

Effective Communication

Interpersonal communication in the staffroom and community



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Links to learn more

Anything that has an UNDERLINE in this presentation is a LINK!

- This presentation is a resource for you to use back in your stage team to explore Communication with your colleagues
- The links will take you to activities we undertake today and to resources you can use later
- After providing some feedback you will receive a PDF copy of this presentation with active links

Session Summary

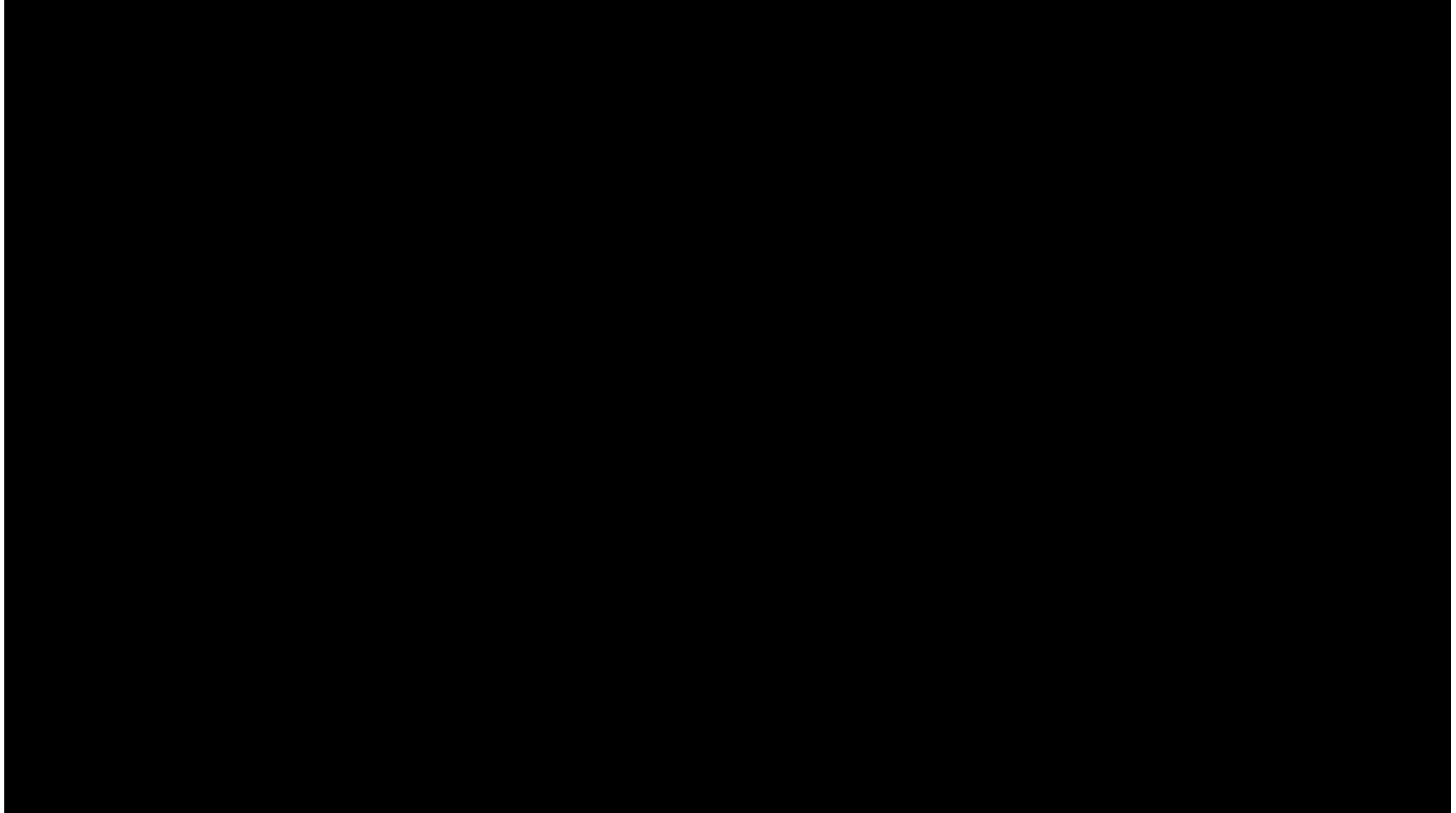
- The concept and importance of effective communication
- What are some key ingredients of great interpersonal communication
- What gets in the way
- Observe and practice some skills
- Have a look through a range of short communication games and activities to build skills in your learning community



