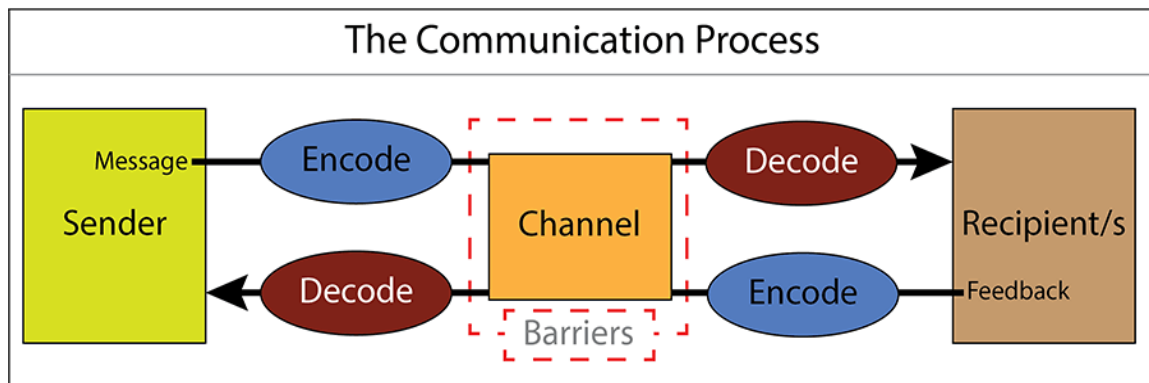


Teamworking skills; Communicating Effectively in Groups – by Nikolina Dodlek

Effective teamwork and group communication are essential for building a successful, compassionate, collaborative and supportive team.

Communication

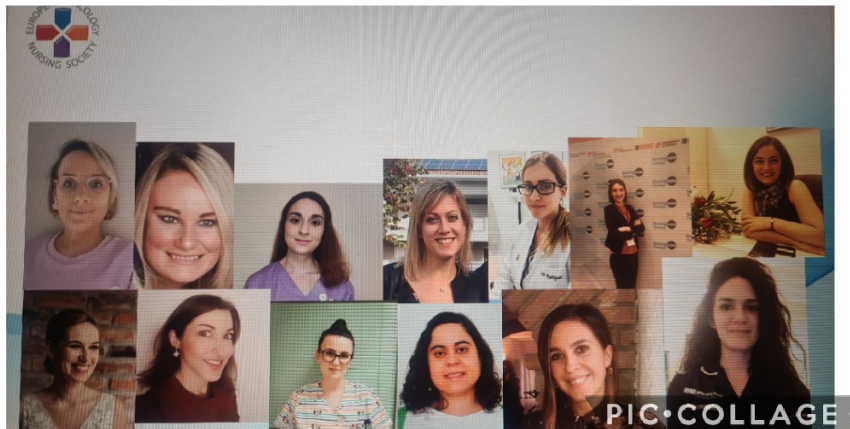
Communication is the foundation of good teamwork. Everything begins and ends with good communication. It is very common in our society and lifestyle to have taken-for-granted notions of communication. Instead, think about communication as a challenge. Two people may read very different things into a choice of words and/or body language. Written communication, which is so common today, is easy for the sender, but much more complex for the recipient to interpret. It is possible that neither will have quite the same understanding as the sender.



Choosing an appropriate communication channel is vital for effective communication. For example, complex, technical information is easier to share via a printed document than a spoken message. Written communication is also useful as a way of recording what has been said, for example by taking minutes in a meeting. So it is a good thing to do, especially in larger groups to reach out for *feedback* from the recipient(s). This is to ensure that the message is understood and you can attempt to correct any misunderstanding or confusion, as well as remind yourself about the target audience. Remember, you can always ask!

Group development and decision making

Groups who come together through socialising develop norms and roles. The concept of group decision making is based on the received wisdom that 'two heads are better than one'. This means that when decisions are taken jointly, the expertise or experience of each member could be capitalised upon to reach an optimum solution. However, there are some decision-making traps that groups can fall into, whilst also developing better practice for making good group decisions. These traps can include the fear of upsetting the balance, relying on first impressions, not framing the question properly or refusing to leave your "echo chamber". With the right strategy and guidance, you can lead your group to make the right decisions for your community.



Conflict, difference, and diversity

(problem-solving, listening, critical thinking)

Groups can have a good “fight” but the key is to choose the right words in a dispute, as well as knowing how to negotiate with others when things get difficult. Differences in opinion and diversity are so important for group communication. Understanding the concept of identity is critical for our involvement in groups. Discussion of the elements of a problem helps the group tailor its problem-solving process. The group should also address specific characteristics of the problem. Common and important characteristics to consider are task difficulty, the number of possible solutions, group member interest in a problem, group member familiarity with the problem, and the need for solution acceptance. But, the key is the ability to listen effectively.

Communication and technology

Technology is an increasingly prevalent aspect of the modern landscape of group working that we must understand. Virtual working is common and groups are using technology, as well as various models and theories of media functionality and information processing. Technologies for group communication and collaboration allow relationships to exist and deliver productivity, no matter where they are located.

Groupware, teleconferencing and virtual worlds are three ways that technology is changing the face of the workplace.

Time management

Teams know which tasks they spend most of their time performing and can quickly detect inefficient working processes, and avoid micromanagement. It is necessary to keep a ‘to-do’ list to keep track, rank tasks, manage distractions and track time.

Leadership

Motivate, unite the group, bond, support, inspire, direct, listen, be compassionate! Be empathic, have courage and respect the team. Be creative and innovative, manage conflict, negotiate for preferred outcomes and give clear instructions. Be conscious of yourself and always ask for feedback! Work to improve group communication to work more effectively as a team.

The point is to feel comfortable, supported and appreciated in a team and to always have freedom to have someone to turn to, to feel that you belong here, that you are developing, contributing, participating, teaming up in the right sense and going in the right direction. Just to feel comfortable and safe.

A team is a reflection of its leadership.