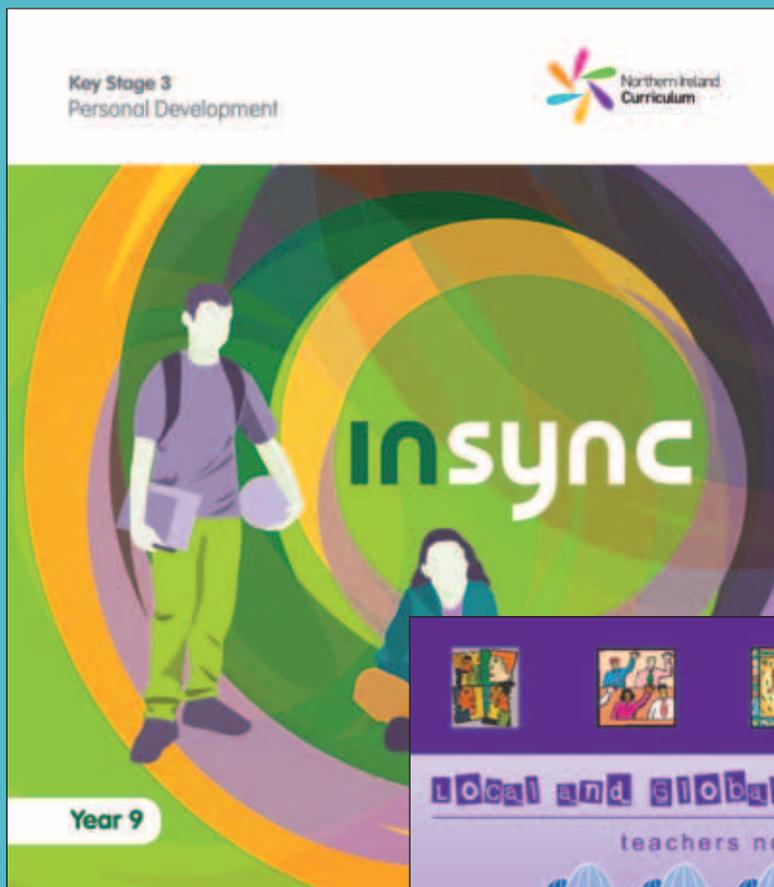Northern Ireland
Curriculum

# Developing Communication Skills in Learning for Life and Work

"Communication is central to the whole curriculum. Children should be able to communicate in order to express themselves socially, emotionally and physically, to develop as individuals, engage with others and contribute as members of society.
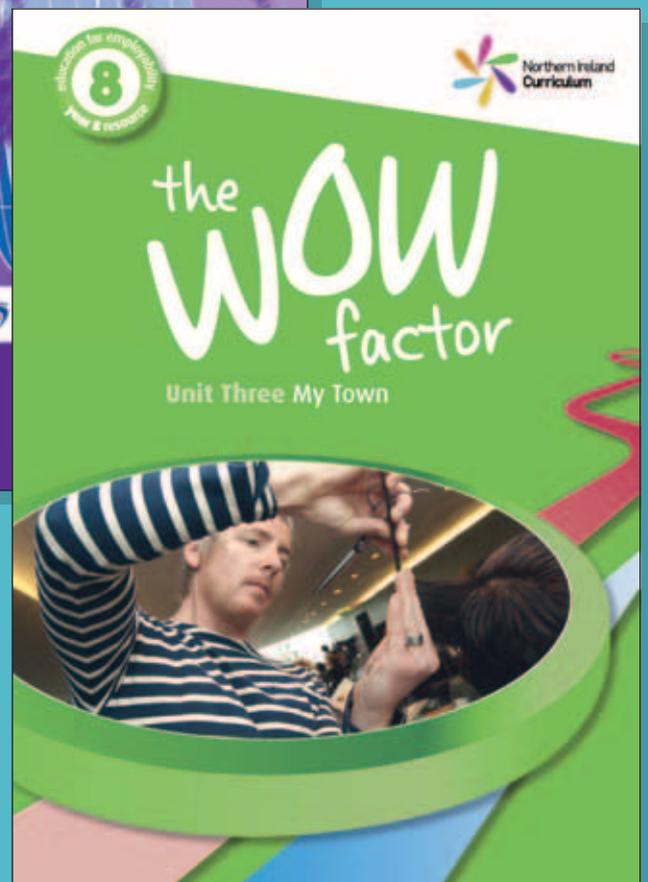
Children should be given opportunities to engage with and demonstrate the skill of communication and to transfer their knowledge about communication concepts and skills to real-life meaningful contexts across the curriculum."