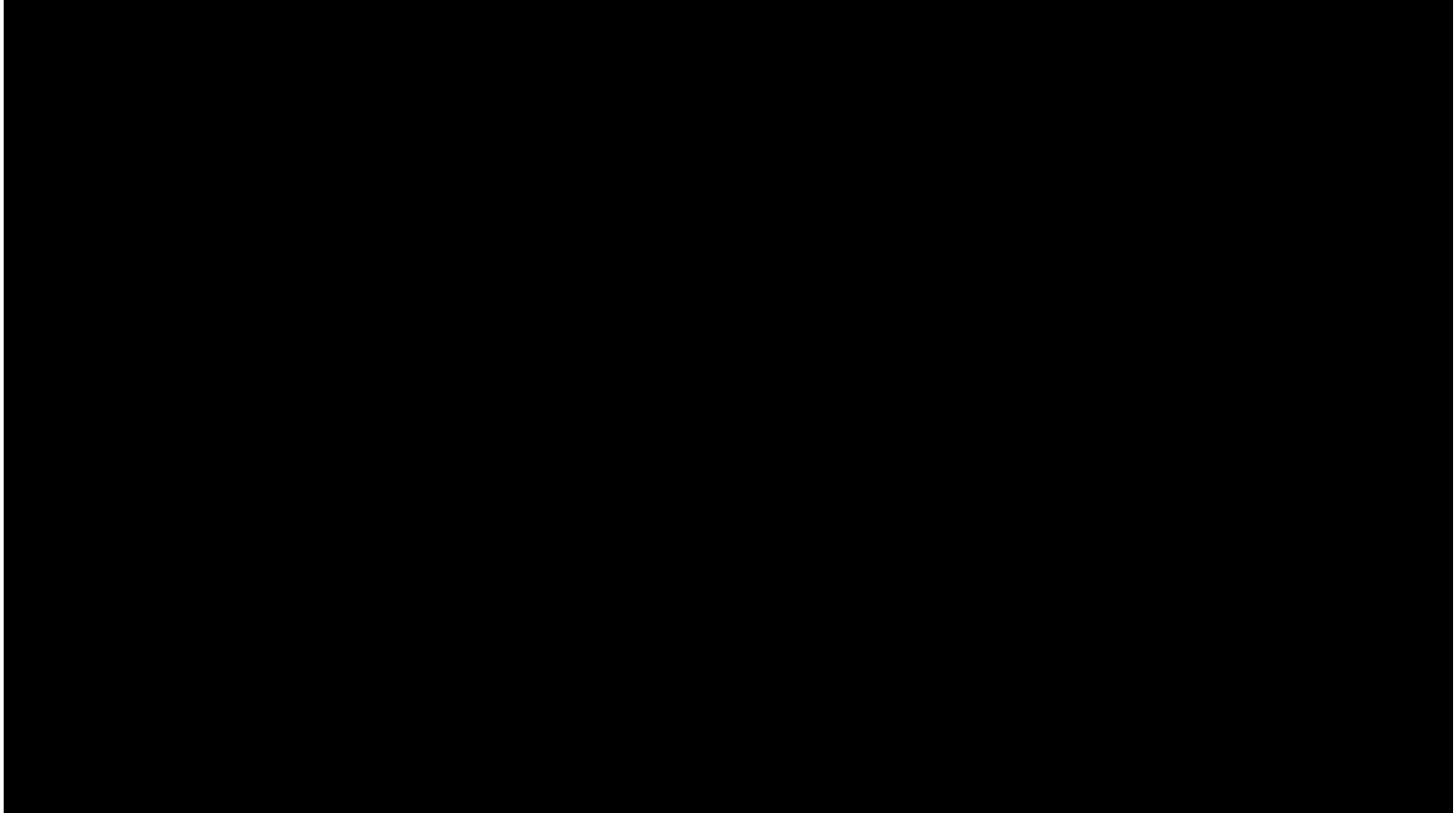
Role Play - helpful and unhelpful communication

