

Effective Communication Strategies

Chief Medical Residents
August 10, 2011

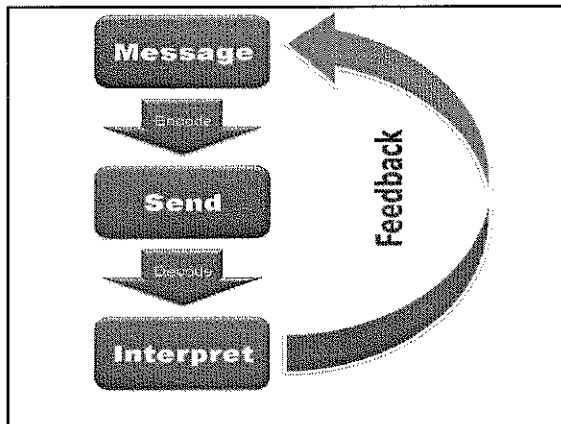
Effective Communication Strategies Agenda

- Key Principles for Effective Communication
- Variables that can Promote or Hinder Communication
- Active Listening
- Thought Processes that Impact Communication
- Reflection and Practice

- Thanks to MIT for Sharing Materials

Key Principles

- Seek first to understand and then be understood (Stephen Covey)
- Try to ask questions as opposed to giving direct orders
- Be aware of how assumptions and beliefs impact communications
- Be clear on what you are trying to accomplish



Seven C's of Communication

- COMPLETE
- COURTEOUS
- CONSIDERATE
- CLEAR
- CONCISE
- CONCRETE
- CORRECT

What Hinders Effective Communication?

- Competing goals
- Differing roles
- Differing information
- Communication styles
- Differing values

What Supports Effective Communication?

- Shared goals
- Clear roles
- Sharing information
- Understand that we each have our own communication styles
- Appreciate others values

Active Listening

Active listening is a specific skill set that is about ***understanding what*** someone is saying

Two objectives of active listening:

- 1) Letting the speaker know you are listening (via body language, tone, interest, focusing, etc.)
- 2) Staying focused on the speaker and what the *speaker* wants to say *in order to understand*

Am I an ACTIVE Listener?

What do you need to be an active listener?

- I find it easiest to listen to people when...
- I find it hard to listen when...
- I know that I'm being listened to when...
- When I really want to be listened to, I...
- As a chief resident, my responsibility is to...

*“Courage is what it takes to stand up
and speak; it is also what it takes to
sit down and listen.”*

Winston Churchill



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Mindfulness

“Mindfulness means paying attention, on purpose, to one’s own thoughts, feelings and judgements . . . It is the practice of being fully present in our attention to where we are, what we are doing, and what is happening at the moment.”

(Epstein, 2001)



Key Tips for Active Listening

By Jeannette Gerzon

http://web.mit.edu/hr/oed/learn/comm/art_active.html

Active listening is a foundation communication skill. Its primary assumption is that the listener is trying to understand the speaker's point of view or experience. The following tips, though not always possible in a given moment or place, will aid our effort to hear and understand what the speaker is saying.

Listening Tips that Aid Understanding

- **Choose to listen (or not):** If you cannot listen now but are willing, set a time for later.
- **Find a good space:** Choose a place to talk without distractions.
- **Take the time:** Let the other person tell their story.
- **Respond (vs. react):** Choose your body language, tone, and intention.
- **Show interest:** Make eye contact; focus on the person speaking; don't answer your phone or look at your email.
- **"Hear" as well as listen:** It is normal to miss some words or not know their meaning. Ask: "Could you say that again?" "Could you explain?"
- **Ask questions:** Ask for more information, for what happened. Ask if you understand: "Are you saying that?"
- **Clarify/Paraphrase:** Not everyone knows exactly what they mean to say. Check your understanding. For example, "It sounds like what you are saying is _____. Is that right?"
- **Be patient:** It's not easy for people to talk about important things.
- **Listen for content and emotion:** Both carry the meaning at hand. It's OK sometimes to say, "How are you doing with all this?"
- **Learn:** Listen for their perspective/their view. Listen for their experience. Discover or learn a new way of seeing something.
- **Follow their lead:** See where they want to go. Ask what is important to them (rather than deciding where their story must go or how it must end).
- **Be kind:** Listen with heart as well as with mind.



Active Listening

Directions: Working in pairs, you will have the opportunity to be a Listener and a Speaker.