Personal Development
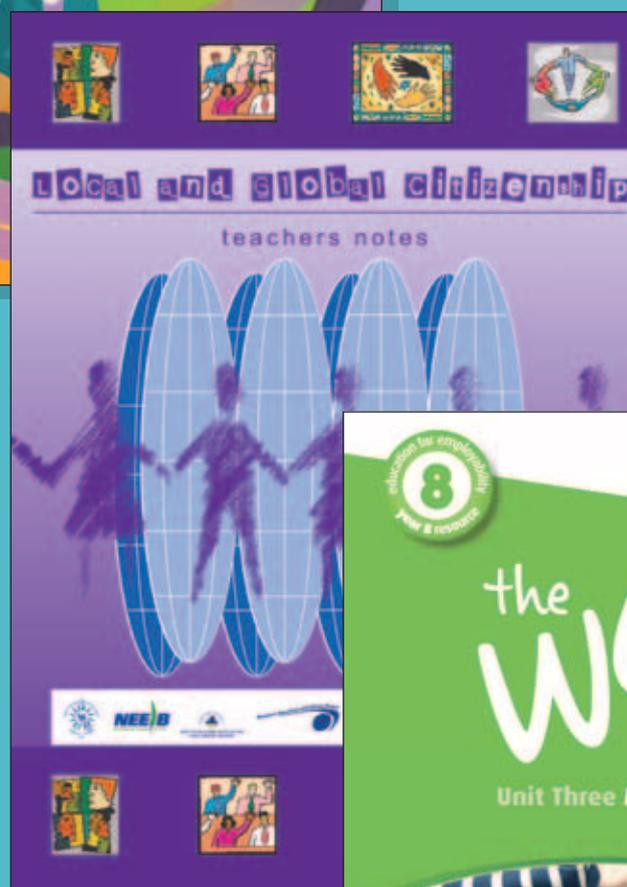
Local and Global Citizenship

Wow Factor
Education for Employability

The Northern Ireland Curriculum embeds the development of skills within the statutory requirements for each Area of Learning. The learning outcomes for Learning for Life and Work state that pupils should be able to communicate effectively in oral, visual and written formats showing clear awareness of audience and purpose.

The aim of this document is to help Learning for Life and Work teachers identify relevant opportunities to develop pupils' Communication skills through their subject. It also aims to provide Learning for Life and Work teachers with the tools and information needed to optimise pupils' development of these skills.

About the Resource

The document relates to three resources that have been published by CCEA for Learning for Life and Work at Key Stage 3:

- **Insync** (Personal Development);
- **Local and Global Citizenship Folder;** and
- **Wow Factor** (Education for Employability).

From each resource, we have selected an activity for each year group that we believe provides an excellent opportunity for the development of Communication skills. We then explain how the activity can be adapted to focus on Communication. We also provide a checklist that can be used to help teachers and pupils think about the skill they are developing.

How to Use this Resource

On each page you will find:

- **A Communication Checklist** – *this will provide teachers and pupils with tips and pointers on how to develop the specific Communication skill they are focusing on.*
- **A Link to a Learning for Life and Work Resource** – *this link will bring you to the original activity in one of the Learning for Life and Work resources.*
- **Preparation Notes** – *further information on how to adapt the original activity so that the development of Communication skills can be optimised.*

Linking to the original Learning for Life and Work resource first will help you understand the context and background to the activity described. The preparation notes help you turn the activity into an opportunity to develop Communication skills. When performing the activity, display the checklist for pupils so that they can self-assess their development of the skill, or use it as a reminder for the sorts of behaviour and work you should expect to see throughout the activity.

The checklists themselves are context-free and therefore can be applied to any activity where you want pupils to develop that particular aspect of Communication. However, the checklists are linked to a particular year group, so if you are presenting a Year 10 checklist to a Year 8 class, you may need to amend the list to reflect the pupils' ability.