- Best done in a group of 4 people – 3 can work too
- Roles – Encoder, Decoder 1, Decoder 2 and Observer
- (Easier version) Encoder – talk on a familiar topic for four minutes
- Decoder 1 – First 2 minutes – use a range of negative communication strategies – interrupt, make a point about yourself, throw in some quick solutions, use blockers, change topic, distractions etc.
- Decoder 2 – Second 2 minutes – use a range of active listening techniques
- Observer – keep time and record observations of both communication partners
- Swap roles for a new round
- (Applied Version) – Give Encoder a scenario that creates challenge in your workplace – Parental Complaint, Staffroom Conflict etc. – [an example is give here](#)

Unhelpful Communication

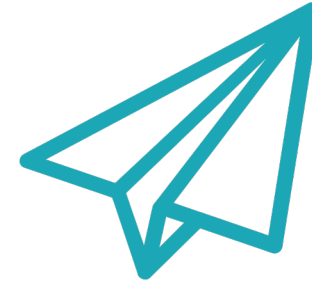
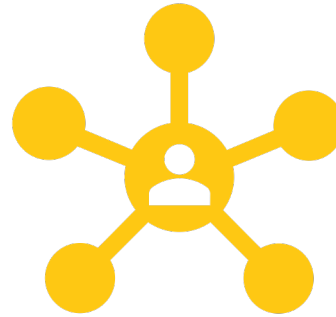


