



**Maryland State Geographic Information Committee**  
A commitment to excellence in the development and coordination of geographic information technologies.

# Sharpening Communication Skills

MSGIC Lunch and Learn  
Session 3 of 5  
May 6, 2020

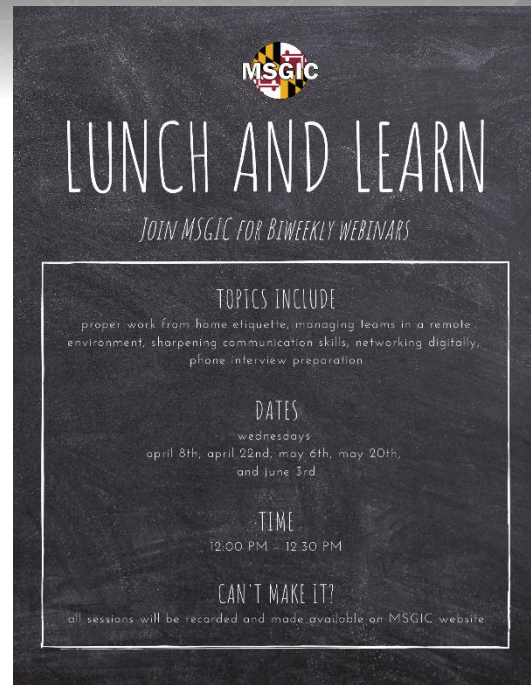


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## • MSGIC LUNCH AND LEARN SERIES

- Five 30-minute lunchtime sessions
- Every other Wednesday starting April 8<sup>th</sup>
- Topics include:
  - Work from Home Etiquette
  - Managing Teams in a Remote Environment
  - Sharpening Communication Skills
  - Networking Digitally
  - Phone Interview Preparation





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- **SPEAKER: MARY BUFFINGTON**

- Project Manager, Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative
- GISP
- MSGIC member since 2010





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- SHARPENING YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS
  - Common communication barriers
  - Communication Basics (again)
  - Tips for effective communication while working remotely
  - Communication = Team Building



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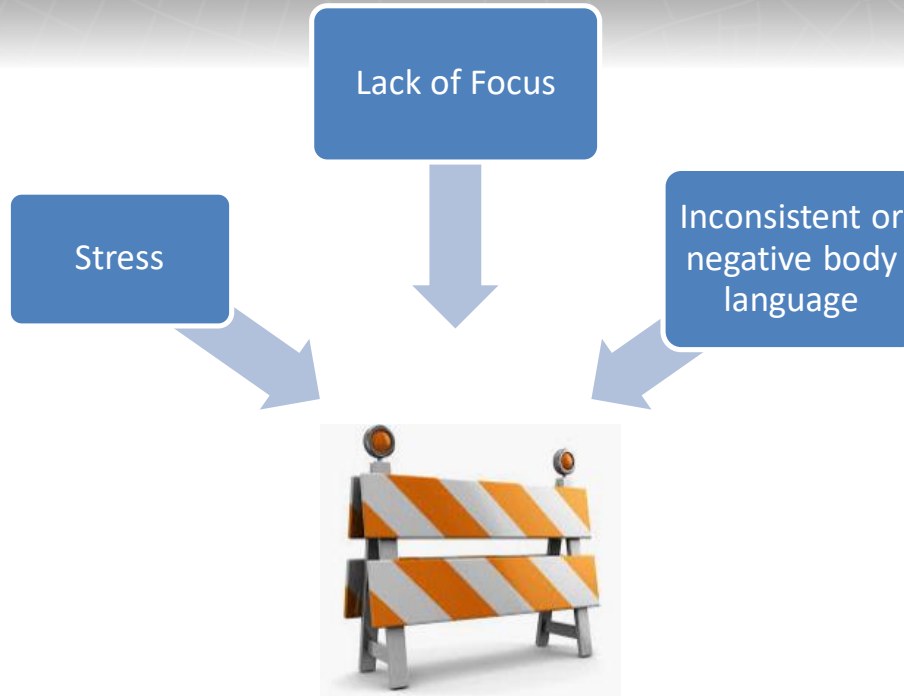
- **NOW YOU WORK FROM HOME!**
  - Only 1 in 3 employees worked remotely prior to current shift
  - Adjusting to working from home during a pandemic is different than a typical situation
  - Communication is the foundation of successful remote work
    - Stay on same page as team
    - Keeps teams connected and productive





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- THE BASICS

- Overcommunicate
- Be clear in your messages
- Use the appropriate tools for each task
  - Email, messaging, video, screen-share, phone call
  - Basecamp, Trello, Slack, etc.
- Be respectful



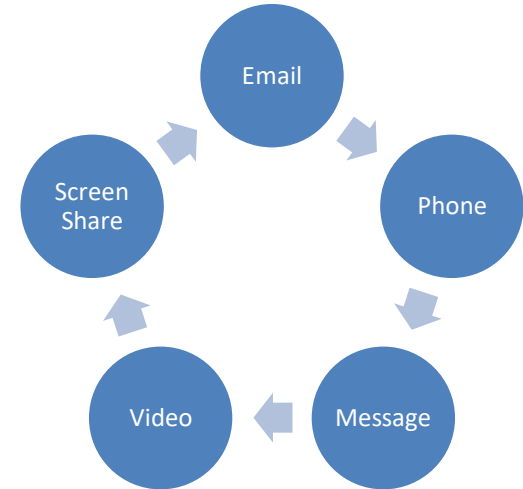


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## • TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING REMOTELY

- Be proactive – communicate early and often
- Set expectations
  - Working hours
  - Project milestones/deadlines
- Ask for communication preferences
  - Communicate in a way that meets needs
  - Be flexible







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- TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING REMOTELY
  - Be aware of tone
    - Avoid sarcasm as typed words carry more weight
    - Grammarly.com – tone checker suggests edits for positive and encouraging messaging
  - Use video
    - Provides valuable face-to-face connection and interaction
  - Keep office culture alive
    - Meet ups, coffee breaks
    - Have a designated space for not work related items



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- **COMMUNICATION = VIRTUAL TEAM BUILDING**
  - Keep your team connected when they can't physically be together
  - Facilitates emotional connections among participants
  - Allows participants to learn about one another
  - Promotes bonding that typically takes place in the office
  - Communication is easier and smoother with a team that feels connected



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## • WHAT IS VIRTUAL TEAM BUILDING?

- Meeting Icebreaker Questions
  - “You’re alone in a dark cabin with only one match, a lamp, a fireplace, and a candle. Which would you light first and why?”
  - “If your home could be one tv/movie film set what would it be and why?”
  - “If you could write a book, what would it be about?”
- Show and Tell
- Meet the pet/partner/child/house plant





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Pancakes

vs.

Waffles



Waffles

vs.

French  
Toast



Waffles

vs.

?





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- SET ASIDE TIME FOR TEAMBUILDING
  - May be during or after work hours
  - Celebrate office birthdays and special achievements
  - Play office games





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- OFFLINE TEAMBUILDING IDEAS
  - Fitness challenge
  - Book club
  - Start watching a show or movie together
  - “What’s on your Plate?”
  - Many, many more!



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## Questions?