Recap of previous lecture

1. During ward rounds, a consultant gives strict instructions to interns about how to document patient notes. Which type of communication is this?

A. Upward communication

B. Downward communication

C. Horizontal communication

D. Diagonal communication

2. A medical student is presenting physically at a community health talk on malaria prevention. Which type of communication is MOST appropriate here?

A. Group communication

B. Mass communication

C. Public communication

D. Organizational communication

3. During a consultation, a medical student explains medication use to a patient, but the patient avoids eye contact, folds arms, and leans back. What is the most appropriate interpretation of these non-verbal cues?

A. The patient is relaxed and trusting

B. The patient is attentive and engaged

C. The patient may be resistant or uncomfortable with the discussion

D. The patient fully agrees with the information provided

4. A student nurse tells a patient recovering from surgery: *“We’ll ambulate you soon.”* The patient looks confused and asks, *“What do you mean?”*

Which verbal communication skill was poorly applied?

A. Using clear and simple language

B. Showing empathy

C. Giving constructive feedback

D. Active listening

Cont…

5. A doctor reassures a patient by saying: “You’ll be fine,” but avoids eye contact, fidgets, and speaks in a low, hesitant tone. What is the likely effect on the patient?

A. The patient feels confident because of the doctor’s words

B. The patient trusts the doctor more

C. The patient perceives mixed messages and may feel anxious

D. The patient ignores non-verbal cues and only trusts verbal reassurance

6. While interviewing a patient with chronic pain, a medical student frequently interrupts with medical advice before the patient finishes speaking. Which communication principle is being violated?

A. Providing constructive feedback

B. Active listening

C. Using appropriate tone of voice

D. Clarifying information

Styles of communication and effective communication

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EQUSAT

2026/2027

Learning objectives

- By the end of this session, students should be able to;
- Identify the four core communication styles
- Recognize the communication styles in self and others
- Learn strategies to communicate effectively even in challenging situations

Communication styles

- Communication styles are habitual patterns of how we interact and share information.
- They influence how we give and receive information
- Impacts patients safety , patient out comes,