Helpful Communication

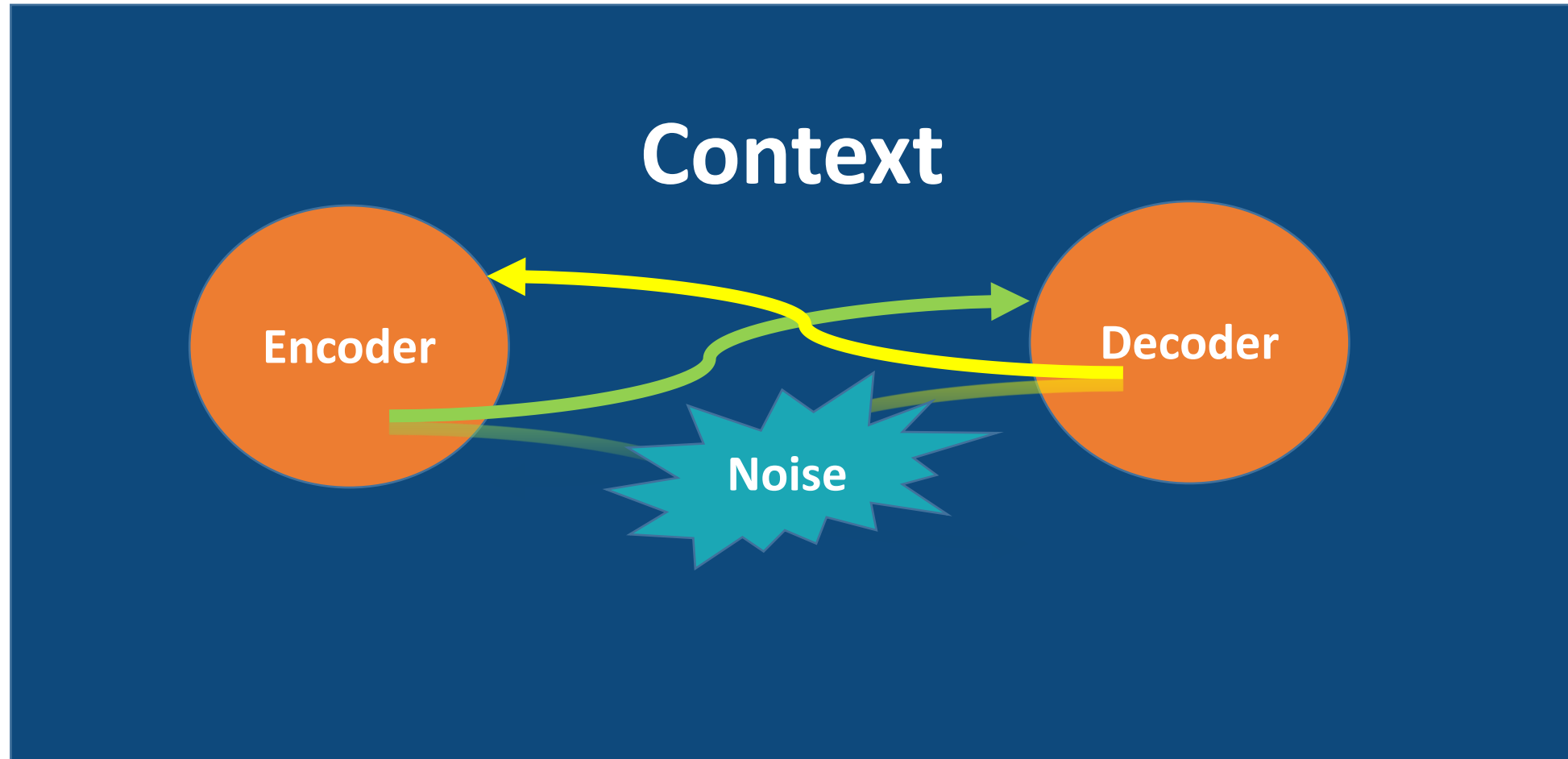


Why is Communication Important?

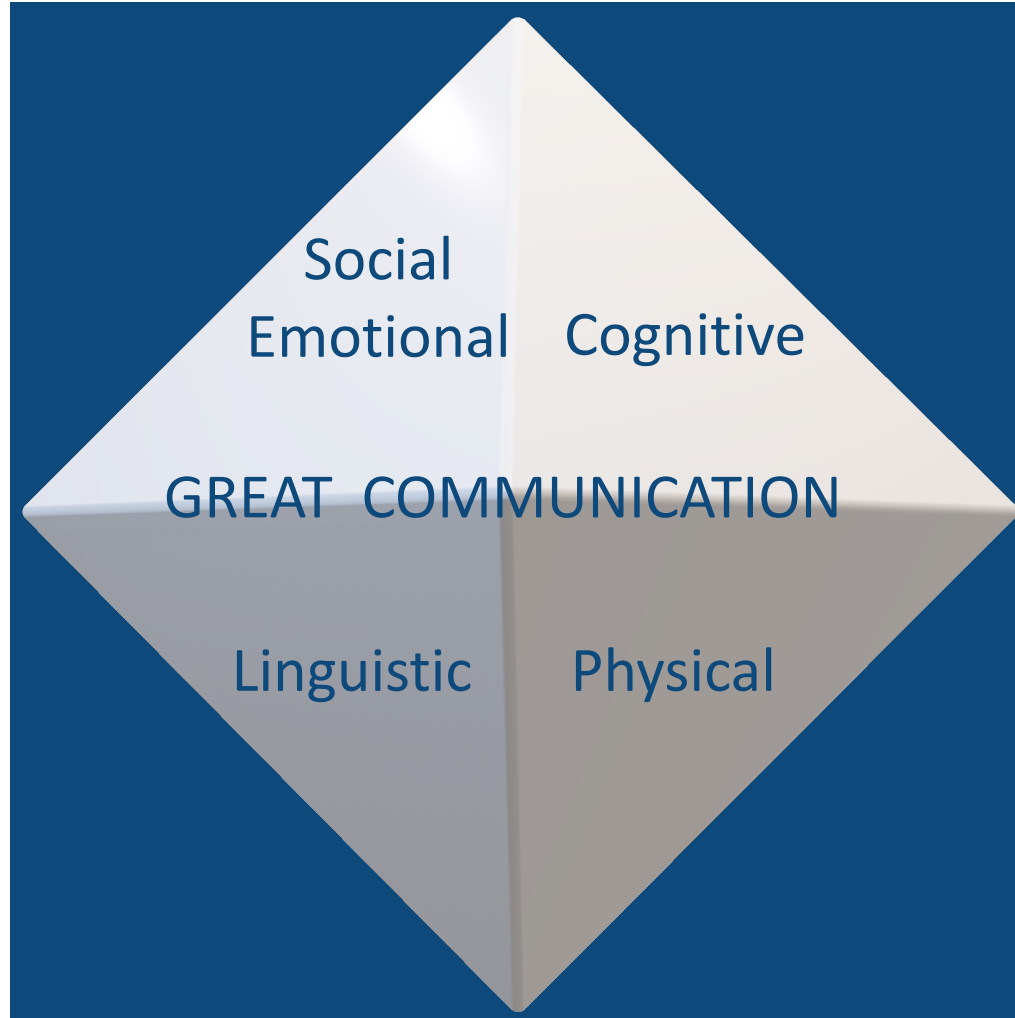
- Makes meaning clear
- Saves time
- Reduces anxiety
- Trust is built – this leads to quality relationships
- Conflict can be resolved
- Reputation