As the Listener:

- Learn about what your colleague needs to be a good listener
- Practice your active listening skills
- Stay focused on the Speaker, ask questions, paraphrase

As the Speaker:

- Think about what you need to be a good listener
- Practice talking about what you need to be a good listener
- Speak naturally

To prepare for your turn as Speaker, complete the following sentences:

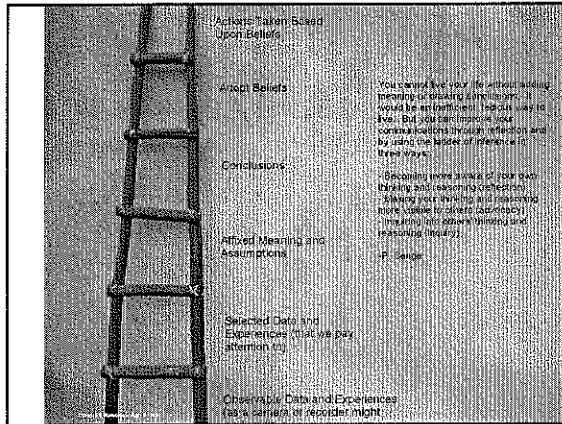
Am I an ACTIVE Listener?

1. I find it easiest to listen to people when...
2. I find it hard to listen when...
3. I know that I'm being listened to when...
4. When I really want to be listened to, I...
5. As a manager, my responsibility is to...

Determine who will be the Listener and who will be the Speaker for the first conversation.

To begin the conversation, the Listener asks the Speaker,
"What do you need to be an active listener?"

When instructed to, switch roles and when done, discuss your experience with your partner.



Ladder of Inference to be used for

- Understanding the thought processes that get in the way of effective communication
- Identifying different perspectives of the same situation
- Improving communication between individuals and within teams

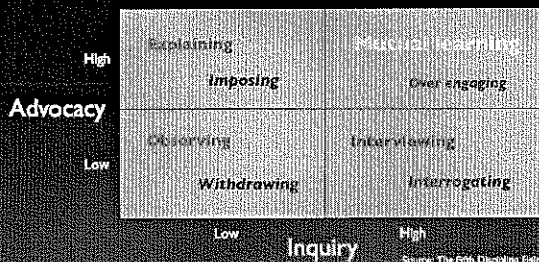
The Ladder of Inference can be used when

- Someone draws a completely different conclusion than you do about a person or event
- You feel misunderstood
- You think the other person might feel misunderstood
- You can't figure out why the other person did such a (weird/unbelievable/stupid) thing

Become aware of the Ladder in your own thinking

- How can you use the Ladder to be a responsible Receiver?
- How can you use the Ladder to be a responsible Sender?

Group decision making is largely an advocacy process in most organizations.