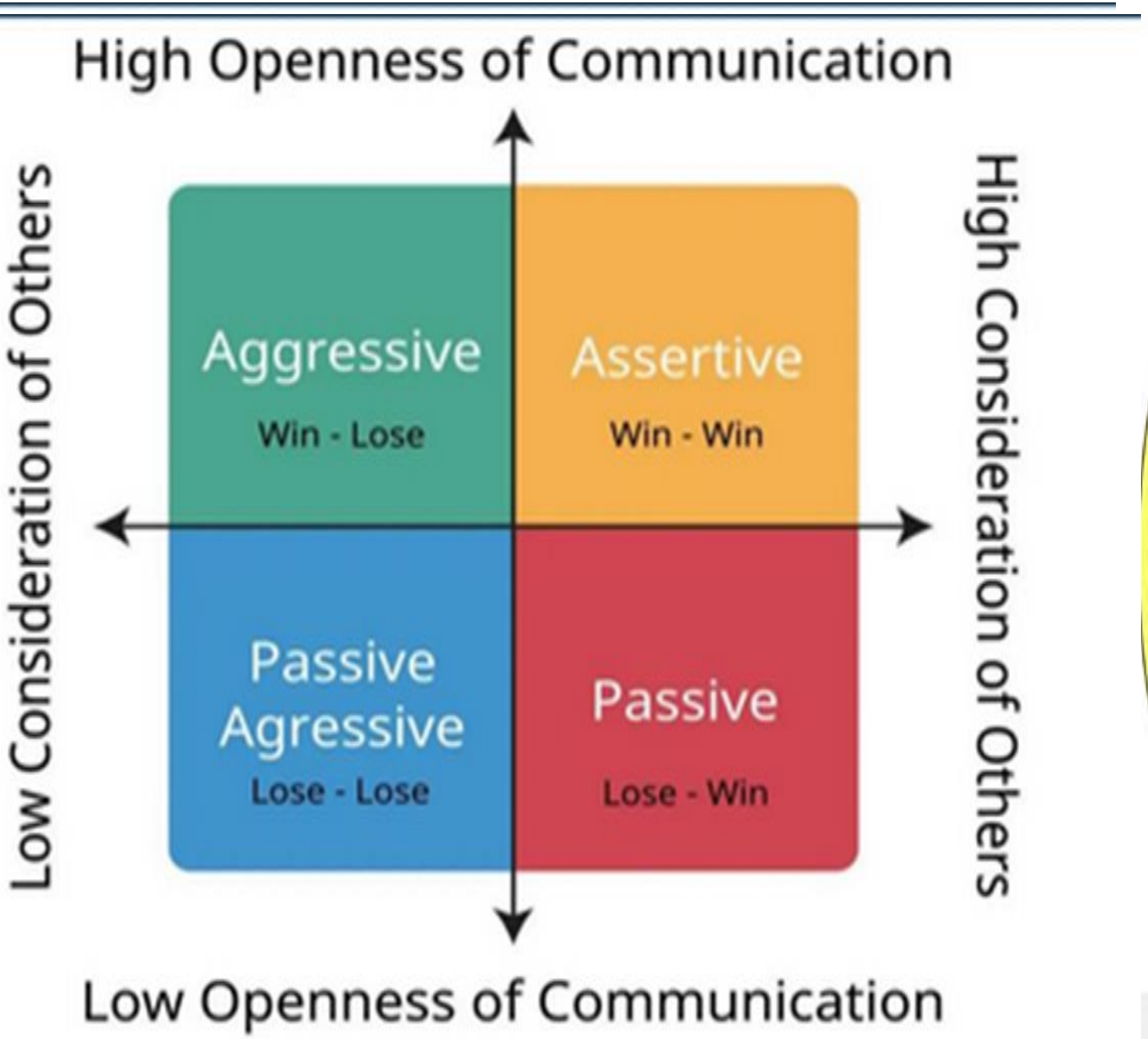
collaboration and teamwork



Styles of Communication

- Assertive
- Aggressive
- Passive
- Passive–Aggressive




High Openness of Communication
Low Consideration of Others
High Consideration of Others
Aggressive
Win - Lose
Assertive
Win - Win
Passive Agressive
Lose - Lose
Passive
Lose - Win
Low Openness of Communication


Your Needs
Aggressive
Assertive
Others' Needs
Passive

Assertive Communication

- Clearly state their feelings and opinion and advocate for their rights without violating the rights of others
- They have high self esteem
- Respect themselves and others
- Fosters collaboration
- Listens actively to others' view point
- Builds a positive work relationship
- Tend to use "I" statements to express their needs
- Willing to compromised to seek solution

Example: A nurse notices a potential medication error. They directly and respectfully approach the physician, stating their concern and advocating
patient safety.



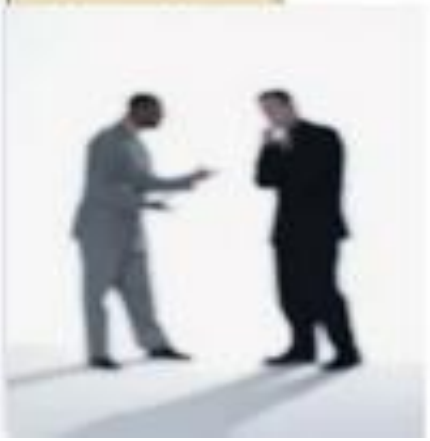




Assertive Communicators will...

- State needs and wants clearly, appropriately, and respectfully
- Express feelings clearly, appropriately, and respectfully
- Use "I" statements
- Communicate respect for others
- Listen well without interrupting

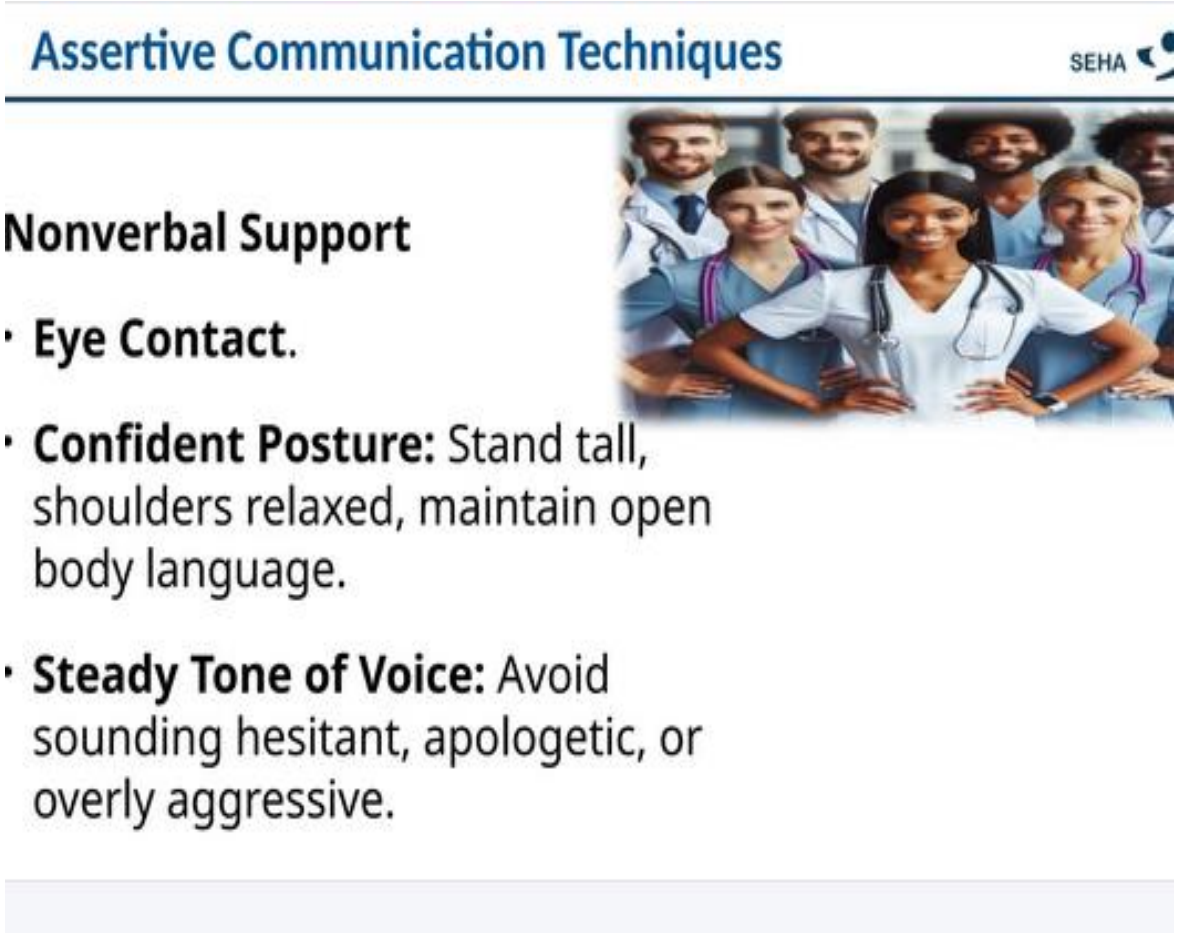
- Feel in control of self
  - have good eye contact
  - speak in a calm and clear tone of voice
- Have a relaxed body posture
- Feel connected to others
- Feel competent and in control
- Not allow others to abuse or manipulate them
- Stand up for their rights