Process of Communication



A Framework for Communication Skills



Each quadrant is interconnected

If one or more quadrants is problematic, then mis-communication can easily occur

Warning - Skills are only part of the equation!

“The **most important** ingredient we put into any relationship is **not what we say** or **what we do**, but **what we are**.

And if our **words** and our **actions** come from superficial human relations techniques rather than from our **own inner core**, others will sense that duplicity.”

Stephen R. Covey

If you are worried about someone else's behavior - start by looking at your own

Mark Smith



[YouTube Clip - 5 Chairs – 5 Choices – Louise Evans](#)

Is it the right
time?

Is it the right
place?

Getting the context right

Is the message
clear in your
mind?

Are you open to
change your
mind?

Are you the best
person?

Is there any
distress?

“You have two ears and one mouth”



Video Analysis - The Power of Listening

- The importance of listening in communication around conflict
- When we listen, trust is built
- When we listen, we can encourage others to open their mind
- Listening is not natural or easy for us as humans
- Clearing your own mind is important – Listening to self first



William Ury

Highly respected international negotiator and mediator

Great listener tips

1. Pay attention
2. Use minimal encouragers
3. Paraphrase
4. Check in with feelings
5. Invite them to elaborate
6. Help them shift



If you are trying to help someone?

Avoid “giving **advice**”

Focus on “giving
support”



Empathy vs Sympathy

“Empathy fuels connection, and sympathy drives disconnection.”

Social Psychologist: Brene Brown

- Listening v Fixing
- The ‘At Least’ Trap





Communication Blockers

SELF FOCUS

- One-Upping
- Mind Reading
- Rehearsing
- Filtering
- Split attention
- Personifying



OTHER FOCUS

- Judging
- Advising
- Minimising
- Belittling
- 'Why' questioning
- Agreeing / disagreeing
- Closed Question
- Changing the Subject

Often it is what is NOT said that is the most important to HEAR!



Questioning tips ...

- Be mindful of **open or closed questioning** – both have benefits and risks – Ask yourself what is the best type to use in this situation?
- **Questions for checking understanding** – help define the problem or solution
- **Questions for getting specific detail** – narrow the problem
- **Solution focused questioning** – prompt the person for their preferred solution or give them a narrow range of solutions to choose from
- **What, When, How and Who** prompt open discussion

Putting it into Practice



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A test of your memory ...

- Sit with your hands clasped in your lap or on the desk
- Close your eyes
- Concentrate on the words I say and try to remember as many as you can!



Mental Health First Aid

- Many people find it difficult to communicate with a person who may be experiencing a mental illness
- The skills to do this can be learned at a Mental Health First Aid course
- MHFA Australia have a range of great online resources to aid in communication
- Guidelines for many different situations - <https://mhfa.com.au/mental-health-first-aid-guidelines>
- www.safercommunities.com.au - Mark
- www.beyondlimitslearningclinic.com.au - Alena



Recall the list of words!

