Different ways to communicate

Different styles can both be valid and meaningful.

Communication can be direct or indirect, spoken or written, expressive or quiet. Some people need time to process, others think aloud. Neurodivergent people may communicate in ways that differ from social expectations. The goal is not to force one style, but to build mutual understanding.

TWO DIFFERENT STYLES

DIRECT COMMUNICATION

Clear, specific words and explicit requests.

INDIRECT COMMUNICATION

Meaning expressed through context, hints or tone.

Different does not mean deficient.

Curiosity and checking meaning help both styles meet.

REFLECTION

Which communication style feels most natural to me?

What shapes our styles?

Styles vary with setting, trust, energy and processing needs.

Processing pace

Some people answer immediately; others need quiet thinking time.

Sensory environment

Noise and competing input can change how easy speaking feels.

Nonverbal signals

Eye contact, movement and facial expression vary across people.

Conversation purpose

One person may seek empathy while another offers solutions.

Literal and implied meaning

Direct language and hints may be interpreted differently.

COMMUNICATION EASE CHANGES WITH CONTEXT



Illustrative bars only; not measured data.

How a style mismatch develops

A simple diagram showing where checking meaning helps.

1. One person communicates in their natural style

v

2. The other expects a different style

v

3. A pause or hint is misinterpreted

v

4. Both feel confused or judged

v

5. They check meaning and agree a shared approach

A WAY TO BRIDGE THE STYLES

“I communicate best when we are specific. What did you mean by that?”

Ways to meet in the middle

Five practical adjustments for different communication styles.

01 Name your preference

“I do best with clear questions and a little time to think.”

02 Check meaning

“When you said that, did you mean this or something else?”

03 Offer more than speech

Try messages, writing, visuals or a quieter environment.

04 Use clear requests

Ask one question at a time and say what response is needed.

05 Respect different signals

Listening does not always look like eye contact or stillness.

A USEFUL BRIDGING SENTENCE

“I think we communicate differently. Can we find a way that works for both of us?”

My communication preferences

A practical worksheet to share with someone you trust.

What helps me express myself most clearly?

Do I prefer spoken, written or visual information?

How much processing time do I usually need?

What signals show that I am listening or need a break?

What one adjustment could we agree to try together?

Different communication styles deserve respect. These examples are illustrative, not diagnostic. A shared approach should be consensual and should not require either person to hide their needs.