Assertive Communication

- **Characteristics:**
- Clear, respectful, confident.
- Balances own needs with others'.
- **Advantages:**
- Builds trust and mutual respect.
- Reduces conflict and misunderstandings.
- **Disadvantages:**
- Requires self-awareness and practice.
- **Example:**
- A doctor telling a patient: *"I understand your concern, but I recommend starting treatment today for the best outcome."*



The impact of a pattern of assertive communication is ..... these individuals:

- Feel Connected to others
- Feel in control of their lives
- Are able to mature because they address issues and problems as they arise
- Create a respectful environment for others to grow and mature





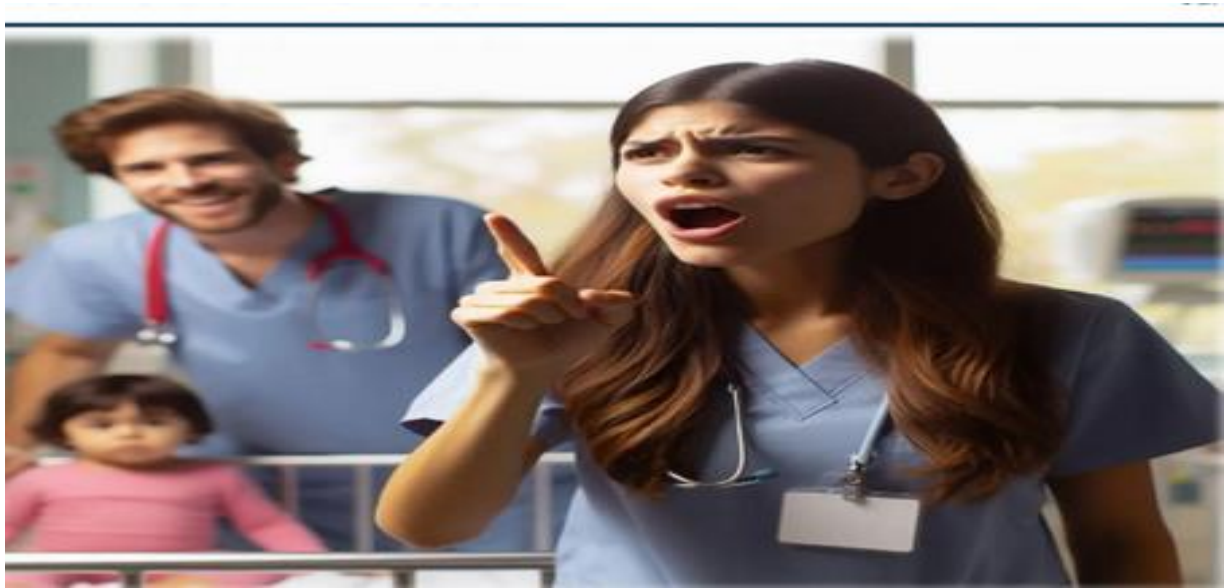
The Assertive communicator will say, believe, or behave in a wa, that says:



- "We are equally entitled to express ourselves respectfully to one another."
- "I am confident about who I am."
- "I realize I have choices in my life and I consider my options."
- "I speak clearly, honestly, and to the point."
- "I can't control others but I can control myself."
- "I place a high priority on having my rights respected."
- "I am responsible for getting my needs met in a respectful manner."
- "I respect the rights of others."
- "Nobody owes me anything unless they've agreed to give it to me."
- "I'm 100% responsible for my own happiness."

Aggressive Communication

- Individuals express their feelings and opinions and advocate for their needs in the way that violates the rights of others
- Typically verbally and/physically abusive
- Aggressive communication is born of low self-esteem (often caused by past physical and or emotion abuse), unhealed emotional wounds and feeling of powerlessness
- Disregards needs and professional inputs of others



Aggressive communicators will...



- Try to dominate others
- Use humiliation to control others
- Criticize, blame, or attack others
- Be very impulsive
- Have low frustration tolerance
- Speak in a loud, demanding, and overbearing voice
- Act threateningly and rudely
- Not listen well
- Interrupt frequently
- Use "you" statements
- Have piercing eye contact and an overbearing posture
- Become alienated from others
- Alienate others
- Generate fear and hatred in others
- Always blame others instead of owning their issues, and thus are unable to mature



Aggressive Communication cont…

- **Characteristics:**
- Forceful, dominating, sometimes disrespectful.
- Focuses only on own needs.
- Speak loudly, harshly
- Interrupting others
- Use of belittling language or insults esp those less experienced
- Making dismissive gestures ; eye rolling
- Blaming others for errors

- *Aggressive people seek to "win" in conflict situations by dominating or intimidating others.*
- *Such individuals are easily angered and have a low tolerance for frustration. They seem to believe that they should not have to experience frustration*

aggressive cont...

