

What's Your Communication Style? A Self-Assessment

Consider each of the following questions separately and circle the one letter (a, b, c, or d) that corresponds to the description that best fits you. If you have trouble selecting only one answer, ask yourself which response, at work, would be the most natural or likely for you to make.

After scoring your responses, you will notice you are not just one style, and neither is anyone else so you have to adjust your communication accordingly. It is important not to label someone because we are all different and complex so no one fits into a box. This tool, as with other tools, is meant to be a guide and to give you ideas but the best learning is through trial, error, reflection and trying again.

There are no right answers to these questions, so base your response on how you are today, not how you think you should be or would like to be in the future.

1. When talking to a patient or friend ...
 - a. I maintain eye contact the whole time.
 - b. I alternate between looking at the person and looking down.
 - c. I look around the room a good deal of the time.
 - d. I try to maintain eye contact but look away from time to time.
2. If I have an important decision to make ...
 - a. I think it through completely before deciding.
 - b. I go with my gut instincts.
 - c. I consider the impact it will have on other people before deciding.
 - d. I run it by someone whose opinion I respect before deciding.
3. My work area mostly has ...
 - a. Family photos and sentimental items displayed.
 - b. Inspirational posters, awards, and art displayed.
 - c. Graphs and charts displayed.
 - d. Calendars and project outlines displayed.
4. If I am having a conflict with a patient or friend...
 - a. I try to help the situation along by focusing on the positive.
 - b. I stay calm and try to understand the cause of the conflict.
 - c. I try to avoid discussing the issue causing the conflict.
 - d. I confront it right away so that it can get resolved as soon as possible.
5. When I talk on the phone at work ...
 - a. I keep the conversation focused on the purpose of the call.
 - b. I spend a few minutes chatting before getting down to business.
 - c. I am in no hurry to get off the phone and don't mind chatting about personal things, the weather, and so on.
 - d. I try to keep the conversation as brief as possible.

6. If a patient or friend is upset ...
 - a. I ask if I can do anything to help.
 - b. I leave him alone because I don't want to intrude on his privacy.
 - c. I try to cheer him up and help him to see the bright side.
 - d. I feel uncomfortable and hope he gets over it soon.
7. When I attend meetings at work ...
 - a. I sit back and think about what is being said before offering my opinion.
 - b. I put all my cards on the table so my opinion is well known.
 - c. I express my opinion enthusiastically but listen to other's ideas as well.
 - d. I try to support the ideas of the other people in the meeting
8. When I make a presentation in front of a group ...
 - a. I am entertaining and often humorous.
 - b. I am clear and concise.
 - c. I speak relatively quietly.
 - d. I am direct, specific, and sometimes loud.
9. When a patient is explaining a problem to me ...
 - a. I try to understand and empathize with how the person is feeling.
 - b. I look for the specific facts pertaining to the situation.
 - c. I listen carefully for the main issue so that I can find a solution.
 - d. I use my body language and tone of voice to show the person that I understand.
10. When I attend training programs or presentations ...
 - a. I get bored if the person moves too slowly.
 - b. I try to be supportive of the speaker, knowing how hard the job is.
 - c. I want it to be entertaining as well as informative.
 - d. I look for the logic behind what the speaker is saying.
11. When I want to get my point across to patients or friends...
 - a. I listen to their point of view first and then express my ideas gently.
 - b. I strongly state my opinion so that they know where I stand.
 - c. I try to persuade them without being too forceful.
 - d. I explain the thinking and logic behind what I am saying.
12. When I am late for a meeting or appointment ...
 - a. I don't panic but call ahead to say that I will be a few minutes late.
 - b. I feel bad about keeping the other person waiting.
 - c. I get very upset and rush to get there as soon as possible.
 - d. I apologize profusely once I arrive.

13. I set goals and objectives at work that ...
- I think I can realistically attain.
 - I feel are challenging and would be exciting to achieve.
 - I need to achieve as part of a bigger objective.
 - Will make me feel good when I achieve them.
14. When explaining a problem to a co-worker whom I need help from ...
- I explain the problem in as much detail as possible.
 - I sometimes exaggerate to make my point.
 - I try to explain how the problem makes me feel.
 - I explain how I would like the problem to be solved.
15. If a patient or friend late for a meeting with me at a location I chose ...
- I keep myself busy by making phone calls or working until they arrive.
 - I assume they were delayed a bit and don't get upset.
 - I call to make sure that I have the correct information (date, time, and so on).
 - I get upset that the person is wasting my time.
16. When I am behind on a project and feel pressure to get it done ...
- I make a list of everything I need to do, in what order, by when.
 - I block out everything else and focus 100 percent on the work I need to do.
 - I become anxious and have a hard time focusing on my work.
 - I set a date to get the project done by and go for it.
17. When I feel verbally attacked by a patient or friend...
- I tell the person to stop it.
 - I feel hurt but usually don't say anything about it to the person.
 - I ignore the person anger and try to focus on the facts of the situation.
 - I let the person know in strong terms that I don't like their behavior.
18. When I see a patient or friend whom I like and haven't seen recently ...
- I give the person a friendly hug.
 - I greet the person but don't shake their hand.
 - I give the person a firm but quick handshake.
 - I give the person an enthusiastic handshake that lasts a few moments.