Education for Employability

Year 8

Where to Develop the Skill:

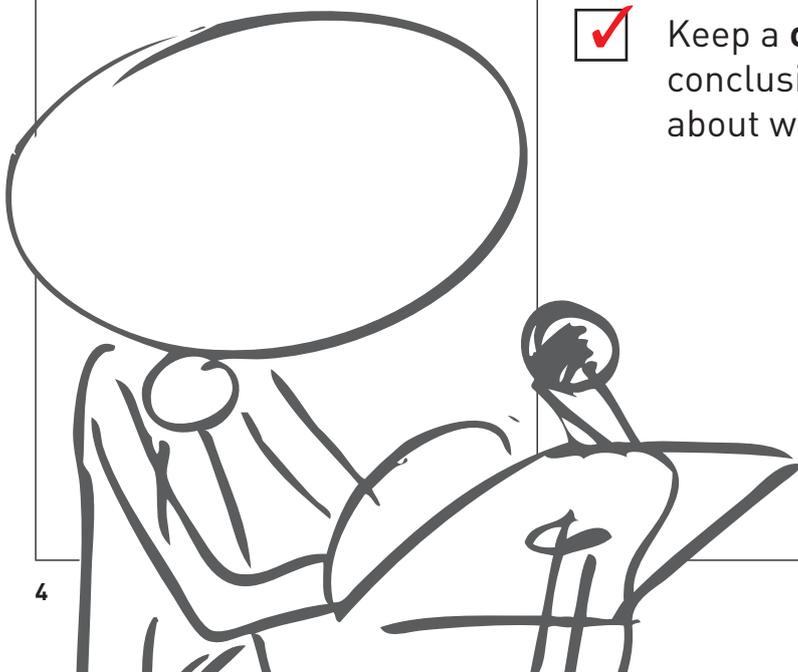Year 8, WOW Factor, Unit 4, Theme 4, Steps to Achievement

In this activity, pupils discuss how to set goals in order to achieve their aim. By extending the activity to include a one-minute presentation related to goal-setting, pupils have an opportunity to develop the Communication skill of individual presentation.

Preparation:

- Once the pupils have completed Resource 5, indicate that during this part of the activity they will also be focusing on developing the skill of delivering an individual presentation to an audience.
- Ask the class to identify what they think are the skills of a good presenter.
- Record pupils' suggestions as appropriate and supplement as necessary from the checklist provided. Indicate that this list represents the success criteria for the skill.
- Pupils peer-assess each other using their success criteria.

Individual Presentation

☑ Make sure your voice is **loud and clear.**

☑ Maintain **eye contact** with your audience.

☑ Be aware of **posture**, for example, stand up straight, don't slouch and don't fidget.

☑ **Pace yourself** correctly ensuring you make good use of time.

☑ Have **brief notes** which are easy to refer to, but do not read directly from them.

☑ Use **visual aids,** if appropriate, to engage your audience for example, presentation software, photographs, props, etc.

☑ Match your **style and tone** to your audience and purpose for example, a formal style for an interview presentation, a conversational style for a presentation for your classmates.

☑ **Engage your audience** immediately; draw them in with an interesting opening.

☑ **Stick to your topic** throughout – if you have prepared well you will be less likely to veer off topic.

☑ Keep a **catchy thought** for your conclusion – make your audience think about what you have said.

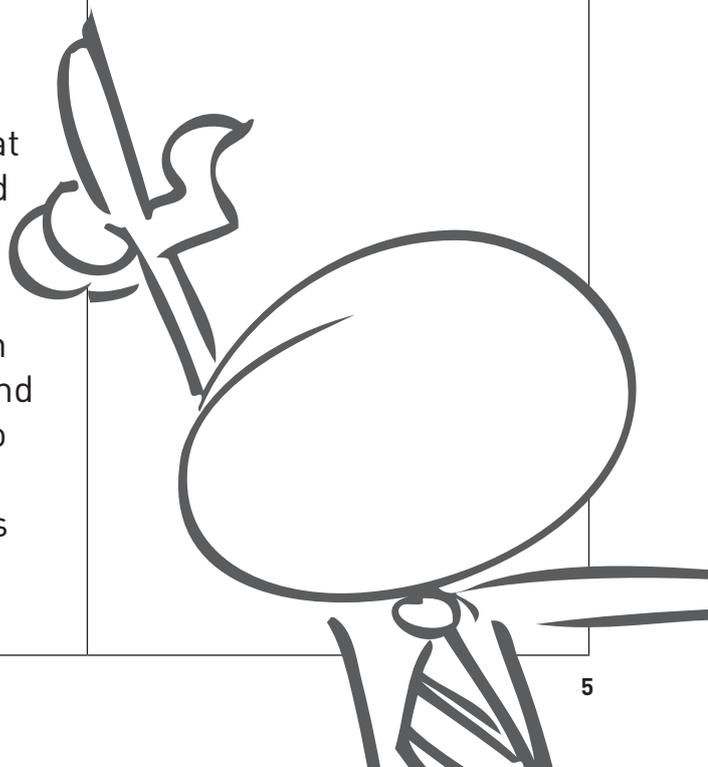# Using Evidence from Texts to Support Opinions