Advantages

- Gets results quickly in emergencies.

- **Disadvantages**
- Damages relationships.
- Creates fear and resentment.
- **Example:**
- A surgeon shouting at a nurse in the operating theatre.
- Belittling a New staff

Passive Communication

- Style of communication in which individuals have developed a pattern avoiding of expressing their opinions or feelings, protecting their rights
- A passive individual do not respond overtly to hurtful or anger inducing situations
- Prioritizing the perceived needs of others (colleagues, patients, supervisor) at the expense of one's professional input or wellbeing.
- Avoiding disagreements with physicians which can compromise care

Passive communication cont…

- Passive or nonassertive persons will not say what they really think out of fear that others may not agree
- Passive persons may see themselves as victims who are subject to the manipulation of others. It is this view that is damaging to their self-esteem.
- They tend to have a great deal of anxiety in relationships
- They worry about how others will respond to them and have a high need for approval.
- Accepting unfair workloads or difficult assignment without advocating for self
- Feeling un heard or unvalued in the health care team

Passive Communication cont…

- **Characteristics:**
- Avoids expressing needs or opinions.
- Prioritizes others over self.
- Tend to speak softly
- Expressing needs apologetically
- Exhibit poor eye contact or slumped body posture
- Allows others to infringe on their rights
- Internalized frustrations and burnout
- Difficulty in setting boundaries and declining unreasonable request

- **Advantages:**
- Prevents open conflict.
- **Disadvantages:**
- Leads to misunderstanding, burnout, or errors.
- Important issues may go unaddressed.
- **Example:**
- A medical intern silently accepting unfair workload without speaking up.

Impact of Passive Communication

BEHAVIORS

- Fail to assert for themselves
- Allow others to deliberately or inadvertently infringe on their rights
- Fail to express their
- Feelings, needs, or opinions
- Tend to speak softly or apologetically
- Exhibit poor eye contact and slumped body posture

FEELINGS

- Anxious because life seems out of their control
- Depressed because they feel stuck and hopeless
- Resentful (but are unaware of it) because their needs are not being met
- Confused because they ignore their own feelings
- Unable to mature because real issues are never addressed



Passive Communicator will say or feel…



- "I'm unable to stand up for my rights."
- "I don't know what my rights are."
- "I get stepped on by everyone."
- "I'm weak and unable to take care of myself."
- "People never consider my feelings."



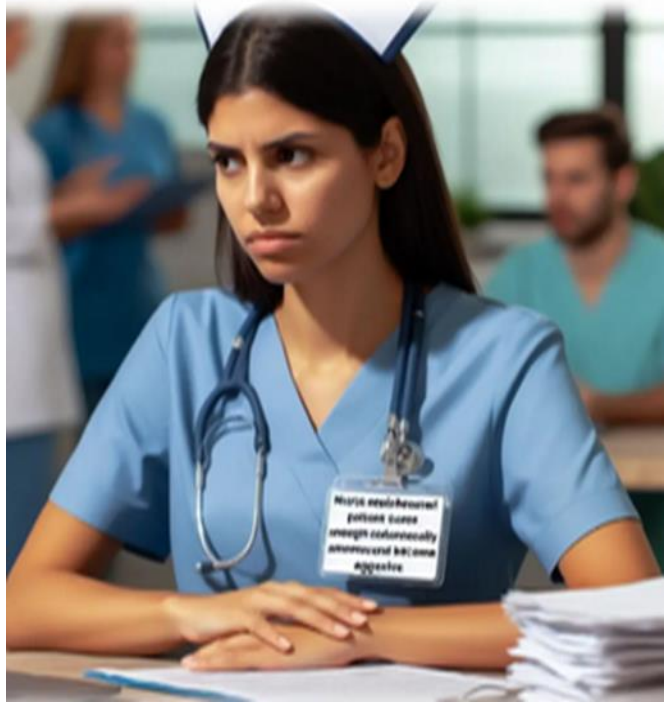


Passive style cont…

- They feel passive on the surface but aggressive under the surface
- POW’s (prisoner's of war);often communicate like this to deal with their lack of power
- They feel an incredible lack of power
- And while they maybe smiling on the outside, secretly they are trying to sabotage or make fun of the situation they are in

Passive–Aggressive Communication

- Involves indirectly expressing negativity or disagreement while maintaining a façade politeness agreement
- Its detrimental in a health care setting; creates confusion and undermines trust
- Making sarcastic remarks when a colleague suggests a different approach
- **Examples**
- Feigning forgetfulness for uncompleted work
- Feigning disagreement with patient care plan



Passive Aggressive Communicators...

- Mutter to themselves rather than confront the person or issue
- Have difficulty acknowledging their anger
- Use facial expressions that don't match how they feel - i.e., smiling when angry
- Use sarcasm
- Deny there is a problem
- Appear cooperative while purposely doing things to annoy and disrupt
- Use subtle sabotage to get even
- Become alienated from those around them
- Remain stuck in a position of powerlessness (like POWs)
- Discharge resentment while real issues are never addressed so they can't mature



Passive–Aggressive Communication cont…

- **Characteristics:**
- Indirect, uses sarcasm or subtle resistance.
- Appears passive but is resentful.
- Unclear communication that leaves room for misinterpretation
- Non verbal cues which contradicts the verbal message; saying yes with a sigh
- **Advantages:**
- Avoids direct confrontation.
- **Disadvantages:**
- Breeds mistrust and poor teamwork.

