

HANDOUT - Communication Barriers

Commands: When we are giving commands to others, we demonstrate our power over them. This might lead to the other person trying to hit back, which can result in a fight.

Threatening: It is similar with threatening the other person – it make him/her feel attacked and creates fear. He/she might change the behaviour, but on the long-term, this strategy disturbs the relationship between people.

Lecturing: When we start lecturing someone when they talk about their feeling, it can easily create a sense humiliation in the other person.

Advising: When we give advise to others when they are in a difficult emotional state, it can create similar effects as lecturing. The other person might feel “stupid” for not finding out the right solution themselves.

Own stories: If someone talks about his/her feelings, and as a response we start to talk about what has happened to us, it demonstrates to the person that we are not really interested in what his/her state is – we rather shift the focus on ourselves.

Logical arguments: Logical arguments are similar to advises in these kinds of situations, as a person who is overwhelmed by his/her emotions is usually not able to listen to reasons, therefore they don't help to solve the situation.

Encouragement: Encouragement can be useful in certain situation, but when for example someone tells us that they feel sad, and our response is “Cheer up”, the other might feel that he/she is not allowed to feel what he/she feels.

Criticizing: “You also made mistakes in this situation” – criticizing the other person in this way makes the other person defend him/herself instead of continuing sharing.

Joking: If we start to joke about someone's emotions it can easily hurt them and stops them from sharing more.

Labelling: If we put labels on the other person, he/she might feel that he/she is not understood as a person, and won't feel encouraged to share more.