

Handout: Effective communication

Communication: A process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior

Merriam-Webster, 2008

Effective communication strategies :

1. Respect, empathy, understanding
2. Attention to non-verbal communication
3. Clear and concise verbal communication
4. Avoid “communication freezers” like unsolicited advice, judgement
5. Active listening - More on this in next touchpoint!

Exercise:

- Read the case narrative in the table below.
- The table provides examples of ineffective communication.
- Using the strategies for effective communication above and your own experience, can you think of ways to communicate more effectively in this case narrative?

Case narrative	Response	
	Ineffective communication	Effective communication
Your team member’s child is unwell. They come to you to inform you that they are taking leave tomorrow and ask for your help. They want to know if you could fill in for them on one task. They ask if you could call up a high-risk pregnant woman to make sure that she took all her prescribed medications this week and ask if she has any symptoms.	“Fine”	Can you think of ways to communicate more effectively?
	“You shouldn’t feed your child food from outside. Of course they’ll fall sick.”	
	You continue looking at your phone screen and say “Fine”	
	“Okay, fine, I can sort of try to do this.”	

Answer key: Effective communication

Case narrative	Response		
	Ineffective communication	Effective communication	
Your team member's child is unwell. They come to you to inform you that they are taking leave tomorrow and ask for your help. They want to know if you could fill in for them on one task. They ask if you could call up a high-risk pregnant woman to make sure that she took all her prescribed medications this week and ask if she has any symptoms.	"Fine"	You make eye contact with and lean towards your team member, "Of course. I hope your child feels well soon. Who is the patient?"	Respect, empathy, understanding
	"You shouldn't feed your child food from outside. Of course they'll fall sick."	You make eye contact with and lean towards your team member, "Of course. I hope your child feels well soon. Who is the patient?"	Avoid communication freezers
	You continue looking at your phone screen and say "Fine"	You make eye contact with and lean towards your team member , "Of course. I hope your child feels well soon. Who is the patient?"	Attention to non-verbal communication
	"Okay, fine, I can sort of try to do this."	You make eye contact with and lean towards your team member, " Of course. I hope your child feels well soon. Who is the patient? "	Clear, concise verbal communication