Passive Aggressive Communicator will say feel…



- "I'm weak and resentful, so I sabotage, frustrate, and disrupt."
- "I'm powerless to deal with you head on so I must use guerilla warfare."
- "I will appear cooperative but I'm not."



THE 4 BASIC COMMUNICATION STYLES

1



PASSIVE COMMUNICATION

- Avoid expression
- Not protecting rights
- Apologetic
- No self-defending

2



AGGRESSIVE COMMUNICATION

- Very expressive
- Violating other rights
- Verbally abusive
- Attack and dominate

3



ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Clear expression
- Advocate own rights
- Respectful
- Want to connect

4



PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE COMMUNICATION

- Act out indirectly
- Undermines others
- Resentful
- Fake cooperation

Style	Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages	Example
Assertive	Clear, respectful	Builds trust	Needs practice	Recommending treatment respectfully
Aggressive	Forceful, dominating	Quick results in crisis	Damages relationships	Surgeon shouting at nurse
Passive	Avoids expressing needs	Avoids conflict	Misunderstandings, burnout	Silent intern taking overload
Passive–Aggressive	Indirect, resistant	Avoids open conflict	Breeds mistrust	Nurse delaying task
Therapeutic	Empathetic, supportive	Patient trust, adherence	Time-consuming	Doctor reassuring patient

How To Identifying Your Own Style ?

Self-Reflection

- ✓ Think about past interactions.
- ✓ Notice your tendencies.
- ✓ Identify patterns.

Feedback

- ✓ Ask trusted colleagues.
- ✓ Openness to feedback.

Formal Assessments

- ✓ Online quizzes & tools.
- ✓ Personality assessments.







How To Recognizing Communication Styles in Others 2

Verbal Cues
- ✓ Word Choice.
- ✓ Tone of Voice.
- ✓ Sentence Structure.

Nonverbal Cues
- ✓ Body Language.
- ✓ Eye Contact.
- ✓ Physical Space.

Situational Cues
- ✓ Reactions to Conflict.
- ✓ Under Pressure.
- ✓ Giving & Receiving Feedback



Tips for Adapting to Different Styles

With Passive communicators: Encourage them to speak up, ask open-ended questions, Don't take it personally, Focus on the Issue and Avoid judgment.

With Aggressive communicators: Set clear boundaries, Don't Mirror Their Aggression, use calm and firm language, Active Listening, Focus on Facts, Not Emotions .

With Passive-Aggressive communicators: Focus on actions and solutions, avoid getting drawn into negativity, Focus on the Issue and Set Clear Expectations.

Assertive Communication Techniques

SEHA

Core Techniques

- **"I" Statements:** Focus on expressing your own thoughts and needs clearly.

Example: "I feel overwhelmed by my current workload..." instead of "You always give me too much work."

- **DESC Script:** A structured approach for addressing issues:

✓ **Describe** the situation objectively.

✓ **Express** how it impacts you and your concerns.

✓ **Specify** your preferred solution or desired outcome.

✓ **Consequences** (positive or negative) of different actions.



Assertive Communication Techniques

SEHA

Example: **Addressing Workload Concerns**

- **Describe**: "For the past three shifts, I've been assigned the heaviest patient load on the unit."
- **Express**: "I'm feeling exhausted and concerned that I can't provide the optimal level of care to all my patients. "
- **Specify**: "I would like to discuss a fairer way to distribute patient assignments."
- **Consequences**: "If we can find a more balanced system, I believe it will improve patient safety and reduce staff burnout."

Effective communication

- Effective communication takes place only when the listener/ receiver clearly understands the message that the speaker intended to send.
- Senders message must be delivered clearly
- Receiver must listen actively



Principals of communication

- Principals guide in forming messages, its style so that it becomes more effective to the target audience
- These principals are called the 7 C’s of communication



