

Clear, Crisp,  
Concise:  
Ensuring Your  
Professional  
Communication  
Is On Target





# MOMENTUM

2022 Annual Conference & Expo

LeadingAge<sup>®</sup>  
Washington

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# Learning Outcomes:

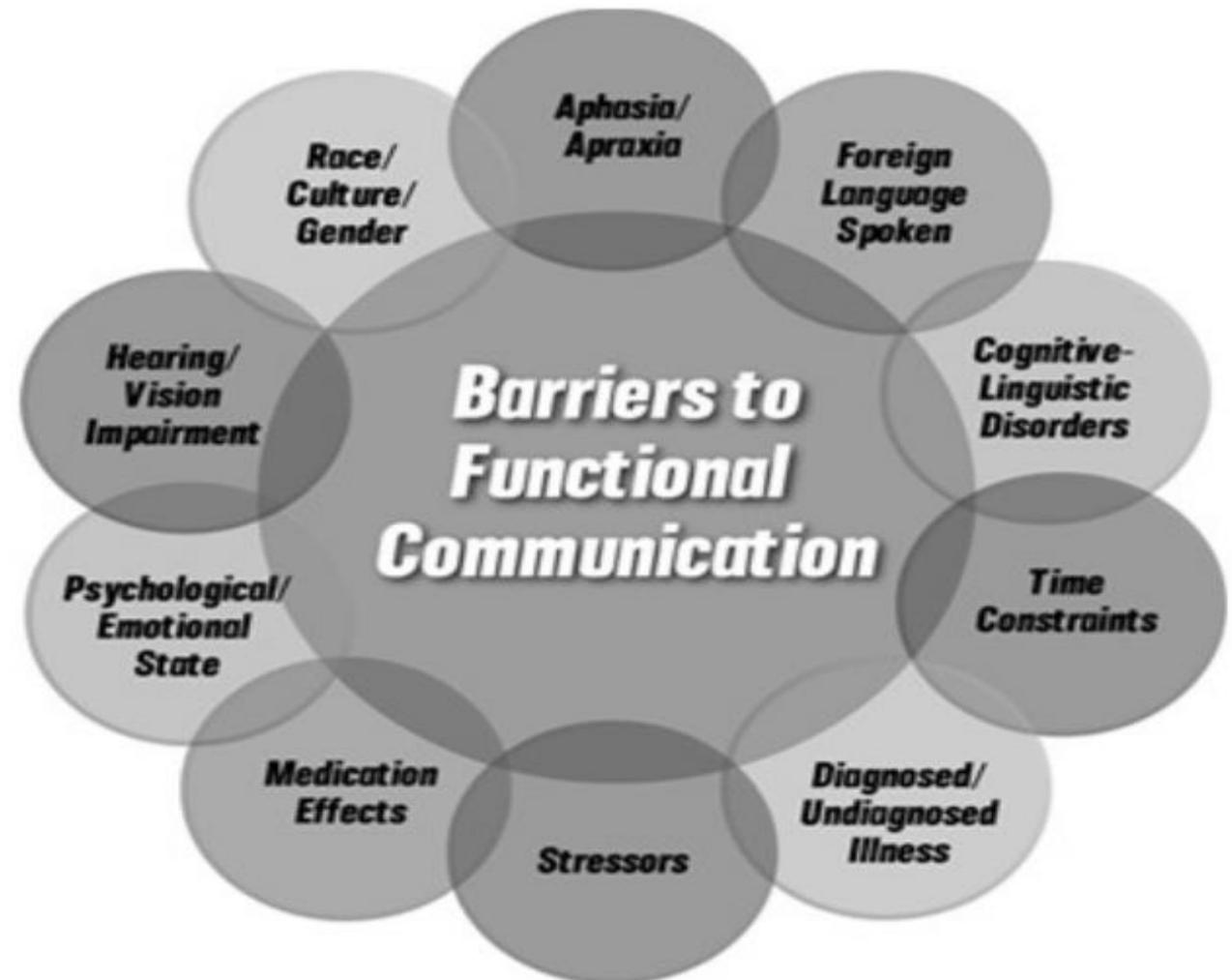
After this course, participants will be able to:

