, accurate quantitative statements
Lecturing, preaching, moralizing	Making brief, explicit problem statements (I would like_____)
Talking in a sarcastic tone of voice	Talking in a neutral tone of voice
Failing to make eye contact	Looking at the person with whom you are talking
Fidgeting, moving restlessly, or gesturing when being spoken to	Sitting in a relaxed fashion, excusing self for being restless
Mind reading, stating the other’s opinion	Reflecting, paraphrasing, validating
Getting off topic	Catching self and returning to the problem as defined
Demanding, commanding, ordering	Suggesting alternative solutions
Dwelling on the past, war stories	Sticking to the present and future
Monopolizing the conversation, repetition	Taking turns making brief statements
Using big words, intellectualizing	Speaking in simple, clear language
Threatening or trying to manipulate	Suggesting alternative solutions
Teasing, humoring, discounting	Reflecting, validating
Calling people names, swearing	Using appropriate words to express criticism
Remaining silent, ignoring, not responding	Reflecting, validating
Yelling, talking in loud voice	Using an indoor or soft voice
Arguing over minor matters	Picking your battles

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