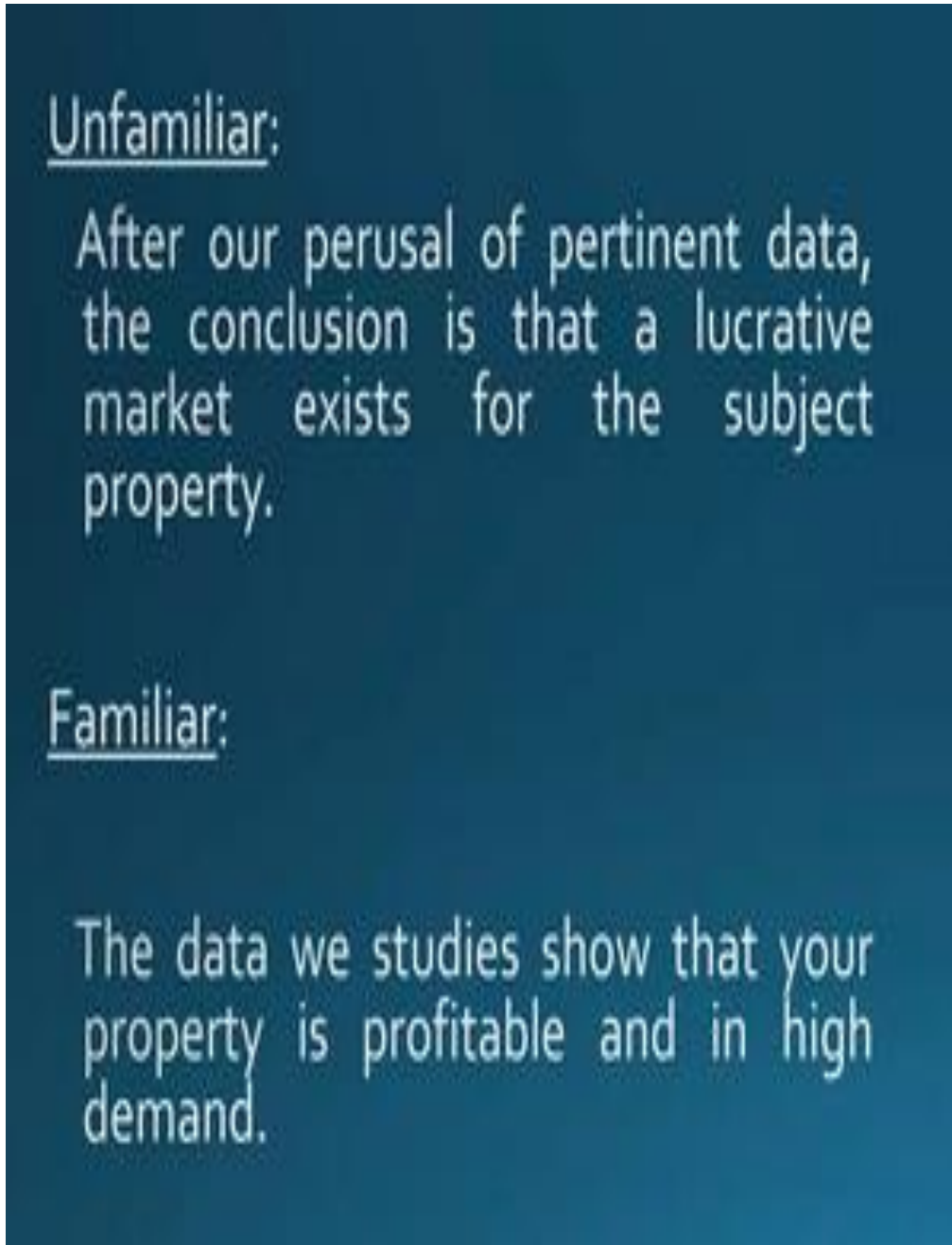


7 Cs of Communication

1. **Clarity:** Keep it simple and easy to understand.
2. **Conciseness:** Be brief and to the point.
3. **Coherence:** Ensure a logical flow of ideas.
4. **Consistency:** Align words with actions and past messages.
5. **Consideration:** Think about your audience's needs.
6. **Concreteness:** Add specific details for clarity.
7. **Courtesy:** Maintain a polite and respectful tone.

1. Clarity

- Clarity refers to the ability of a message or idea to be readily grasped by the audience
- Getting the meaning from your head to the head of your reader accurately is the purpose of clarity.
- Choose short familiar words
- Use simple language, avoid jargon and difficult vocabulary, and maintain overall message focused on the core idea
- Can include examples, illustrations and visual aids
- Instead of saying *“hypertension”* to a patient, say *“high blood pressure.”*



2. Conciseness

- Conciseness means expressing a message or idea using as few words as possible without losing the essence of the message
- Hence a concise message saves the time and expenses for both the parties
- Concise means someone should keep to the point and make it brief
- ‘filler words’ that can be deleted “for instance”

“kind of,” “you see”



How to achieve Conciseness?

- Avoid wordy expression.
- Include only relevant material.
- Avoid unnecessary repetition

Include only Relevant Information

- Always try to provide only relevant information to the receiver of the message.
- Stick to the purpose of message
- Avoid long introduction, unnecessary explanation etc.
- Get to the important point concisely.

3. Courtesy

- Knowing your audience allows you to use statements of courtesy; be aware of your message receiver.
- True courtesy involves being aware not only of the perspective of others, but also their feelings.
- Communication that is courteous regards the audience with respect and consideration.
- It entails speaking politely, demonstrating empathy
- Be sincere, tactful, thoughtful and appreciative
- Omit expressions that hurt, irritate, or act in a disrespectful or insulting manner
- Grant apology graciously

Courtesy cont…

- Although Applying socially accepted manners is a form of courtesy, rather it is politeness that grows out respect and concern for others.
- Courteous communication generates a special tone in their writing and speaking

Tactless, Blunt	More Tactful
Stupid letter; I can't understand	I should understand it, as there is no confusing word in this letter, could you please explain it once again..?
It's your fault, you did not properly read my latest e-mail	Sometimes my wording is not precise; let me try again

4. Correctness

- At the core of correctness is proper grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- However the message can have right grammar and punctuation but still insults.

