

## **10 COMMANDMENTS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS<sup>1</sup>**

1. Develop relationships and trust based on identification.
2. Help the client see you as a real person by self-disclosing something that is not known to others.
3. Ensure that there is a communication feedback loop by paraphrasing, restating, and asking clarifying questions to best understand client needs.
4. End power dynamics, role conflicts, and stereotypes by sharing information that you know and following through on what you say you are going to do.
5. Do not expect those you are working with to know what may be obvious to you. Use your expertise to coach or mentor them to get their needs met.
6. Hearing and actively listening is not the same thing. Active listening requires putting yourself in the position of the person you are working with.
7. One solution does not fit everyone. Obtain enough information to customize your services to those you are working with.
8. Promote two-way communication (not just what you think would work for those you are working with, but what do they think would work best for them).
9. Use familiar words and examples that people you work with can relate to.
10. Ask open-ended questions to discover motives and passion. Try to stay away from questions that ask "why" because they can put people on the defense. Instead, use "I" statements that allow for other perspectives.

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<sup>1</sup> From Dr. Donna Beegle's Communication Across Barriers, website: [www.combarriers.com](http://www.combarriers.com)