



## **ACKNOWLEDGE, ASK AND ADAPT: A PROCESS IN COMMUNICATING**

### **Step 1: Acknowledge**

How do you recognize the need for communication with the other person? How does your attitude convey sincere interest and response? What can you say to the other person to communicate an awareness that there is a problem you need to jointly solve?

- Take time to think about how you feel about this issue and get clarity on the reasons behind your feelings.
- Listen carefully to the other person's concern. If you bring up the concern, do it respectfully with an attitude of wanting to understand the issue. Seek the other's point of view without being critical, arguing, disagreeing or trying to solve the problem.

### **Step 2: Ask**

How can you get information that will help you understand more precisely the other person's point of view?

- The next step is data gathering, trying to get to the real sources for conflict or misunderstanding for the other person or for you. There is more than one way to ask. It may be appropriate to ask directly and then follow with more questions to clarify. Or there may be other ways you can find out through observations or other means rather than asking direct questions, which sometimes cause a defensive reaction or are culturally inappropriate.
- Pay attention to verbal and nonverbal responses. Restate what you think is being said; take time to be sure you are meaning the same thing in the language you are using.

### **Step 3: Adapt**

How do you work with the other person to define the issues and boundaries of the problem? Do you seek "common ground" as the basis for negotiation? Do you open up a negotiation with the other person about what to do?

- Once the issues have been defined, seek out the common ground by stating your areas of greatest importance to each other. Listen carefully for areas of common agreement.
- Negotiate around the areas of important agreements and boundaries. Come to a resolution that addresses the real/major issues. Sometimes we have to agree to disagree.