Characteristics of correctness

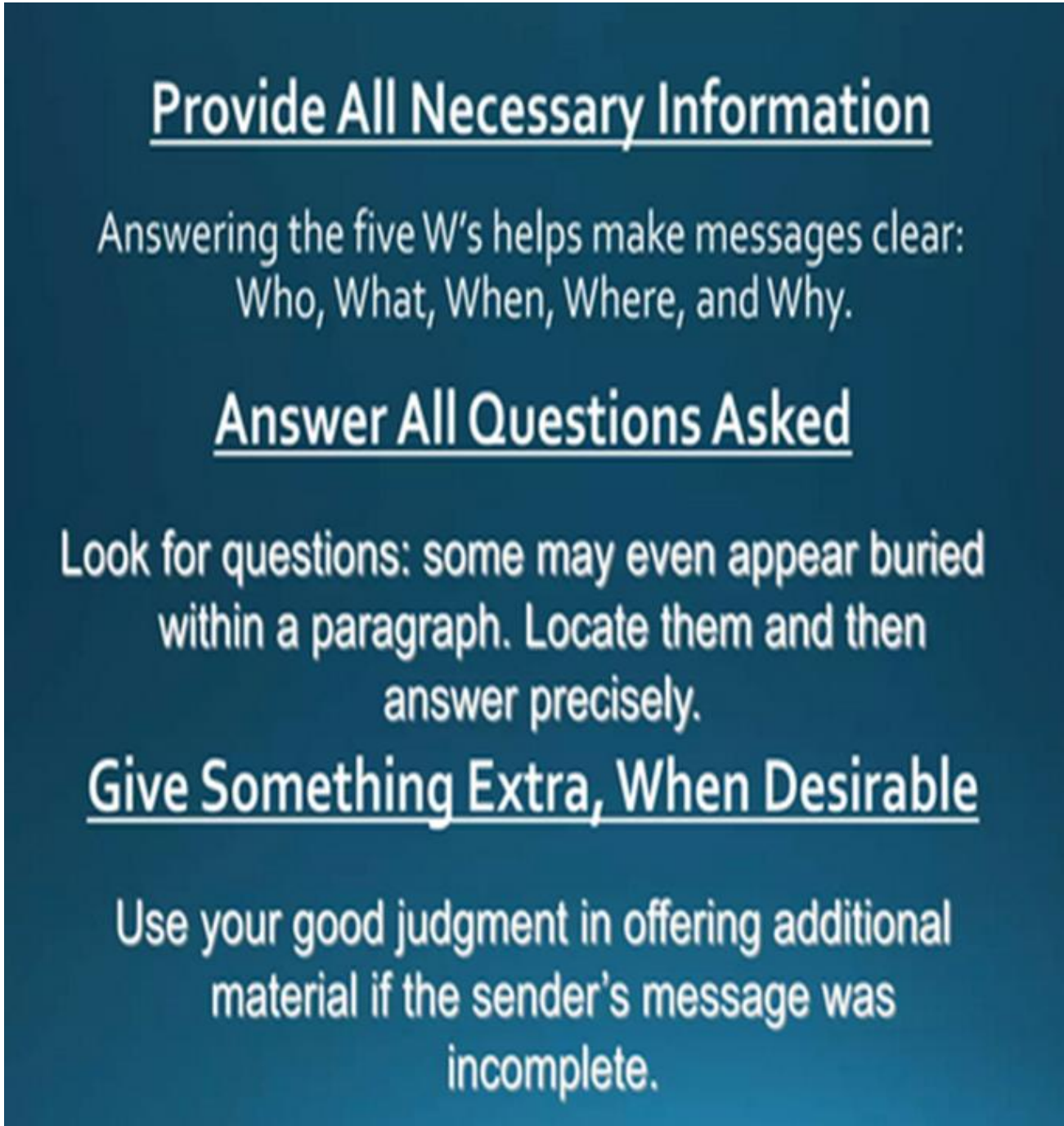
- Check for accuracy of facts, figures, and words
- Maintain acceptable handwriting
- Use the right level of language
- *Writing "Tbs amoxicillin 500mg TDS"*

instead of "give some antibiotics.



5. Completeness

- The message is complete when it contains all the facts the reader or listener needs to react
- Provide all necessary information
- Answer all questions asked
- Ensure that the message is well-organized and easy to follow.
- Give something extra when desirable



Example

Dr. Okello, patient John Mbabazi has a routine dental cleaning appointment tomorrow at 10:00 AM in Room 3 of the dental unit. He has severe tooth sensitivity, so please prepare the appropriate anesthesia and tools to minimize discomfort.

The five W's completes the answer in multidimensional aspects.

- WHO?
- WHAT?
- WHEN?
- WHERE?
- WHY?