1. Identify ways to ensure communication is delivered in a professional manner
2. Recognize errors in verbal and written communication that minimize the intended message
3. List the essential elements of clear professional communication

## What is Effective, Clear, Concise Communication?



# External and Internal Factors That Contribute to Communication Breakdown



## **Complications That Impact Communication: Health Conditions**

- Aphasia
- Dementia
- Motor Speech Disorders
- Hearing Loss
- Psychological Issues
- Low Vision
- Neuro Developmental Disorders
- English – Second Language or Native Language Only
- Dialectical and Cultural Differences
- Family Denial/Bias

# Effective Communication



## Effective vs. Ineffective Communication

### Effective and Clear

- Shared Goals/Model
- Adaptability
- Team Orientation
- Community Trust
- Performance/Outcomes
- Resident Safety

### Ineffective and Unclear

- Negative Resident/Survey Outcomes
- Wastes Time/Resources
- Breeds Resentment and Distrust
- Causes Complacency/Conflict
- Lack of Coordination/Follow up

# Organizational Assessment

- Does your current strategy support your organizational strategy/structure? Does it work? Has EHR helped or hindered?
- Do your policy/procedures include communication protocols?
- Have you set and measured progress in your communication efforts? Area of QAPI Process?
- Does your staff consider current systems as just paperwork and valueless?

# Fostering OPEN Communication

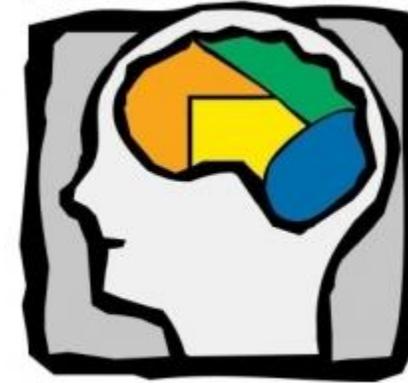
- Are contrary opinions expressed in a positive, constructive manner? How do others feel about your willingness to hear other viewpoints?
- Are facility leaders expressing reactions and opinion without intimidating others unintentionally?
  - Self assess
  - Seek others' opinions
  - If you see intimidation as a positive attribute, analyze its effectiveness

When is the last time you took the time to assess your own Communication Style?

What Color is your Brain?

Based on work of Sheila Glazov  
Brief assessment with no right or wrong answers  
Outcome provides you with your dominant brain color

What Color Is



Your Brain?®

- **Yellow Brainers** are Responsible, Organized, Loyal and Punctual  
Communicate in RULES
- **Blue Brainers** are Creative, Communicative, Helpful and  
Compassionate Communicate through QUESTIONS
- **Green Brainers** are Logical, Private, Competent and  
Independent Communicate via PROBLEM SOLVING
- **Orange Brainers** are Dynamic, Fun-loving, Generous and  
Courageous Communicate via CHANGE

# Ideal Conditions in the Workplace

Once you determine your communication dominance and the dominance of those on the team, you can create work conditions that play to the strengths of the team members. Remember ***People Thrive*** when their attributes and abilities are acknowledged.



# Professional Communication

## ➤ **Written Communication**

- Emails
- Memos or Letters

## ➤ **Verbal Communication**

- Clarity/Respect/Confidence
- Language/Style
- ISBAR

## ➤ **Non-verbal Communication**

- Body Language
- Environment
- Active Listening

✓ ***Essential for Working Relationships***

✓ ***Correlated with Patient Outcomes***

✓ ***Healthcare workers Satisfaction or Stress***

✓ ***Patient Safety***

✓ ***Public Satisfaction***

# Written Communication

## ***Steps for Writing Professional Emails***

- Identify your goal
- Consider your audience
- Keep it concise
- Proofread before sending
- Use proper etiquette
- Remember to follow-up