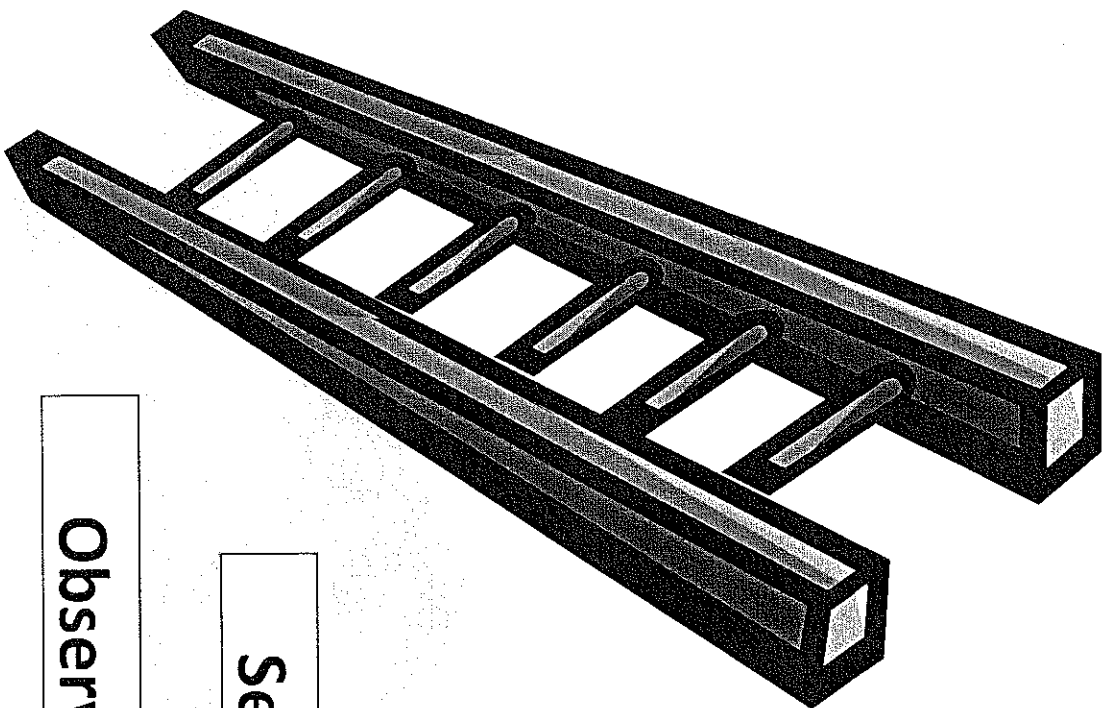


Advocacy needs to be balanced with inquiry if we want to speed up organizational learning and innovation.

Feedback



Listening Through our Assumptions



Actions

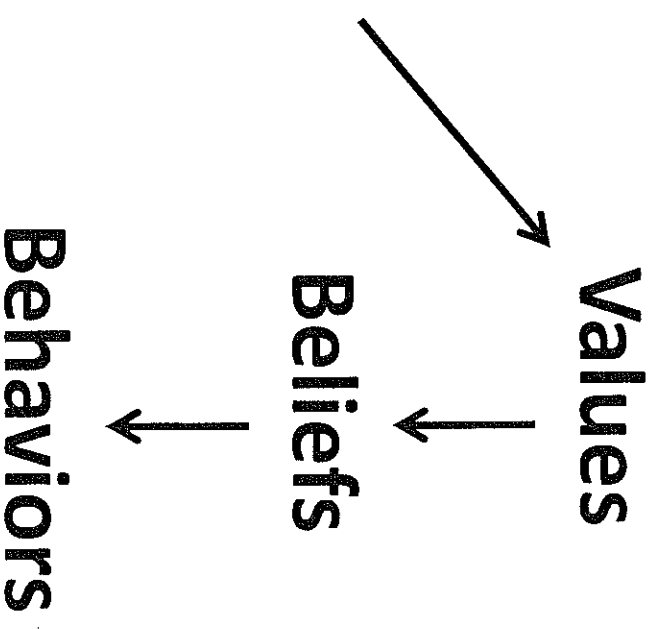
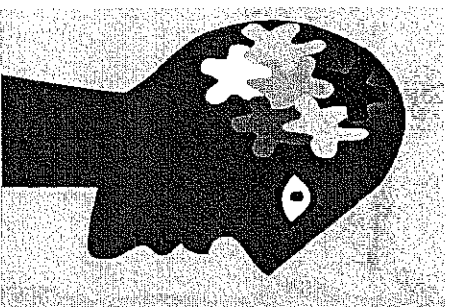
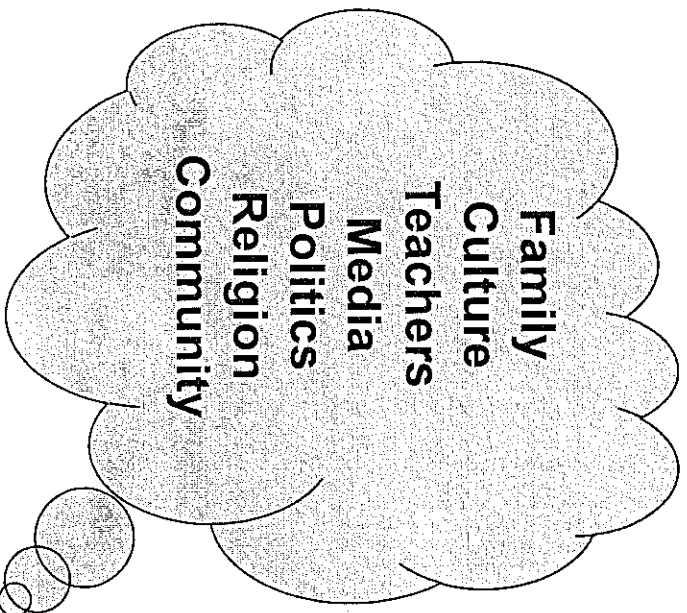
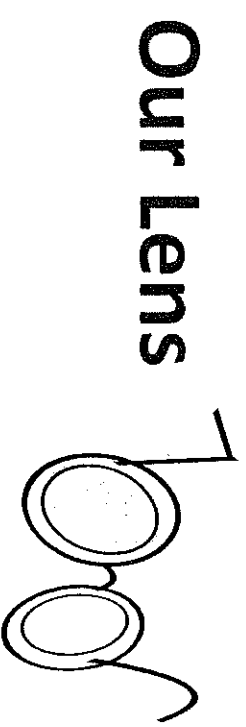
Beliefs

Assumptions

Meanings

Selected Data

Observable Data





Actions

Next time I see Joe, I'm going to tell him how rotten it is that he is disrespecting the team's practices.

