Effective Communication Strategies for Pharmacists and Trainees

Anita Cleven, PharmD
Director of Experiential Education, Assistant Professor

David Fuentes, PharmD, BCPP, BCCT
Assistant Dean for Academics and Assessment, Associate Professor

Learning Objectives

1. Identify common nonverbal mistakes pharmacy professionals make
2. Explain the importance of listening in successful communication
3. Distinguish effective from non-effective communication styles
4. Apply fundamental practices of emotional intelligence to enhance communication gains
5. Use working styles and individual strengths to provide effective and appropriate feedback

The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

George Bernard Shaw

Communication — the act of communicating: the process of conveying thoughts, feelings, or information to another person or persons through the use of words, gestures, or various other techniques.
Pre-test questions
1. When meeting with a new colleague or client, you notice that they have their arms crossed in front of their body, signaling to you (select all that apply):
   a. To disengage and come back later because this does not seem like a good time
   b. That they might be cold and you might survey other communication signals
   c. The individual is thinking deeply and concentrating on what you are saying
   d. The individual does not like you and you will need a mediator to talk to the person

Pre-test questions
2. Active listening can be encouraged by (select all that apply):
   a. Concentrating on the speaker’s words
   b. Staying focused by removing as many distractions as possible
   c. Listening for the unspoken as well as the spoken
   d. Making comfortable eye contact
Pre-test questions

3. An effective communicator ensures congruence between verbal, vocal, and ________parts of a message (fill in the blank)
   a. Visual
   b. Structural
   c. Tonal
   d. Developmental
   e. Symbolic

Pre-test questions

4. Why is having a solid understanding of your own learning style(s) and personality preferences beneficial when communicating? (select all that apply)
   a. Helps tailor your care to best meet others’ needs
   b. Ensures consistency and treating everyone identically
   c. Helps maintain rapport with others
   d. Ensures accuracy in conveying your message

Pre-test questions

5. What is an appropriate communication strategy to deliver the newest drug-related information to your patient, Mike, who is highly analytical? (select all that apply)
   a. Providing a warm friendly environment while relaying information in a detailed manner
   b. Preparing your information in advance and providing data and facts while keeping emotions to a minimum
   c. Sharing all the side effects and getting right down to the action
   d. Begin with asking Mike his thoughts on the new drug, give him time to think then present the information in a slow, detailed, and customized manner
**Case Scenario: Communication Issues?**

During a meeting, 5 executive team members are discussing a new proposal for a clinical service initiated by one of the meeting participants. While in discussion, two of the participants are talking to each other, and the team quickly moves on without seeking input from the other 3 members. At that moment a 6th member joins the meeting and then the entire conversation is reviewed to get that person caught up.

The late individual chimes in on the idea and the other three participants attempt to chime in and are stopped/cut short by the meeting leader because "we have to move ahead with the agenda".

Depending on the issue discussed, this pattern occurs across the 6 team members.

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**Importance of Communication in Pharmacy**

- **Better Patient Care**
  - Understand the needs of your patient
  - Successfully educate patient

- **Better Relationships**
  - Trust
  - Improved Outcomes
  - Increased Satisfaction

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**COMMUNICATION**

The imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.

- Verbal
- Nonverbal
- Visual
  - Oral
  - Written
  - Physical
  - Paralanguage
Three V's of Communication – Dr. Albert Mehrabian

93% of communication is nonverbal

Verbal 7%
Vocal 38%
Visual 50%

Nonverbal mistakes made by pharmacy professionals

Verbal
Oral Written

Nonverbal
Physical Paralanguage

Visual

My words came out fine!
They were processed incorrectly by your brain!!!
Processing Information

- variety of influencers
  - oral, written, visual
- knowledge on a topic
  - attitude, knowledge and skills
- differences in backgrounds
  - emotional reactions

MESSAGES

- SENDER – what you mean
- MESSAGE – what you say
- RECEIVER – interpret the message
- FEEDBACK – response

Emotional Intelligence and how they drive our responses

“...The capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.”

