**Interpersonal and Small Group Communication**

**Typical Learning Experiences of Students Earning Lower-Level Credit:**

* Deal with interpersonal situations in volunteer activities, teaching, work in community dispute resolution and arbitration, coaching and mentoring, customer service. (5+ year experience.)
* Attend training sessions in areas such as assertiveness, interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, working with small groups, dealing with difficult people, listening, the art of communications, how to win friends and influence people, developing self-esteem, telephone courtesy and customer service, effective meeting skills, effective negotiation.

**Typical Learning Experiences of Students Earning Upper-Level Credit:**

* Students do not generally receive upper-level credit in interpersonal and small group communications. Those with extensive backgrounds may seek upper-level credit in more narrowly defined areas, such as labor relations negotiations, and managing organizational change.

**Discussion Topics:**

If you are familiar with some (but not necessarily all) of the following topics, you may be eligible for lower-level credit in the area of interpersonal communications. If your knowledge of some of the following topics is substantial, you might be advised to request credit in those narrower areas.

**Communication Theory**

* Define communication.
* What are the elements of communication?
* Distinguish between verbal and nonverbal modes of communication.

**Elements of Good Listening**

* What is a listening attitude?
* What is the role of body language in effective listening?
* How do you use clarifying questions for effective listening?
* How do you deal with emotional "hot buttons"?
* How do you control distractions?
* What strategies do you use to focus on issues and not personalities?
* How do you use paraphrasing?
* What are some benefits of effective listening?
* Discuss the merits of participatory and passive listening, empathetic and passive listening, judgmental and nonjudgmental listening. Give examples of situations in which each might be useful.

**Managing Disagreement**

* What is interpersonal conflict?
* What are some causes of interpersonal conflict?
* What are some positive aspects of conflict in a relationship?
* What are some negative aspects of conflict in a relationship?
* What are the common strategies for managing interpersonal conflict?
* What are the behaviors associated with each strategy of conflict management?
* What factors may contribute to the decision to choose one strategy of conflict management over another in a particular situation?
* What are some unproductive strategies for managing conflict?
* What are some productive strategies for managing conflict?
* What are some specific activities that you can use to work with a group in resolving a conflict?
* How do you prepare for a conflict resolution session?
* What activities need to follow a conflict resolution meeting?

**Assertiveness**

* What is assertive behavior?
* How is it different from aggressive behavior?
* What is the relationship between assertiveness and self-esteem? Why?
* What is the relationship between assertiveness and appropriate expression of anger?
* What are some strategies for developing assertive behavior?

**Dealing with Difficult People**

* What are some common difficult behavior types?
* What are effective strategies for dealing with each type?
* What is the relationship between assertiveness and dealing with difficult people?

**Effective Meeting Skills**

* What are the types of meetings? Purposes of each?
* What are typical problems with meetings that make them unproductive to participants?
* What are the roles and responsibilities of the leader?
* What are the responsibilities of participants and various roles taken on by participants?
* What is the importance of an agenda? Of selection of time for a meeting? Of selection of participants? Of physical facilities?
* Discuss various strategies for dealing with disruptive participants?
* What is groupthink?
* What follow-up should occur after a meeting?