Where to Develop the Skill:

Local and Global Citizenship, Unit 2, Activity 2.7, Responding to Racism

In this Local and Global Citizenship activity, pupils read case studies about racism and think about ways to respond to racism. By extending the task to include preparing a speech about how people are affected by racism, pupils have a good opportunity to develop the Communication skill of using evidence from texts to support opinions.

Preparation:

- After pupils have read through the case studies on racism in the resource and have completed the worksheet, ask them to prepare a speech explaining how teenagers are affected by racism in Northern Ireland. They must use examples from the case studies to support their points.

- Tell them that during this part of the activity they will also focus on the skill of using evidence from texts to support opinions. Use the checklist to help pupils with the task.

☑ When points are made, ensure they are backed up by evidence from what has been read.

☑ Evidence can be in the form of quotations or examples from the text.

☑ If quotations are being used, ensure the correct punctuation is applied (see example below).

☑ Use the following structure in each paragraph to ensure opinions are properly supported:

- **P**oint
- **E**vidence
- **E**xplanation

(To help remember this, think **P.E.E.**)

For example:

(**P**oint) Some teenagers suffer from racist bullying which can be very upsetting.

(**E**vidence) For example, Jillian says that pupils said things like, "all Jews should die" when she was at school.

(**E**xplanation) Targeting young people's differences can be very hurtful as it can make them feel that they do not fit in and that these differences are something to be ashamed of. However, in reality we are all different in some way and that is what makes us special.

Personal Development

Year 8

Where to Develop the Skill:

Insync Year 8, Theme 3, Activity 2.2, Decisions and Consequences

In this Personal Development activity, groups of pupils are given a scenario to act out from a worksheet. They have to create alternative endings for their scenario and demonstrate the consequences of each decision they make.

Preparation:

- Indicate that during this part of the activity they will also be focusing on developing the skill of adopting and maintaining a role.
- Once the pupils have created their role-play, discuss with them how actors make their performances convincing (see checklist for suggestions).
- Record pupils' suggestions as appropriate and supplement as necessary from the checklist provided. Indicate that this list represents the success criteria for the skill.
- Pupils peer-assess each other using their success criteria.

Adopting and Maintaining a Role

☑ Choose and use **appropriate body language** for the role, for example:

- Arms crossed to show annoyance.
- Finger pointing to show aggression.
- Fidgeting and staring into space to show boredom.
- Straight, upright posture to show authority.

☑ Use **relevant facial expressions** for the situation, for example:

- shock
- anger
- fear
- humour etc.

☑ Use **appropriate language**, for example:

- Childish vocabulary for young children.
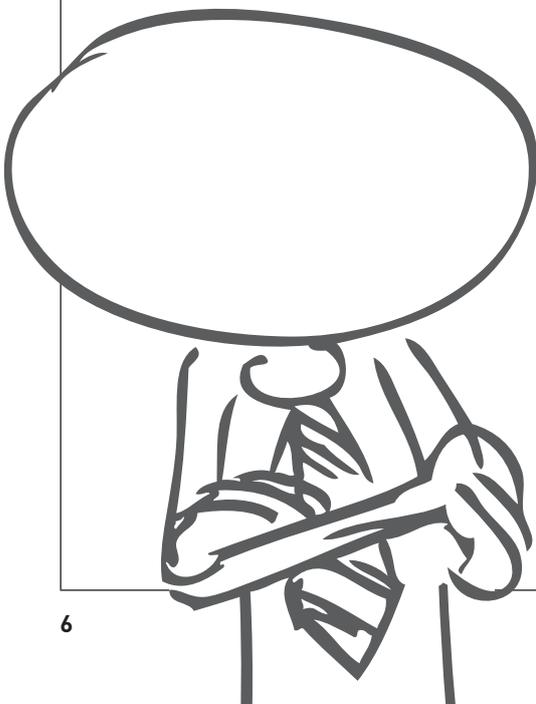- Slang for a teenager.