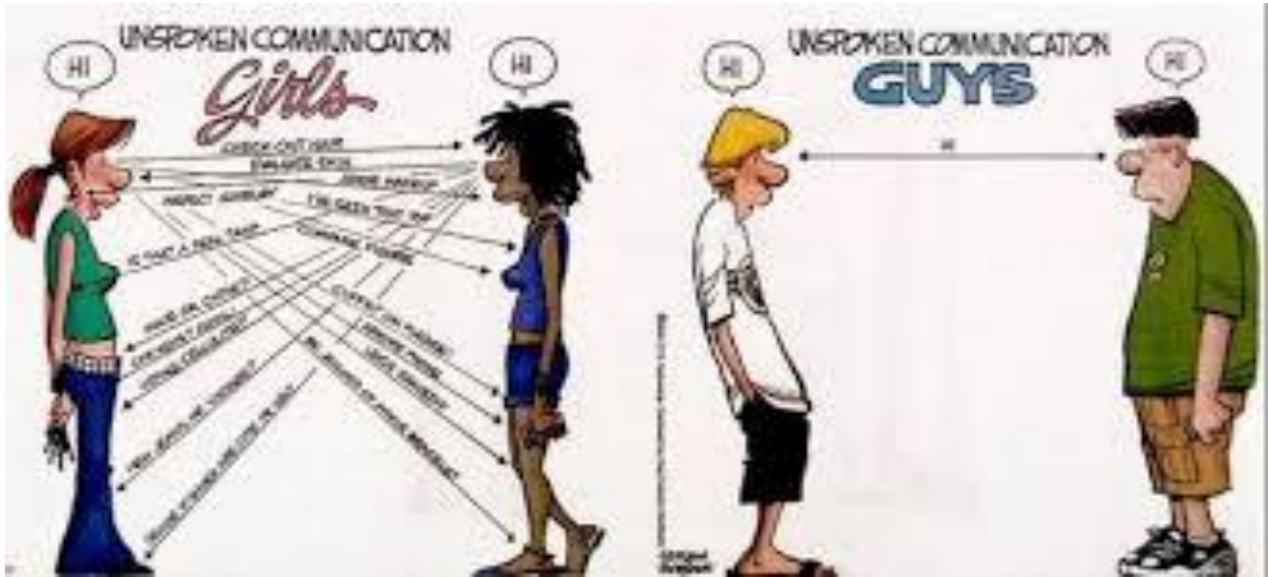


6. Consideration

- Consideration in communication entails recognizing the needs, interests, and concerns of the audience by placing oneself in their position
- Means preparing every message with the message receiver in mind, try to put your self in their place
- It involves tailoring the message to the audience's expectations and preferences, making it relevant and engaging
- Don’t not accuse or charge them without facts
- Emphasize positive, pleasant facts

7. Concreteness

- It means that message should be specific instead of general.
- Being specific, vivid and definite rather than being vague and general
- use specific figures and facts
- Say: *“Temperature is 39°C”* instead of *“Patient has a high fever.”*



Characteristics of Effective Communication

- Clear & concise
- Accurate & complete
- Respectful & empathetic
- Active listening
- Feedback-oriented
- Culturally sensitive

Ways to Make Communication Effective

- **Use the 7 Cs of Communication**

➢ Clarity, Conciseness, Concreteness, Correctness, Consideration, Completeness, Courtesy.

- **Active Listening**

➢ Pay full attention to the speaker.

➢ Use verbal and non-verbal cues (nodding, summarizing, reflecting back).

- **Appropriate Non-Verbal Communication**

➢ Maintain comfortable eye contact.

➢ Use facial expressions and gestures that match your words.

➢ Mind body posture (open, not defensive).

Cont...

- **Empathy and Respect**

➢Put yourself in the patient's or colleague's shoes.

➢Show understanding of feelings and concerns.

- **Feedback Mechanism**

➢Encourage questions.

➢Ask patients to repeat instructions to confirm understanding.

- **Simplify Language**

➢Avoid jargon when talking to patients.

➢Use simple explanations, analogies, or visuals.

- **Right Medium/Channel**

➢Choose the best channel (face-to-face, phone, memo, email) depending on urgency and context.

Cont…

- **Cultural Sensitivity**
- Respect cultural and religious differences in communication styles.
- Be mindful of words, gestures, or tones that may be offensive
- **Timeliness**
- Share information at the right time (e.g., emergency instructions must be quick and clear).
- **Positive Attitude and Courtesy**
- Use polite language, greetings, and thank-yous.
- Remain calm even in tense situations.

Barriers to Effective Communication

- Language differences
- Noise & distractions
- Emotions (stress, anger, anxiety)
- Prejudice & assumptions
- Lack of feedback
- Poor listening skills

Strategies to Improve Communication

- Use simple, clear language
- Maintain eye contact & open body language
- Practice **active listening**
- Ask & encourage questions
- Provide feedback and clarification
- Be aware of cultural differences

Communication in Healthcare

- Building patient trust
- Accurate history-taking
- Clear instructions & health education
- Team collaboration
- Reducing medical errors

Communication in Healthcare

- Ensuring patient safety, providing quality care, and fostering positive patient-provider relationships.
- Healthcare professionals should use plain language that patients can understand, avoiding complex medical terminology or jargon. Clear communication helps patients comprehend their conditions, treatment options, and instructions, enabling them to make informed decisions about their healthcare.
- Actively listening to patients involves giving them undivided attention, maintaining eye contact, and focusing on their concerns. It also involves asking open-ended questions and using reflective techniques to gain a deeper understanding of patients' needs, perspectives, and preferences

Cont…

- Demonstrating empathy and compassion is essential for establishing trust and rapport with patients. Healthcare providers should show understanding, validate patients' emotions, and acknowledge their fears or anxieties. This helps create a supportive and caring environment, leading to better patient satisfaction and outcomes.
- Non-verbal cues, including body language, facial expressions, and gestures, play a significant role in communication. Healthcare professionals should be aware of their own non-verbal signals and interpret those of patients accurately. Non-verbal communication can convey empathy, interest, and reassurance, strengthening the patient-provider relationship.
- Healthcare providers should respect and value patients' cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and practices. Being culturally sensitive involves understanding and accommodating different cultural norms, beliefs, and communication styles. It helps avoid misunderstandings, build trust, and deliver culturally appropriate care.

Cont…

- Effective communication extends to interprofessional collaboration among healthcare team members. Clear and timely communication between physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and other allied health professionals is vital for coordinating care, sharing information, and making informed decisions collectively.

- Effective communication requires ongoing evaluation and improvement. Healthcare professionals should seek feedback, reflect on their communication skills, and engage in training or professional development activities to enhance their communication competencies.


ANY
QUESTIONS