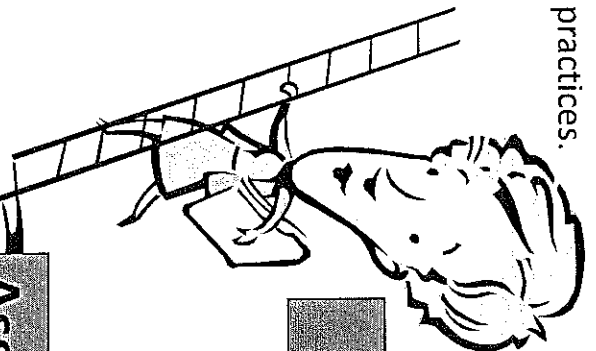
ACTION

Joe cannot be counted on.

BELIEF

Joe doesn't respect the team.

BELIEF



Beliefs

Assumptions

Meanings

Selected Data

Observable Data

Joe's been late for three team meetings.

Next time I see Joe, I'm going to ask him if there's anything going on keeping him from being prompt. Maybe I can help out.

ACTION

We should cut Joe some slack.

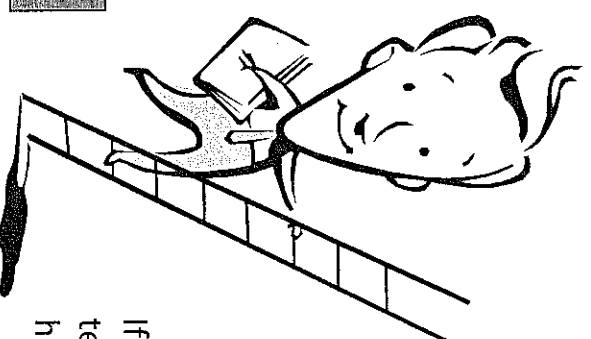
BELIEF

Joe is under a lot of pressure.

BELIEF

If Joe were able to get to team meetings on time, he would.

ASSUMPTION



Joe doesn't manage time well.

MEANING

Joe doesn't show up on time for team meetings.

SELECTED DATA



SELECTED DATA

Joe's promptness at team meetings has changed.

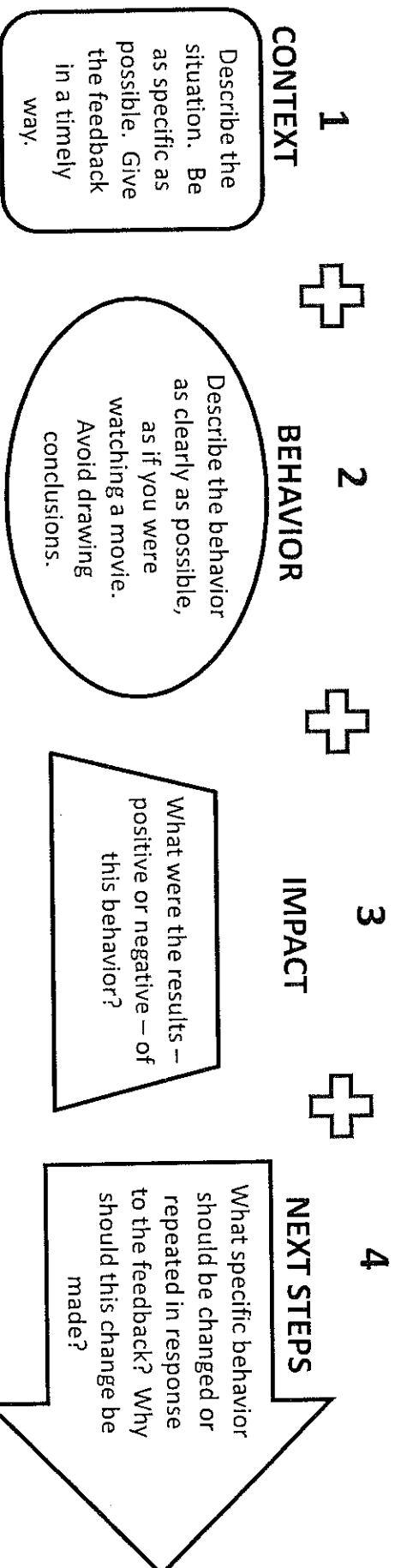
MEANING

Something must be preventing Joe from being on time.

