

**February's topic is focused on maintaining conversation with others.**

**These tips can be helpful in building and maintaining appropriate social conversations in different settings.**

**Maintaining a Conversation:**

**A conversation should include at least 3-5 back and forth exchanges between at least two people by making comments/asking questions, while paying attention to non-verbal and verbal cues of communication partner(s): i.e. – looking away, changing the subject, talking to other people, walking away, smiling, eye contact, showing interest/asking questions related to the topic.**

**Listening During a Conversation:**

**Engaging in active listening - being present and focusing on the conversation, avoiding distractions, looking at the person speaking, paying attention so you can follow along and come up with follow-up questions and/or comments.**

**Topic Fillers:**

**If the conversation comes to a pause for both partners, topic fillers can help avoid awkward moments and abrupt endings to a conversation, while aiding in smooth transition to another topic or appropriately ending a topic: i.e. – Asking open ended questions about the topic, “What do you think?”, “Have you ever done that?”, “Would you be interested in that?”**

**Ending:**

**It's important to pay attention to the person you're speaking to and look for cues that the conversation is coming to an end: i.e. – person is getting ready to go (packing papers/getting keys/looking at phone/watch), person says, “It was nice seeing you!”, “I have to get going.”, while keeping in mind the importance to end the conversation promptly. When a communication partner is giving cues/indicates they are ready to go, ending the conversation promptly shows you are being respectful to the communication partner's' needs in order to increase the likeliness of future conversations.**