DIY

Do-It-Yourself: Effective Email Communication

Email can be a quick and easy communication tool AND can create or escalate conflicts.
Here are some tips to use email effectively:

Know Your Audience

- When emailing someone for the first time, make sure to briefly introduce yourself. Use professional language – no informal shorthand, texting language, unusual fonts, or excessive capitalization.
- Proofread your message. It is easy to dismiss an email with poor spelling and grammar.

Be Polite and Respectful

- The more polite you are, the more likely you will get a positive response. Use 'please' and 'thank you.' If you are rude, the recipient likely will be less inclined to help you.
- Know that any email you send may be forwarded to others without your knowledge or permission. Email exists forever; a rude email you send today can have long-lasting effects.
- Use 'CC' and 'Reply All' wisely. Only include people that truly need or want to be included.

Keep it Short and Simple

- Make the recipient's job easy - if you want a quick response, send a brief message.
- Important details can be lost in lengthy emails. If the conversation is too long or too complex, meet in person or talk over the phone.

Be Clear

- Use the subject line to let the recipient quickly know why you are contacting them.
- Know your goal - use bullet points if you have multiple goals to help ensure that nothing is overlooked.

Don't Email if:

- You are trying to resolve a conflict. Email often escalates conflicts. Instead, use email to set up a meeting time to discuss the conflict in person.
- You are angry or upset. Take time to cool down and set up a time to talk face-to-face.
- Your message is long or very detailed, save details for in-person conversations.
- You are sharing confidential information.
- Your concern is urgent, unless that is your only option. If possible, call or meet in person.

This resource is brought to you by the Student Conflict Resolution Center.