30 seconds to write down as many of the words you can remember on a scrap of paper



Ted Talk – 10 Ways to have a Better Conversation

Good summary of the art of conversation
and communication



Celeste Headlee

Radio Host with a lot of conversation experience

Mind Tools Website - Communication Quiz



This assessment can give you some tips about your strengths and areas for improvement in the communication space

Communication Activities for Adults

- The following slides have information and links to a range of communication activities that suit adult participants
- Brief details are given on the slides- follow the link to see full instructions for each activity
- These can be used as a 'one off' activity in a staff meeting or other team collaboration or could be components of a more intensive communication workshop
- Many of these activities are appropriate for older children

These activities come from:

<https://positivepsychology.com/communication-games-and-activities/>

<https://www.thoughtco.com/nonverbal-communication-activities-1857230>

<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/team-building-communication.htm>

Guess That Emotion Game

Skills – Reading Emotions

Group Size - 2+

Resources – Cards with emotions (about 20 or more)

Time – 10 minutes +

Directions

- Place emotion cards face down
- Split group into two teams
- A participant from Team A takes a card and acts out the emotion - Team B are trying to guess
- Swap roles
- Debrief – how do we recognise the emotions of a conversation partner?

  LIST OF EMOTIONS  				
SAD	HAPPY	HURT	CONFIDENT	ENERGIZED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depressed • Desperate • Dejected • Heavy • Crushed • Disgusted • Upset • Sorrowful • Weepy • Frustrated • Dismayed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amused • Delighted • Glad • Pleased • Charmed • Grateful • Optimistic • Content • Joyful • Enthusiastic • Loving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jealous • Betrayed • Let down • Tender • Wounded • Impaired • Damaged • Criticized • Abused • Punished • Rejected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Brave • Assured • Certain • Prepared • Successful • Encouraged • Peaceful • Secure • Relaxed • Comforted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened • Motivated • Focused • Invigorated • Determined • Inspired • Creative • Healthy • Renewed • Vibrant • Refreshed
ANXIOUS	ANGRY	TIRED	STRONG	HELPED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afraid • Stressed • Troubled • Uncomfortable • Stunned • Mixed up • Unsure • Stuck • Hurt • Frozen • Desperate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annoyed • Agitated • Raging • Furious • Livid • Bitter • Fed up • Irritated • Mad • Critical • Resentful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indifferent • Bored • Drained • Exhausted • Dull • Weary • Powerless • Dejected • Listless • Burned out • Fatigued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic • Tenacious • Hardy • Sure • Certain • Unique • Secure • Empowered • Ambitious • Powerful • Confident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cherished • Befriended • Appreciated • Understood • Commended • Empowered • Accepted • Blessed • Healed • Loved • Saved

We have to move now ...

Skills – Expressing and detecting Emotions

Group Size – 2+

Resources – Emotion Cards (See link)

Time – 5-10 minutes

Directions

- Write down a list of common emotions on pieces of paper and put them in a jar. I.e. Happy, Distressed, Annoyed, Rushed etc.
- Each participant chooses a piece of paper from the jar
- Take it in turns to read the following line “We all need to gather our possessions and move to another building as soon as possible.” with the emotional tone of their assigned emotion
- See if others in the group can name the emotion.
- Debrief – how does body language, tone of voice, pitch, volume etc effect the message?

Memory Test

Skills – Listening and recall

Group Size – 2+

Resources – Word List

Time – 5 minutes

Directions

- Tell participants they are going to be tested on memory - Read out a list of random words (List suggestion at link) – read slowly with a 2 second gap between words - participants focus and try to remember - not allowed to write down the words
- Talk on a different topic for thirty seconds
- Ask participants to list as many words as they can
- What attention processes did participants use to recall the information given to them? Was it easy to remember? Would it be easier if they could take notes or use a recording device other than memory?

Clap and Follow

Skills – Listening and responding

Group Size – 2+

Resources – Nil

Time – 5 minutes

Directions

Tell your group that this is a game that requires their full concentration.

Share these instructions with them:

- When they hear one clap from the leader (you), tell them this means they should stand up.
- When they hear two claps from the leader, they should hop once in place.
- When they hear three claps, they should rub their belly.
- When they hear four claps, they should do a 360-degree turn on the spot.
- When they hear five claps, they should pat their head.

Begin the activity! Start with one clap, then two claps, and so on until you have given the group each instruction once.

Now, mix it up! Switch between the five different instructions and begin to pick up the pace. This is when the eliminations begin.

Continue until there is one clear winner.

