Good communication skills can smooth your way in every personal and work situation. When you are in a high-pressure work environment, there’s not always time to choose the right words or tone. Many barriers can stand in the way of effective communication—time, culture, language, old habits, inattentive listening or unfamiliarity with a new environment.

If you find yourself questioning whether you need extra help to become a better communicator during your residency, you have a caring and confidential resource available 24/7: your Resident Assistance Program. Equipped to help you resolve troubling, stressful and overwhelming personal and work related issues, RAP professionals will listen to your concerns.

Contact RAP: 813-870-3344

Remarks, page 2.)

“Because many of the words and phrases do have legitimate uses, the context and delivery style determine whether they’re being used offensively,” he says. “Since some messages can be read both ways, the sender can often get away with it. The phrase ‘forget it,’ in response to an apology can mean ‘apology accepted.’ But in response to a request for an explanation, it can
Dismissive Remarks

Organizational expert, consultant and author Rick Brenner catalogs phrases that can convey a dismissive attitude. Almost everyone uses some of them, without realizing their negative effect.

- Never mind.
- Don’t worry about it.
- Talk to me later (or sometime).
- Sorry, gotta go.
- Stay focused.
- Ask me later.
- Let’s not.
- Send me an email on that.
- It’s complicated.
- You’re overreacting.
- Could be.
- Who knows? Or cares?
- Oh, that. Let’s move on.
- I hear you. (repeatedly)
- Take a number.
- I don’t think it’s quite that bad.
- That’s life.
- Why does that matter?
- Don’t be so sensitive.
- Chill.

Find more examples at www.chacocanyon.com/pointlookout/130130.shtml

Be Aware of Dismissive Speech and Behavior

(Continued from page 1)

be a dismissive rejection.”

Another example is when someone comes in late to a meeting and the leader says “so glad you could join us, Mr./Ms./Dr. So-and-So.” “It’s even more ‘zingy’ as a dismissive remark when that formal address is used,” Brenner notes.

Small Slaights Can Build Up

The study of microbehavior looks at the small, often unconscious messages people send out and receive when they interact. “No matter what you think you are saying, your tone, facial expressions and hand gestures can communicate something different,” states Ron Beckwith, Ph.D. in a 2009 white paper “Microbehavior in Organizations: Sweating the Small Stuff,” published by The Millennium Group International. Micromessages can be both positive and negative, and because they are small, can be difficult to recognize and address.

When subtle, dismissive micromessages are repeatedly directed at people who are perceived as different, they may fall into the category of “microinequities,” a term coined in the 1970s. Research by MIT Professor Mary P. Rowe found that even unintentional microinequities in the workplace can undermine the confidence of individuals, including women and minorities.

Counteract Dismissive Speech by Reframing

“Targets of dismissiveness usually cannot control the behavior of offenders, but they can learn to remain centered,” Brenner says. Reframing is intentionally changing your perspective, he explains.

“When you observe a dismissive remark directed at you, your initial reaction may be to feel hurt or angry, even if you don’t show it. In reframing, you tell yourself ‘I am not going to experience it that way.’ It takes will, and it seems unnatural at first, but it does work. Instead of sitting there wallowing in hurt, you say to yourself, ‘Hmm. Seems like this person has a problem. This isn’t about me.’”

Brenner continues, “You might repeat to yourself, ‘Well, thank you for announcing that you’ve got a problem.’ Try to tell yourself something funny. Instead of showing anger, you’re reacting with a smile or a laugh. You’re taking responsibility for your own emotional state, and making a conscious choice to do something other than to feel hurt.”

Resources:

- Rick Brenner, Chaco Canyon www.chacocanyon.com
- The Millennium Group International, LLC www.tmgi.net/