



The “Getting Real” communications module is a 5-session (1.5 to 2 hours each session) highly interactive training offered to youth, parents, and other caring adults interested in enhancing their personal, family or professional relationships by examining their responses to the verbal and non-verbal behavior they experience in their interactions with others. Participants receive personalized coaching on effective communication skills, including speaking with confidence and sensitivity, listening to and validating others, sharing feelings, matching body language with verbal messages, and measuring appropriate levels of trust in personal, family and professional relationships.

Through the “Getting Real” module, participants are expected to develop a greater awareness of the various types of responses (intimate and defensive), various levels of depth of communication, and the impact these factors may have on the receiver of the communication. Participants are encouraged to enhance their personal communication by identifying the response they use most, examining their ability to express their feelings and ideas clearly, and establishing a new pattern of interactions which will enrich their relationships.

“Getting Real” promotes skills of self-awareness, awareness of others and establishing appropriate levels of trust and mutual respect. The Getting Real module focuses on helping participants to combine thoughts, feelings and behavior in a way which leads them to generate powerful and meaningful messages to others. Finally, the module helps promote insights and experiences which help us to become great listeners to others who may be struggling to say what they really want us to hear.

### **The “Getting Real” Rationale**

The basic premises upon which the “Getting Real” communications module is built are as follows:

1. Communication is a deliberate attempt to impart one’s ideas, feelings, desires, and beliefs.
2. Communication involves verbal and non-verbal messages, i.e., facial expression, eye contact, and physical movements.
3. Communication is influenced by both our conscious and unconscious thoughts and feelings.
4. By choosing to communicate clearly and expressing our feelings, we can increase the effectiveness of our interactions and enhance our relationships.
5. Being a good communicator takes practice and continued refinement of the various skills involved.

6. Being a good communicator involves being aware of the effect one's verbal and non-verbal responses may have on others.
7. The response we choose to use greatly influences how others will respond to us.
8. We can learn many things about ourselves by listening to others.
9. We can contribute to the growth of others by learning and using effective communication skills.
10. We can learn effective communication skills best in a group setting.

Communication skills are used by human beings to exist in society. Basic communication skills consist of listening, effective responding, and sending and receiving verbal and non-verbal messages. The "Getting Real" module operates under the overarching rationale that communication is at its best when it serves to establish and maintain healthy, connected interpersonal relationships. These relationships are characterized by the parties involved having their ideas and feelings fully represented and respected.

Through the "Getting Real" module, participants are given the opportunity to learn and gain confidence in using both intimate and defensive responses through role-playing. The experiential (role-playing) nature of the module makes it fun and exciting for most participants. Yet, since we know that changing behaviors may also be anxiety producing for others, "Getting Real" is designed to create an atmosphere of acceptance and comfort for all individuals in the module, while simultaneously challenging participants to experience personal growth.

**The "Getting Real" module is extremely effective in:**

1. Increasing refusal skills
2. Increasing a sense of internal locus of control
3. Increasing self-efficacy
4. Increasing self-worth
5. Increasing self-respect
6. Increasing respect for others
7. Increasing our ability to gain the respect of others
8. Enriching communication on an intimate level
9. Increasing a sense of security
10. Increasing family bonding
11. Increasing an appropriate sense of whom to trust
12. Increasing an appropriate and healthy sense of emotional responsibility and self-care