Just Listen

Skills – Active Listening –
Summarise feelings of another

Group Size – 2+

Resources – Topic Cards

Time – 15 minutes

Directions

- Create a list of eight topics – see instructions at link – non-controversial topics best – make up topic cards
- Pair participants – one participant picks a card and talks about how they feel about the topic for 3 minutes
- Listener does not interrupt or speak until end of three minutes – spends one-minute summarising what they have heard
- Swap roles and repeat
- Debrief in large group – what active listening processes were most effective?

Wordless Acting

Skills – Body Language, tone and other aspects of voice

Group Size – 2+

Resources – Script (See Link)

Time – 10 minutes

Directions

- Pair your participants and assign a Role A and Role B
- Give them each a copy of the lines in the instructions at the link
- Role B person is also given an emotional distraction – i.e. in a rush, feeling guilty, feeling excited
- After reading through lines see if Role A can guess the emotional distraction
- Swap Roles

Listen and Draw

Skills – Paying attention, giving/ following instructions (Active Listening)

Group Size - 3+

Resources – Pen Paper

Time – 5 minutes

Directions

- One leader and a group of participants
- Leader gives a series of instructions for participants to draw on their piece of paper i.e. Draw a straight line through the middle of your paper, now draw a circle in the middle of the line, etc. (see link for ideas)
- Participants draw their interpretation of the instructions
- After 5 or 6 instructions compare the different drawings
- Same instructions – different results – discuss together why this is so – what could help the communication of these instructions to get everyone on the same page? Collaboration, clarifying questions ...

Communication Origami

Skills – Paying attention, giving/ following instructions (Active Listening)

Group Size - 3+

Resources – Paper, scissors

Time – 5 minutes

Directions

- Like Listen and Draw – instructions are now given as cuts and folds in sheet of paper – same issue arises – each participant will interpret the instructions differently and create a different product
- Variation – with eyes closed – what we see helps us establish meaning (we hear with our eyes too)

Stop Listening

Skills – Impact of blocking communication – active listening

Group Size – 4+

Resources – Nil

Time – 10-15 minutes

Directions

- Split participants into two groups – Speakers and Listeners
- Speakers come up with a topic of interest to talk about (something they are passionate about)
- Listeners are taken aside and instructed to cease active listening after about 30 seconds – listener instructed to show behavior of disinterest in body language and responses
- One speaker paired with one listener – speaker talks on topic of interest for a few minutes (until they notice the active disinterest shown by listener)
- Debrief – how did it feel for speaker after 30 seconds?

Activities - OPEN / CLOSED Questioning

There are few different variations of this type of communication game:

GUESSING GAME - Have a person in a group pick an object in the room and others ask questions to find out what the object is – person can only respond with Yes or No to questions asked

YES / NO CHALLENGE – In pairs – one questioner one responder – questioner asks questions and responder tries to answer always with YES / NO – Questioner needs to ask good OPEN QUESTIONS to prevent responder from making a YES / NO response

Telephone Exercise

Skills – Listening and repeating a message – impact of ‘noise’ that dilutes and changes a communication

Group Size – 5 or more

Resources – Nil

Time – a few minutes

Directions

- A good activity to demonstrate that messages get lost in repetition - rumors or gossip work like this – regardless of how carefully we listen, our interpretation is usually different to the original message
- Participants make a line and a message is passed down the line verbally from one to the next (whisper the message in the ear of next participant)
- Once the message has been passed down the line the final person to receive the message compares what they heard compared to the original message
- Variation – make it a physical action for a fun alternative

Listener and Talker

Skills – Active Listening,
Responding with Support

Group Size – 2 +

Resources – Nil

Time – 20 minutes

Directions

- Split group into Talkers and Listeners
- Talkers are to talk for a few minutes on the topic “My ideal Holiday”
- Listeners use active listening to gather information from the talker – then summarises what they have heard and give a reasoned suggestion about possible holiday destination for the talker to consider
- Switch roles and repeat
- Debrief – what were effective active listening techniques? After using active listening were the listeners able to influence and support the encoders to find a good holiday plan!

