

When it comes to my communication style, I decided to think about it for myself first, and see how close I was to what my friends and family thought. I would say I have a pretty direct style of communication. I tend to be the person that states things exactly how they are without sugar coating anything for anyone. However, I do try to understand my audience and who I am talking to, because sometimes it is in the best interest of myself and others to maybe keep some things to myself, or maybe not say certain things that I might otherwise say when I would be with my friends or family. For example, if I do not like my friend's shirt that she is wearing I might call her out on it, but she knows that I don't mean it in a rude way. But, when I'm out and about I tend to keep my opinions to myself and be a little more formal when it comes to communicating. After talking to my friends and family, I was actually pretty shocked at what their responses were when I asked them what they thought my communication style was. Many had said that I was pretty shy, which is understandable, but they all mentioned how I was a great listener and the person that they would come to when they need to talk about something. I was surprised when I heard this because I have always thought that maybe my form of communication or shyness drove people away, but according to others, it pulls people in. I think being a good listener is definitely going to be something that will help me when going to my clinicals for this semester, because that is one of the biggest things when it comes to therapeutic communication. Although it may seem like something little, just being there to listen to someone as they talk can really mean something to someone, especially if they are going through a hard point in their lives. After learning these things, I think it will help me in the future when it comes to relating to people, and really listening to them because it gives me a little more confidence than what I had before. Although I would now consider myself as an active listener, there are definitely some things that I could do to help improve my communication style for the future. When it comes to some nonverbal things, I could try to recognize my posture and sit up straighter when talking to individuals. In doing this, it can help show whoever I am talking to that I am present in the conversation, as well as interested, rather than being slumped over, which can send a bad message to whoever is trying to talk to me. Another form of nonverbal communication that I would like to try to get better at would be facial expressions. I think this is something that a lot of people need to work on when they are trying to have any type of conversation with anyone, whether it be therapeutic or not. Facial expressions are a huge type of nonverbal communication that can tell someone you really are not interested or that you may be veering off from the conversation. When having conversations from now on, I want to try to be able to recognize when I may be making a bad or wrong facial expression, and try to stay positive and open-ended in what the other individual is saying. This is one of the ways that you can be a great active listener without even saying anything during the conversation. Simple things such as nodding, making eye contact, sitting up straight, and really listening while someone talks is a great way to show you are listening and supporting them. On the other hand, there are some verbal forms of communication that I think I can work to improve on as well. One of these things would be asking for clarification when I do not understand something. Often times I find myself in a conversation, and when I do not understand what is being said I just assume, or figure it out later on my own. This could be solved easily by simply asking for clarification when the individual is talking rather than being to embarrassed or shy to ask. I think it would be better to ask to something to be reexplained and get the correct version than

assuming something of someone. Another form of verbal communication would be to actively engage in the conversation by giving positive feedback. Even if you do not agree or support what the individual is talking about, there is no need to be degrading towards them. It is important to let them know that you are listening and are trying to understand how it is to walk in their shoes.