Joe's promptness at team meetings has changed.



Giving Effective Feedback: a 4-part Model



POSITIVE FEEDBACK:

Yesterday when Professor Smith stopped by your office...

I saw you put down the budget you had been working to get done and go to our website to get some information. You then got up and walked her from your office towards the office that could help her.

She stopped by later to tell me how helpful you had been. Your flexibility and willingness to go out of your way to help really model our commitment to customer service!

I really appreciate that you'll continue to do this. It shows your commitment to customer service.

CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK:

At our staff meeting yesterday...

Every time that Susie spoke, you turned away and started talking with Bob, or you opened your laptop and checked your email.

I saw that Susie noticed this. After the 2nd or 3rd time you did this, Susie stopped saying anything for the rest of the meeting. Susie knows a lot about our topic; I think we really missed out on her ideas.

From now on, during staff meetings please focus your full attention on each speaker so that everyone continues to participate and we work more effectively as a team.



Use It

“I” Messages or “I” Statements

When you are in conflict, you may have difficulty clearly articulating your situation without escalating the conflict. Using an “I” message (also known as an “assertiveness statement”) can help you state your concerns, feelings, and needs in a manner that is easier for the listener to hear and understand

An “I-statement” focuses on your own feelings and experiences. It does not focus on your perspective of what the other person has done or failed to do. It is the difference, for example, between saying, “I feel that I am not being permitted to participate in office projects to the extent that others are” and “You always let Marge work on office projects, but you never ask me if I’m interested.”

If you can express your experience in a way that does not attack, criticize, or blame others, you are less likely to provoke defensiveness and hostility which tends to escalate conflicts, or have the other person shut-down or tune you out which tends to stifle communication.

Ultimately, I-messages help create more opportunities for the resolution of conflict by creating more opportunities for constructive dialogue about the true sources of conflict.

What an “I” Message does

- An “I” message can help reduce blaming, accusations, and defensiveness.
- An “I” message can help you communicate your concerns, feelings, and needs without blaming others or sounding threatening. It helps you get your point across without causing the listener to shut down.
- An “I” message says “this is how it looks from my side of things.”

What an “I” Message doesn’t do

- An “I” message is not about being polite. It’s about being clear.
- An “I” messages is not concerned with how the other person might respond.
- An “I” message is not intended to force another person to “fix the problem.”
- It is clear statement that says “this is how it looks from my perspective.”
- Even though “I” messages let you explain and how you would like things to be, it is free of expectations. If you expect the other person to respond as you want them to immediately, you probably have unrealistic expectations.
- An “I” Message is intended only to open up healthy conversation. Using it alone will not resolve the conflict. If you expect an “I” Message to fix the conflict, you probably have unrealistic expectations.

Four parts of an "I" Message:

1. "When you _____" state observation
2. "I feel or I think _____" state feeling
3. "Because _____" state need
4. "I would prefer that _____" state preference

Here's another pattern to the "I" Message:

1. **How** you feel "I feel angry..."
2. **What** you have that feeling about "about the way he spoke to me..."
3. **Why** you feel this way "because it embarrassed me in front of my friends."
4. **What you would like to see instead:** "I would prefer that we discuss these things in private."

Examples of how to translate a heated remark into an "I" message

1. "You never listen to anyone, and you're not really listening to me now"
"I feel that my concerns are not being heard"
2. "I hate when you yell at the kids."
"When you yell at the kids, I feel angry because I need the kids to be treated with respect. I would prefer that you not raise your voice or curse in their presence."
3. "It's rude of you to be late all the time. You screw up everyone's schedule."
"When you are scheduled to be at your desk at 8:30 but you don't come in until 9:00, I feel disrespected/frustrated, and because your being late means we can't start our meetings on time. I would prefer that you arrive to work at the agreed-upon time."
4. "The salaries in this department are totally inequitable and discriminatory."
"I feel angry by the salary structure in this department. I am among the lowest paid teachers here and that makes me feel terribly underappreciated. I would like to understand more about how salaries are calculated, and I would like to talk to you about whether raising my salary is possible in the next budget cycle."