☑ **Relevant costume/props** if appropriate, for example:

- apron
- walking stick
- baseball cap

☑ Maintain your role throughout the performance.

Persuasive Writing

☑ Make your opinion clear from the first line. Sum up your overall belief in the first paragraph.

☑ Write using a polite and balanced tone, **avoid being one-sided**, for example, 'we appreciate the need to make a profit, however...'

☑ Make your points **clear and logical**.

☑ Use **accurate grammar and punctuation**.

☑ Use common persuasive techniques for example, alliteration, facts, opinions, repetition, rhetorical questions, emotive language, statistics, lists of threes.

** Look at a copy of, or listen to, Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech to see how he uses these techniques.

☑ Support your arguments with **evidence**, for example, statistics, expert opinions etc.

☑ Conclude with a **brief memorable thought** for example, a quote or a humorous quip.

Education for Employability

Year 9

Where to Develop the Skill:

Year 9, WOW Factor, Unit 4, Theme 5, Go Green, Activity 2

In this Education for Employability activity, pupils investigate how businesses can reduce their carbon emissions. They then write a letter to encourage a company to reduce its carbon footprint. This provides an opportunity for pupils to develop the Communication skill of persuasive writing.

Preparation:

- Tell pupils that during this activity they will focus on developing the skill of persuasive writing.

- Ask the class to identify what they think makes a good piece of persuasive writing.

- Record pupils' suggestions as appropriate and supplement as necessary from the checklist below. This list can be used as the success criteria for the skill.

- After finishing their letter, pupils can peer-assess another group's letter using the success criteria.

Citizenship

Year 9

Where to Develop the Skill:

Local and Global Citizenship, Unit 6, Activity 6.1, If There Were £100 in the World

In this Local and Global Citizenship activity pupils explore social justice and social exclusion. In groups, pupils use the questions provided to encourage discussion about the distribution of wealth in the world. Each group gives feedback on decisions, responding to questions and challenges from others. This activity provides a good opportunity for pupils to develop their listening skills.

Preparation:

- After completing activity 6.1 about distribution of wealth in the world, ask pupils to discuss the following question: 'Do you think every person in the world has the same opportunities in life?'

- Tell them that during this part of the activity they will focus on developing their listening skills.

- Ask pupils to suggest what they think good listening would look like and record their ideas as appropriate.

- Ask pupils to suggest how they could tell if someone is listening effectively and record their ideas as appropriate. You can add suggestions from the checklist.

- Ask the pupils to note down examples of good listening skills that they observed during their group discussion. This could be part of a class feedback session.

Effective Active Listening

☑ Be **patient**, avoid trying to guess what someone is about to say and allow the speaker to finish their sentence.

☑ **Do not interrupt** or talk over someone else when they are speaking.

☑ Look at the person who is speaking, making **eye contact**.

☑ Show that you are listening by using non-verbal reactions, such as, **nodding, smiling, facial expressions**.

☑ Show **curiosity** by asking relevant probing questions.

☑ Make a **note** of any **questions** you would like to ask after the speaker has finished.

☑ **Repeat** what has been said to ensure understanding.

☑ **Challenge or agree** with points that have been raised.

☑ Don't fidget!

Finding and Selecting Information from a Range of Internet Sources

Where to Develop the Skill:

Insync Year 9, Theme 10, Activity 2, What Do you Know About Smoking?

In this activity, pupils explore the issue of smoking, its physical effects and why people smoke. By extending this activity to ask pupils to create an information leaflet about smoking, they can develop their skill of finding and selecting information from a range of Internet sources.

Preparation:

- Tell pupils that during this part of the activity they will focus on developing their skills in finding and selecting information from a range of Internet sources.

- Ask pupils to find out more about smoking by reading the information worksheet provided and conducting personal research using an Internet search engine.

- Tell pupils they must consult at least two websites and ensure they record their web addresses.

