



Verbal and non-verbal components of communication behaviours

	PASSIVE	AGGRESSIVE	ASSERTIVE
1. VERBAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Apologetic words ▪ Excuses ▪ Veiled meanings ▪ Difficulty coming to the point ▪ Hedging ▪ Staying silent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accusations ▪ “You” messages that blame or label ▪ Absolute terms such as “always” or “never” indicating no wrongdoing on the aggressor’s part ▪ Putdowns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct requests and refusals ▪ Objective words ▪ Clear meanings ▪ “I” statements ▪ Honesty ▪ Statements of feelings ▪ Open to negotiation and compromise
2. NON-VERBAL			
A. General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actions instead of words ▪ Hoping someone will guess what you want ▪ Looking like you do not mean what you say 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sarcasm ▪ Attacking ▪ Exaggerated ▪ Threatening ▪ Intimidating ▪ Air of superiority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attentive listening ▪ Assured manner ▪ Empathy
B. Voice tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Soft ▪ Whispering ▪ Hesitant ▪ Wavering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loud and demanding ▪ Cold and tense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well modulated ▪ Relaxed ▪ Firm ▪ Warm
C. Eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Downcast ▪ Look down or away ▪ Pleading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staring ▪ Narrowed ▪ Expressionless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct but not glaring ▪ Open
D. Posture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stooped ▪ Slouched ▪ Head nodding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stiff ▪ Hand(s) on hip(s) ▪ “In your face” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Straight on, facing listener ▪ Relaxed ▪ Balanced
E. Hands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fidgety ▪ Clammy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clenched ▪ Pointing ▪ Pounding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relaxed motions

(Inspired by McKay, Davis, & Fanning, 2009)

REFERENCE

McKay, M., Davis, M. & Fanning, P. (2009). *Messages: The communication skills book* (3rd ed.). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.