## ***Format of a well-structured email***

- Subject line
- Salutation
- Body
- Closing
- Signature line
- Hitting send- Reply vs. Reply to All

# Examples of Emails NOT to Send

- ❖ Urgent email
- ❖ Reply all
- ❖ Email to too many people
- ❖ Email to no one in particular
- ❖ Spam/random articles
- ❖ Conversation email
- ❖ Bad news
- ❖ Multiple subject



# CAN YOU SPOT THE ERRORS.....

To: John Pope

From: Gabrielle Bears

Subject: Job?

Hey Bob, We talked a couple weeks back at the conference exhibit hall event. (I was the one looking for a summer internship and had a zit on my lip that could have passed for a cold soar. Lol. Whew. It was not. You're probably like, "uh.. What?" Maybe that helps you recall, maybe not. Not completely important, I suppose. I'd really like to come work for you at your home care business. You seemed like a cool person to work for, I liked ur striped pants. I'm available to start working on Monday, but I am taking my driver's test in June and have to study and go an hour and half away to take it at an easier place cause I'm not a great driver so I'll miss a few days. I am also going to the beach with friends for a week in July. I've attached my resume, it's the bomb dot com. Let me know if you have a job opening for me. I can't wait to play on some computers. If I don't respond to your email, I'm always on FB, snapchat or insta!

Peace out, Gabrielle

# Formal Written Communication

## **Downward-** Typically Standardized Format

Job performance reviews

Policies and procedures

Thank you's

## **Upward**

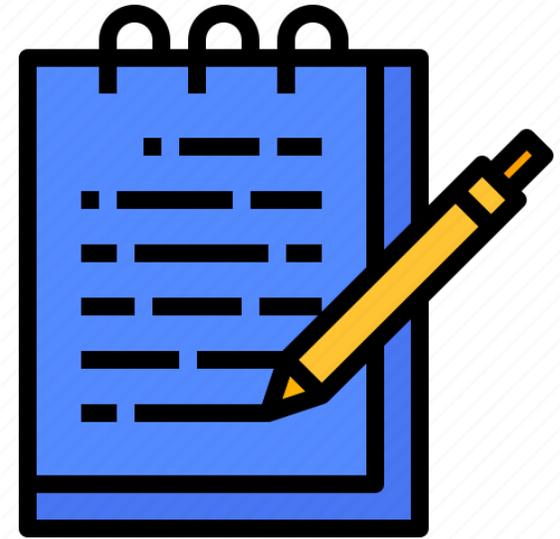
Employee complaints/Thank you's

Request for clarification

## **Horizontal**

Information sharing

Geared toward transparency and efficiency / Thank you's



# Verbal Communication

## Clarity

- ❖ Prevent misunderstandings
- ❖ Refrain from providing too much general information
- ❖ Identify what you can do
- ❖ Identify what you want / Need others to do
- ❖ Communicate when you need it done
- ❖ What is the overall goal or outcome

## Respect

- ❖ Vital to your relationship with others
- ❖ Consider your tone, boundaries, cultural biases
- ❖ Maintain a positive demeanor
- ❖ Use inclusive language
- ❖ Take notes when others are talking
- ❖ Give others opportunity to speak
  - ❖ Listen actively and restate others message

## Confidence

Clear, direct tone without arrogance

Provide feedback / Share an idea

Ask questions

Empathy

Can combine with non-verbal means  
such as

Firm handshake (if appropriate)

Smile while listening



# Verbal Communication Styles

## Passive

Doesn't always express true feelings

## Aggressive

Express their emotions without consideration of others

## Passive-Aggressive

Appear aloof, avoid confrontation

## Assertive

Considerate and express self in direct manner



# Stress Impacts Communication

## Points to remember about people who are stressed:

- They typically have difficulty hearing, understanding, and remembering information.
- They want to know that you care before they care what you know.
  - Caring is 50% of the basis for determining trust.
  - Caring is judged in the first 30 seconds; once assessed, people are highly resistant to change.
  - 75% of information about trust is communicated non-verbally.