- Ask pupils to suggest possible sites they could consult. Facilitate a class discussion around the reliability of information found on the web (see checklist).

☑ Be aware that some websites are more reliable than others.

☑ Distinguish between credible sites and sites where anyone can contribute information without regulation.

☑ Identify information relevant to the task, for example, facts, experts' opinions, and statistics.

☑ Keep an accurate record of the sites used for reference purposes (full web addresses).

☑ Be aware of the publication date, and the difference between historical and current information.

Education for Employability

Year 10

Where to Develop the Skill:

Year 10, WOW Factor, Unit 1, Theme 2, Qualifications for Me

In this activity, pupils select and research a GCSE subject which they would like to promote. They write an insert for an information booklet promoting their chosen GCSE subject. This provides pupils with an opportunity to develop the Communication skill of locating information from a range of sources.

Preparation:

- Tell pupils that during this activity they will focus on developing the skill of locating information from a range of sources.

- Ask pupils how they could begin to carry out this research.

- Record pupils' suggestions as appropriate and supplement as necessary from the checklist provided. This list can be used as the success criteria for the skill.

- Pupils work in pairs to conduct research on their chosen subject.

Locating Information from a Range of Sources

☑ **Identify the key question** you want answered about your chosen subject, for example, 'Is coursework necessary?'

☑ Be aware of **where to locate useful sources of information**, for example, the careers section in the school/public library.

☑ Find out if there are any **outside agencies** that can help, for example, exam board websites.

☑ Be aware that some websites are more reliable than others.

☑ Identify any information relevant to the task by **making notes**.

☑ Keep an accurate record of the sources used, to refer to later.

☑ Ensure all information is **current** and up-to-date.

Formal Letter Writing

✓ Ensure the letter has been structured correctly (see template below).

✓ Write in paragraphs.

✓ Make your purpose clear in the first paragraph.

✓ Conclude the letter with relevant closing remarks for example, in a letter to which you expect a reply you could write, 'I look forward to hearing from you soon'.

✓ Sign the letter 'Yours sincerely' if you have used the name of the person at the beginning.

✓ Sign the letter 'Yours faithfully' if the letter begins with 'Dear Sir/Madam' or 'To whom it may concern'.

✓ Use formal language. Don't use slang or colloquialisms.

✓ Use a polite tone.

✓ Proofread the letter and check spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Where to Develop the Skill:

Local and Global Citizenship, Unit 9, Activity 9.4, At What Age Can I?

In this Citizenship activity, pupils discuss laws which state the age at which you can do certain things for example, you can only vote if you are 18 or older. They then select one of these laws which they would like to change and create an argument to convince the rest of the class that it should be changed.

By extending the activity to include writing a letter to their local MP or MLA, pupils have a good opportunity to develop their formal letter writing skills.

Preparation:

- After pupils have presented their argument to the class, ask them to individually write a letter to their local MLA/MP.

- Indicate that during this part of the activity they will focus on developing their formal letter writing skills.

- Ask pupils to suggest what should be included in a formal letter and how it should be structured.

- Show pupils the checklist to help them write and assess their letter.

Formal Letter Writing Template

Your address
Date

Recipient's address

Dear Sir/Madam (or name of the person if known),

I am writing to......

Yours faithfully (sincerely if the name of the person has been used)

Personal Development

Year 10

Where to Develop the Skill:

InSync Year 10, Theme 9, Activity 2.2, Dating

As part of a Personal Development lesson on the risks and dangers associated with dating, pupils write both a letter to an 'agony aunt' and an appropriate response. This provides a good opportunity to develop the Communication skill of writing to advise.

Preparation:

- As pupils are writing their response to the 'agony aunt' letter, indicate that during this part of the activity they will also be focusing on developing the skill of writing to advise.

- Make available examples of problem pages to demonstrate how responses are structured.

- Ask pupils to identify common features of the advice given in problem pages. Record these and supplement with information from the checklist.

Writing to Advise

✓ Use a friendly informal tone to make your reader feel comfortable.

✓ Use personal pronouns such as 'I', 'you', 'we' and 'us', so that you make a personal connection with your reader.

✓ Use short simple words and sentences to ensure that you do not sound intimidating.

✓ Use rhetorical questions to encourage your reader to think about your suggestions.

✓ Use a balanced non-judgemental style - advise rather than preach!