Scoring the questionnaire

Once you have finished the questionnaire, review the following scoring sheet (shown on the next page). You will be scoring yourself on four specific working styles. They are:

- Driver (DR)
- Expressive (EX)
- Amiable (AM)
- Analytical (A)

Transfer your answers from the questionnaire to the scoring sheet and then count up the number of times you circled each style. Enter these scores at the bottom of the scoring sheet. The style where you scored the most points is your primary working style.

The four terms (Driver, Expressive, Amiable, and Analytical) were originally coined by Dr. David Merrill, founder of Tracom Consulting Group. If you are interested in reading more about the research done by Dr. Merrill and his associates, read *Personal Styles and Effective Performance: Make your Style Work for You* by Dr. David Merrill and Roger Reid (Radnor, PA.: Chilton, 1981

Scoring Form

<p>1</p> <p>a Driver</p> <p>b Amiable</p> <p>c Analytical</p> <p>d Expressive</p>	<p>7</p> <p>a Analytical</p> <p>b Driver</p> <p>c Expressive</p> <p>d Amiable</p>	<p>13</p> <p>a Analytical</p> <p>b Expressive</p> <p>c Driver</p> <p>d Amiable</p>
<p>2</p> <p>a Analytical</p> <p>b Driver</p> <p>c Amiable</p> <p>d Expressive</p>	<p>8</p> <p>a Expressive</p> <p>b Analytical</p> <p>c Amiable</p> <p>d Driver</p>	<p>14</p> <p>a Analytical</p> <p>b Expressive</p> <p>c Amiable</p> <p>d Driver</p>
<p>3</p> <p>a Amiable</p> <p>b Expressive</p> <p>c Analytical</p> <p>d Driver</p>	<p>9</p> <p>a Amiable</p> <p>b Analytical</p> <p>c Driver</p> <p>d Expressive</p>	<p>15</p> <p>a Expressive</p> <p>b Amiable</p> <p>c Analytical</p> <p>d Driver</p>
<p>4</p> <p>a Expressive</p> <p>b Amiable</p> <p>c Analytical</p> <p>d Driver</p>	<p>10</p> <p>a Driver</p> <p>b Amiable</p> <p>c Expressive</p> <p>d Analytical</p>	<p>16</p> <p>a Analytical</p> <p>b Driver</p> <p>c Amiable</p> <p>d Expressive</p>
<p>5</p> <p>a Driver</p> <p>b Expressive</p> <p>c Amiable</p> <p>d Analytical</p>	<p>11</p> <p>a Amiable</p> <p>b Driver</p> <p>c Expressive</p> <p>d Analytical</p>	<p>17</p> <p>a Driver</p> <p>b Amiable</p> <p>c Analytical</p> <p>d Expressive</p>
<p>6</p> <p>a Amiable</p> <p>b Analytical</p> <p>c Expressive</p> <p>d Driver</p>	<p>12</p> <p>a Analytical</p> <p>b Amiable</p> <p>c Driver</p> <p>d Expressive</p>	<p>18</p> <p>a Amiable</p> <p>b Analytical</p> <p>c Driver</p> <p>d Expressive</p>

Total Drive Score _____

Total Analytical Score _____

Total Amiable Score _____

Total Expressive Score _____

The Analytical

The Analytical is polite but reserved, logical, fact-and task-oriented. This person's focus is on precision and perfection. Other strengths include persistence, diligence, caution, and a systematic approach.

Weaknesses involve being withdrawn, boring, quiet, reclusive, and even sullen at times. If he or she seems indecisive, it's because of a need to assess all the data. Perfectionism can be a fault if the Analytical pushes it too far. This person is definitely not a risk-taker.

The Analytical needs to be right and won't openly discuss ideas until confident in a decision. His or her pleasure is accuracy. Pain is to be wrong and criticized.