Source: Communications in High Stress Environments, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenmakovsky/2013/10/03/1159/?sh=4a2e4a4e7270>

- People typically will not give you the benefit of the doubt regarding the meaning of non-verbal cues in high stress situations.
- When people are stressed, they tend to remember most what they hear first and last.
- Stress and mental noise can reduce the ability to process information by up to 80%.
- The gap between perceptions and reality often widens.

# Communication in a Crisis - ISBAR LeadingAge® Washington

## ***Introduction / Identify***

Name, Role, Location

## ***Situation***

Reason for call, perceived urgency of problem

## ***Background***

Succinct history

## ***Assessment***

Results, Risks, Needs

## ***Recommendation***

Clarity of Request

'Know the Plan,  
Share the Plan,  
Review the Risks'

I dentify  
S ituation  
B ackground  
A sssessment  
R ecommendation

(Curtis et al., 2011)

# ISBAR Example

- **Situation:** *"An ambulance brought Mr. Pierce in this morning around 7 a.m. because he was feeling unwell and experienced a rapid onset of shortness of breath. He's 73 years old and presented with probable pneumonia. He's presently stable."*
- **Background:** *"The patient has no significant past medical history. He's a nonsmoker, a casual drinker and currently only takes antihypertensive medications. His stats gave little cause for concern, although he was afebrile with a slightly elevated white cell count when he came in. He recently returned from a road trip, but we feel we've eliminated the possibility of a pulmonary embolism."*
- **Assessment:** *"Because the patient has a cough, chest pain and shortness of breath, I think he has pneumonia."*
- **Recommendation:** *"I'd like to repeat the blood tests, administer a formal chest X-ray and start him on a round of antibiotics. Does that sound like a suitable course of action to you?"*

# Minimizing Communication Breakdowns

Communication breakdowns stem from differing expectations among the parties involved in the transition, a lack of standardized procedures, and inadequate time provided for a successful hand-off. These emphasize the importance of effective communication between healthcare workers.

# NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Silent language

Non-verbal behavior can:

1. Repeat verbal discourse
2. Substitute for verbal message
3. Complement the emotion
4. Accent the intended message
5. Contradict the statement

Body language

Eye contact

Professional appearance

Office décor

**You may Say it Best when  
you say Nothing at All**

# IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING

## Active Listening

Emotional involvement

Sensing needs of talker

Asking questions

Using all senses

Affording freedom and space to express

Builds Trust

Encourages positive health behavior /

Compliance

(Brown et al., 2020)



**LISTEN**

# Listening

*Defined: The act of hearing a message and communicating understanding*

- Shows that you understand what people mean, not just what they say.
- If you listen only to the words, you are not going to get the whole message.
- A majority of the message is conveyed nonverbally.

## Listening Effectively

- Be a role model for effective listening
- Help people understand that listening to a problem doesn't mean they are obligated to solve it
- Ask questions to clarify others' points of view
- Paraphrase to show that you are listening and to help you understand what is being said
- Seek out individuals who are shy or reluctant and encourage them to share their thoughts

# 5 different types of Listening

- 1. Biased Listening**
- 2. Sympathetic Listening**
- 3. Empathetic Listening**
- 4. Critical Listening**
- 5. Informational Listening**

# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- ✓ Recognize your own emotional state when communicating
- ✓ Attempt to understand and acknowledge the Receiver's perspective
- ✓ Questioning of information is not personal but  
fact gathering
- ✓ Be prepared for effective communication
- ✓ Graded assertiveness

## Effective Communicators

Engaged

Considerate

Good empathetic listeners

Aware of their communication style

Observe verbal and nonverbal of others

Confident

Clear and direct



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# THANK YOU / QUESTIONS ??

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