- Primary senses enter here
- Emotional center (subcortex)
- Rational center (neocortex)

Requires effective communication between the rational part of the brain and emotional part

Goleman’s Emotional Competency Domains

- PERSONAL: how we manage ourselves
  - Self-Awareness
  - Self-Regulation
  - Motivation

- SOCIAL: how we handle relationships
  - Empathy
  - Social skills
He did not wait to hear what I had to say. Maybe he thinks I am not taking my medicine...

Patient

Oh man what was that? I don’t think he wanted to listen to what I had to say...

Pharmacist

Listening

- Ties into our own personal thoughts
- Stay focused, remove distractions
- Control your hot buttons
- Concentrate on what speaker is saying as opposed to thinking ahead
- Listen for the unspoken as well as the spoken
- Interactive process
- Open body language and comfortable eye contact
- Pause to organize thoughts and consider how you will respond
- Ask questions

Active Listening

Emotional Intelligence

Communication Styles and Action

Styles

- Passive
- Aggressive
- Passive-aggressive
- Combination

What to do!

- Specific
- Summarize
- Adjust your methods

Best Practice
<table>
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<tr>
<th>RELATER</th>
<th>EXPRESSER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• They like positive attention, to be helpful and to regarded warmly&lt;br&gt;• Patient, reliable, steady, relaxed, predictable, modest&lt;br&gt;Ask: Why? (the personal non-goal question)</td>
<td>• They get excited&lt;br&gt;• Magnetic, enthusiastic, friendly, demonstrative, expressive&lt;br&gt;Ask: Who? (the personal dominant question)</td>
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<th>ANALYZER</th>
<th>DRIVER</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Seek lot of data, ask many questions and behave methodically and systematically&lt;br&gt;• Dependent, neat, perfectionistic, careful, compliant&lt;br&gt;Ask: How? (the technical analytical question)</td>
<td>• Like their own way, are decisive, and have strong viewpoints&lt;br&gt;• Ambitious, forceful, strong-willed, independent, goal-oriented&lt;br&gt;Ask: What? (the results-oriented question)</td>
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**Think-Pair-Share Activity**

How would you adjust your communication style to effectively communicate with the styles found below?

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<tr>
<th>Relater</th>
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<th>Analyzer</th>
<th>Driver</th>
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**Introvert (I)** draw energy from inside. More likely to keep thoughts to one's self, focus on depth of concentration vs. **Extroverted (E)** draw energy from outer world. More likely to think out loud focus on the breadth of interest.

**Sensing (S)** vs **Intuition (I)**

**Sensing (S)** gather info. primarily through the five senses, are practical and oriented to the present. Are good at gathering detailed info. focus on reliance of facts vs. **Intuitive (N)** gather info. through intuition and gut-level feelings, are oriented toward the future. Are good at seeing relationships and patterns, focus on grasping possibilities.

**Thinking (T)** vs **Feeling (F)**

**Thinking (T)** make decisions in a logical analytical and objective manner. Prefer to use head over heart. Focus is on logic and analysis vs. **Feeling (F)** make decisions based on how it will affect others. Value driven. Prefer to use heart over head. Focus on warmth and sympathy.

**Judging (J)** vs **Perceiving (P)**

**Judging (J)** prefer planned and organized approach, are decisive. Focus on organization vs. **Perceiving (P)** prefer to be more spontaneous and flexible, more process oriented, may delay decision-making. Focus on adaptability.
Identifying Micro-Expressions

Micro-Expressions = Body Language + Facial Expressions + Speech + Social Comparison + Individual Relationship

Barriers to Effective Communication - PEPSLO

- Physical Environment
- Psychological
- Semantic and Language
- Organizational

How to Overcome Barriers (PEPSLO)

- Make yourself available
- Eliminate environmental distractors
- Use appropriate body language
- Ensure you understand
- Repeat information using various techniques (e.g. oral, written & visual)
- Educate and understand policies and procedures of your institution
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Key takeaways

• Effective communication is fundamental in providing effective patient care
• 93% of communication is nonverbal
• Verbal, vocal, and visual parts of a message should be congruent
• Assertive communication requires listening to what is actually being said, communicating your own needs, understanding your own emotional triggers, not taking messages or behaviors personally
• Identify barriers which may inhibit effective communication

Post-test questions

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What questions do you have?

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