- Wants to know how things work
- Wants to be accurate, have accuracy with others
- Values numbers, stats, ideas
- Loves details
- Fears being embarrassed or losing face
- Often introverted and hide feelings

When communicating with an Analytical:

- Be systematic, thorough, deliberate, and precise
- Focus on the task
- Be prepared to answer many "how" questions
- Provide analysis and facts
- Don't get too personal
- Recognize and acknowledge the need to be accurate and logical
- Don't rush unnecessarily
- Expect to repeat yourself
- Allow time for evaluation
- Use lots of evidence
- Compliment the precision and accuracy of the completed work.

The Amiable

Devoted, consistent, dependable, and loyal, the Amiable is a hard worker and will persevere long after others have given up. He or she is a team player, cooperative and easy to get along with, trustful, sensitive and a good listener. Working in groups with cooperative individuals, the Amiable tries to avoid confrontation. He or she enjoys company, performs best in a stable environment, and often has a stabilizing effect on others.

Weaknesses include indecision and an inability to take risks. Amiables are often too focused on others, conforming, quiet, and passive. They often won't speak up for themselves are too compliant and nice, and often painstakingly slow to make decisions.

The Amiable's pleasure is stability and cooperation. His or her pain is change and chaos.

- Wants to know "why" why am I doing this
- Wants to build relationships
- Loves to give support to others
- Values suggestions for others
- Fears losing trust or having disagreements
- Tend to display emotions
- Often introverts thought

When communicating with an Amiable:

- Be relaxed and agreeable
- Maintain the status quo
- Be logical and systematic
- Create a plan with written guidelines
- Be prepared to answer "why" questions
- Be predictable
- Agree clearly and often
- Use the word "we"
- Don't push, Don't rush
- Compliment him or her as a team player; Be a good listener

The Driver

The Driver is a high achiever – a mover and shaker who is definitely not averse to risk. The individual is extroverted, strong-willed, direct, practical, organized, forceful, and decisive. Look for someone who tells it the way it is and is very persuasive. Watch out or you'll be worn down and bowled over. A driver is task-rather than relationship-oriented and wants immediate results.

This individual is not concerned with how something is done, but what is being done, and what results can be expected. "What" is his or her battle cry. "What's going on? What's being done about it? What you should do is ...!"

The Driver can be stubborn, domineering, impatient, insensitive, and short-tempered, with little time for formalities or niceties. He or she can also be demanding, opinionated, controlling, and uncompromising –or even overbearing, cold, and harsh.

The Driver's pleasure is power, control, and respect. His or her pain is loss of respect, lack of results, and the feeling that he or she is being taken advantage of.

- Wants to know "what" what will this do for me
- Wants to save time
- Values results
- Loves being in control, in charge, doing it his way
- Fears giving up control.
- Often extroverted but do not show emotions

When communicating with a Driver:

- Focus on the task; Talk about expected results
- Be businesslike and factual
- Provide concise, precise, and organized information
- Discuss and answer "what" questions
- Argue facts, not feelings
- Don't waste time; Don't argue details
- Provide options.

The Expressive

The Expressive, a verbally adept personality, is engaging, accommodating, supportive of others, persuasive, socially adept, and relationship- rather than task-oriented. He or she loves to be one of the gang, and is always ready for something new and exciting, especially if the gang is ready to participate. Additional strengths include enthusiasm, diplomatic skills, and the ability to inspire others.

Weaknesses involve impatience, a tendency to generalize, verbal assaults, and sometimes irrational behavior. The Expressive can also be egotistical, manipulative, undisciplined, reactive, unorganized, and abrasive.

The Expressive readily exchanges information and life experiences. His or her main need is to be appreciated and accepted. The Expressive's pleasure is recognition and approval. His or her pain is isolation and lack of attention.

- Wants to know “who” who else is involved
- Values appreciation, applause a pat on the back
- Loves social situations and parties
- Likes to inspire others
- Fear being rejected.

When communicating with an Expressive:

- Focus on developing a relationship
- Try to show how your ideas will improve his or her image
- Be enthusiastic, open, and responsive
- Relate to the need to share information, stories, and experience
- Be forthcoming and willing to talk
- Ask and answer “who” questions
- Remember to be warm and approachable at all times
- Work to minimize his or her direct involvement with details or personal conflicts.

Adapted from:

<https://www.thevantagepoint.ca/sites/default/files/High%20Performing%20Teams%20-%20Self%20assessment%20handout.pdf>

Communication Discussion Questions

- 1. Were you surprised with your communication style result? Why or why not? Was it accurate?**
- 2. How can you better communicate with patients, using what you have learned about your communication style?**
- 3. What 2 or 3 things can you take from what you have learned about communication and start applying tomorrow?**