Tips for Effective Communication

- Cool down. Don't try to resolve the conflict when you or the other person is angry. It's okay to take a time out or agree to meet again in 24 hours. Understand your biases and triggers.

- Identify a Safe Place for Negotiation. Find a mutual time and place to talk. Find a private and neutral location.

- Defining the problem. Each person should describe the conflict and what caused it in his or her own words. Identify issues clearly and concisely. Use "I-messages" ("I feel...", "when you...", "I want...") as tools for clarification. Speak only for yourself.

- Listen carefully and respectfully while the other person is talking. Try to understand the other person's point of view. Remember there are two sides to every story. Don't interrupt and be patient.

- Use active listening skills. Clarify to get more information. Restate what you heard the other person say, including their feelings.

- Assert your needs clearly. Respect each other's differences. Everyone has different values, lifestyles, expectations, and communication styles.

- Build an agreement that works. Brainstorm solutions to the conflict. Be open to new ideas. Be willing to negotiate and compromise. Remember that a solution will probably involve each person giving something and getting something. Trust the other person to do their part.