

LSU Office of the Ombudsperson

Communication Strategies – Email and Virtual Meetings

As always, under any circumstance, limit conflict with mindful, respectful, professional communication.

Due to the current health and safety precautions implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the advancements of technology which will continue beyond the COVID-19 crisis, the Ombuds Office would like to offer some communication strategies to help minimize conflict resulting from miscommunications and misunderstandings.

Emails, Social Media, Texting

Email is a great form of documentation, and a terrible format for communication. Often, due to busy schedules and or logistics, we rely on email to communicate with colleagues and supervisors. Emails should be written as though the recipient(s) is in the room with you, while conveying respect and professionalism. Tone of voice and body language are not part of written communication, and the recipient will interpret the written message through the recipient's perspective and not through the author's intention. Whether you are the author or the recipient of an email, best practices include:

- If offended or upset by another's email, step away and calm down before responding;
- Consider the other person's perspective when they drafted the email;
- Seek out clarification, ask questions; do not accuse or assume wrong-doing;
- Consider communicating in-person, by telephone, or video call to resolve the issue;
- Do not draft/send emails hastily, especially when frustrated by the distractions and complications of working remotely;
- Draft emails which would not embarrass you or the recipient, if published in the news;
- Do not send jokes or other personal content through work email accounts.

Texting and social media present similar concerns when relied upon in the work environment. Best practices include limiting social media to one's personal life and refrain from discussing work-related matters on your personal social media account(s). Texting is a quick and easy way to contact someone, but remember texts can be overlooked or simply not received. If utilizing text messages for work matters, then texts should be respectful and professional. Best practices include obtaining consent from your supervisor to communicate via text. Relying on text messages is risky, as the receiving party may or may not see or receive the message.

Virtual Meetings, Telephone

During the COVID-19 crisis, the need to work remotely is paramount to public health and safety. Whenever possible, utilize telephone or virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom or FaceTime to communicate.