Card Pieces Activity

Skills – Negotiation, Problem Solving

Group Size - 6+

Resources – Card Deck, Scissors

Time – 10-15 minutes

Directions

- Use 4-6 cards per person
- Cut each card in quarters (Diagonally)
- Mix up pieces and distribute equally to participants
- Give individuals 2-3 minutes to sort their card pieces and determine what they need to collect to get complete cards - and think of strategies as to how to achieve this
- Give group 5 minutes to work together to put strategies in place to achieve the goal – most complete cards
- Debrief activity – what communication processes occurred, what were successful strategies, what role did empathy or active listening play?

Make a team

Skills – Problem solving through communication

Group Size – 4+

Resources – Nil

Time – 15 minutes

Directions

- Prepare a list of common human attributes – could be physical, social, family or other common attributes
- Call out an attribute and get group to form sub-groups with commonality in the attribute – i.e. Mother was born overseas – forms two groups. An attribute like star sign would create more groups
- Play through 3-5 rounds
- Debrief – what communication strategies were helpful in completing the task? Consider any non-verbal strategies or ways of working together to get the task done.

The Elephant List

Skills – Broaching tricky topics, action plans

Group Size – 2+

Resources – Sticky notes or sheets of paper

Time – longer – 30+ minutes

Directions

- High trust in team required in this one – take care in managing topics that might come up
- Less of a game, more team-building or planning activity
- Participants are given three sticky notes and asked to add three ideas to sheets – things that are not addressed in the workplace / community / team
- Facilitator and team categorises items into Control, Influence or Accept (see detailed instructions at link)
- Ignore Accept Elephants
- Discuss Control or Influence Elephants in open conversation – solution focused questioning used by facilitator to move discussions to a plan for controlling or influencing the Elephant Ideas!

Power of Body Language

Skills – Non-verbal communication,
Listening and responding

Group Size– 2+

Resources – Nil

Time –5 Minutes

Directions

- Tell participants you are going to give them instructions to follow
- Call out instructions and do action required (see list at Link)
- Final instruction is given but action modelled is incongruent
- Most people will do the action, not follow the verbal instruction
- Debrief – what is the power of body language – this could lead to a conversation about ‘mirroring’ how we can use open body language to get a message across or reinforce understanding

Silent Movie

Skills – Body language /
Nonverbal Communication

Group Size – 8-10+

Resources – Instructions (At
link)

Time –30 minutes

Directions

- Break participants into smaller groups of 4-5 people
- Each group must develop a silent movie scenario (see instructions in link for detail)
- Groups take turns acting out their Silent Movie
- Other groups try to describe the story after they have watched it acted out
- Debrief – Do we need words to say what is happening? What limits are there to establishing meaning without words?

Stack the Deck

Skills – Nonverbal communication, problem solving

Resources – Playing Cards, Blindfolds

Time – 10 minutes (Adding blindfold will take longer)

Directions

- Participants are given a playing card and asked to keep it a secret
- Participants are instructed to not speak during activity
- Challenge is for group to arrange themselves in different suits on their cards – four groups
- Make it harder – add blindfolds to participants
- A second round where each group must arrange in number order from cards can be added

Square Talk

Skills – Group problem solving through communication

Group Size – 5+ in groups of 5

Resources – Rope (long), Blindfolds

Time – 25 minutes

Directions

- See link for instruction details
- Groups must make a rope pattern together while blindfolded. Up to 15 minutes to get this done
- Debrief with questions

Questions

1. Do you feel as a group you communicated effectively?
2. During the Activity, what communication skills did you use effectively?
3. During the activity, what communication skills could you have used to improve performance?
4. How important is communication in the workplace? Why?
5. What key points have you learned about communication from this activity, that you wish to apply in the workplace?

Key References in this presentation

- How to listen so people will open up to you – Youtube video by Julia Kristina - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KSEwNgj5X4>
- <https://positivepsychology.com/communication-games-and-activities/>
- <https://www.thoughtco.com/nonverbal-communication-activities-1857230>
- <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/team-building-communication.htm>
- <https://plentifun.com/listening-games-for-adults>
- <https://mhfa.com.au/courses>
- <https://www.edutopia.org/article/teaching-communication-skills>



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Thank
You

