SUPPORTIVE COMMUNICATION

1. Congruent, not incongruent
A focus on honest messages where verbal statements match thoughts and feelings.

Example:
“Your behavior really upset me.”

NOT “Do I seem upset? No, everything is just fine.”

2. Descriptive, Not Evaluative
A focus on describing an objective occurrence, describing your reaction to it, and offering a suggested alternative.

Example:
Description: “You have finished fewer projects this month than anyone else in the division.” Your Reaction: “I am concerned about our productivity.” Suggest Alternative: “I would like to help you identify what stands in the way of higher performance?”

NOT “You didn’t produce this month – you are just lazy!”

3. Problem-Oriented, Not Person-Oriented
A focus on problems and issues that can be changed rather than people and their characteristics.

Example:
“We don’t seem to see things the same way. How can we solve this problem?”

NOT “You are insensitive! You are the problem!”

4. Validating, Not Invalidating
A focus on statements that communicate respect, flexibility, collaboration, and areas of agreement.

Example:
“I have some ideas, but I would really like to hear your suggestions.”

NOT “What do you know? Have you even logged into Community Connections?”

5. **Specific, Not Global**
A focus on specific events or behaviors and avoid general, extreme, or either-or statements.

**Example:**

“It bothers me when you talk while our speaker is giving their presentation. I know that our time together is short but maybe we could chat after the meeting is over.”

**NOT** “You always talk so loudly during our Chapter meetings that I can’t hear the speaker!”

6. **Conjunctive, Not Disjunctive**
A focus on statements that flow from what has been said previously and facilitate interaction.

**Example:**

“Relating to what you just said, I’d like to raise another point.”

**NOT** “I want you to hear me and, besides, six months ago you were late for a Chapter meeting!”

7. **Owned, Not Disowned**
A focus on taking responsibility for your own statements by using personal (“I”) words.

**Example:**

“I have decided to turn down your request because....”

**NOT** “You might have a pretty good idea, but it would never get approved by the Chapter so there.”

8. **Supportive Listening, Not One-Way Listening**
A focus on using a variety of appropriate responses, with a bias toward reflective responses.

**Example:**

“Can you tell me your thoughts about this project/idea?”

**NOT** “Excuse me – I have the floor!”