

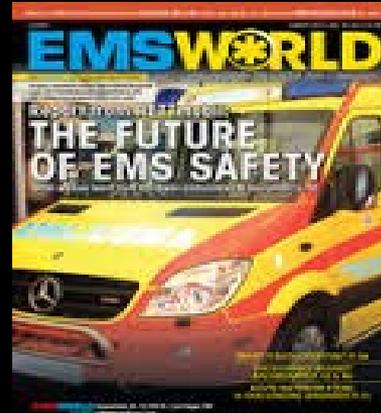
WE NEED TO TALK: UNDERSTANDING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN EMS



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Developed for the 2015 Virginia EMS Conference

Who am I ?





Why are you here?

- To share your communications nightmares
 - To learn more about effective communication
 - To identify various methods of communication
 - To recognize barriers that can impede effective communication
 - To learn how to navigate around those barriers
- 

What is communication?

- Communication:
 - *The art of transmitting information, ideas, and attitudes from one person to another.*
 - *The process of meaningful interaction among human beings.*

- Webster's Dictionary, 2009



What is communication?

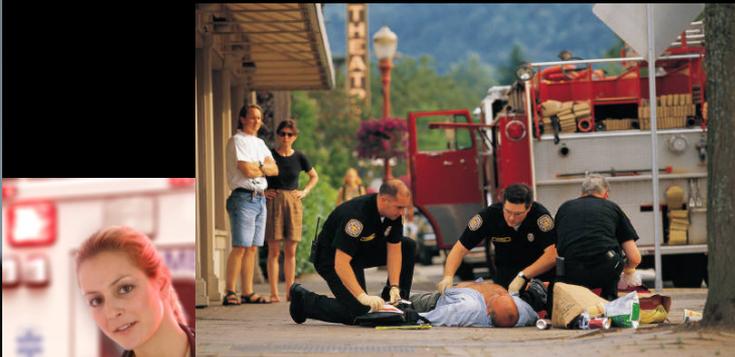
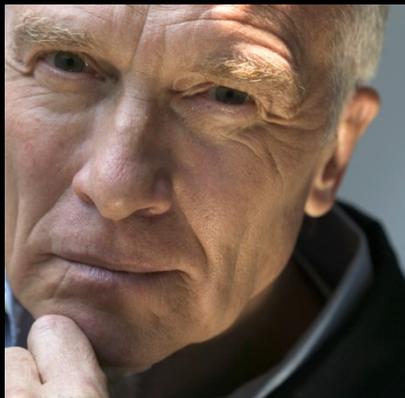
- Effective communication means:
 - conveying messages clearly and unambiguously.
 - receiving information with as little distortion as possible.
- 



Effective communicating requires...

- Trust
 - Maturity
 - Perspective
 - Ability to escalate and de-escalate
- 

Who we communicate with



If you are doing it badly, potential for negative impact exists on multiple levels

What we are taught

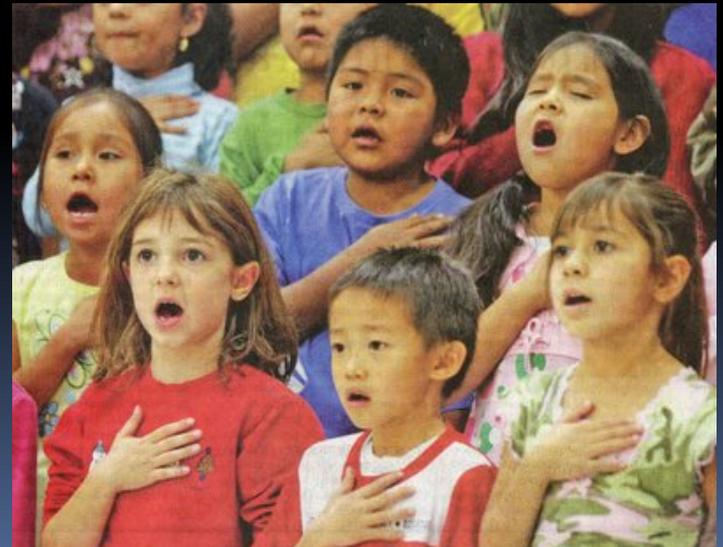
- Reminiscent of grade school
 - Kindergarten – the focus is on sending and receiving messages, sharing experiences, learning about emotions, translating nonverbal messages, and practicing good listening skills.



What we are taught

1st Grade

- awareness of language choices and demonstrating more vocal quality (tone, pitch, rate, and volume).



What we are taught

- 2nd Grade
 - identify relationships between language choices and roles, orally summarize a story, maintain conversations with other children and adults, and respond to another's emotions.



What we are taught

- 3rd Grade
 - understanding of the role communication plays in various cultural settings and small groups.

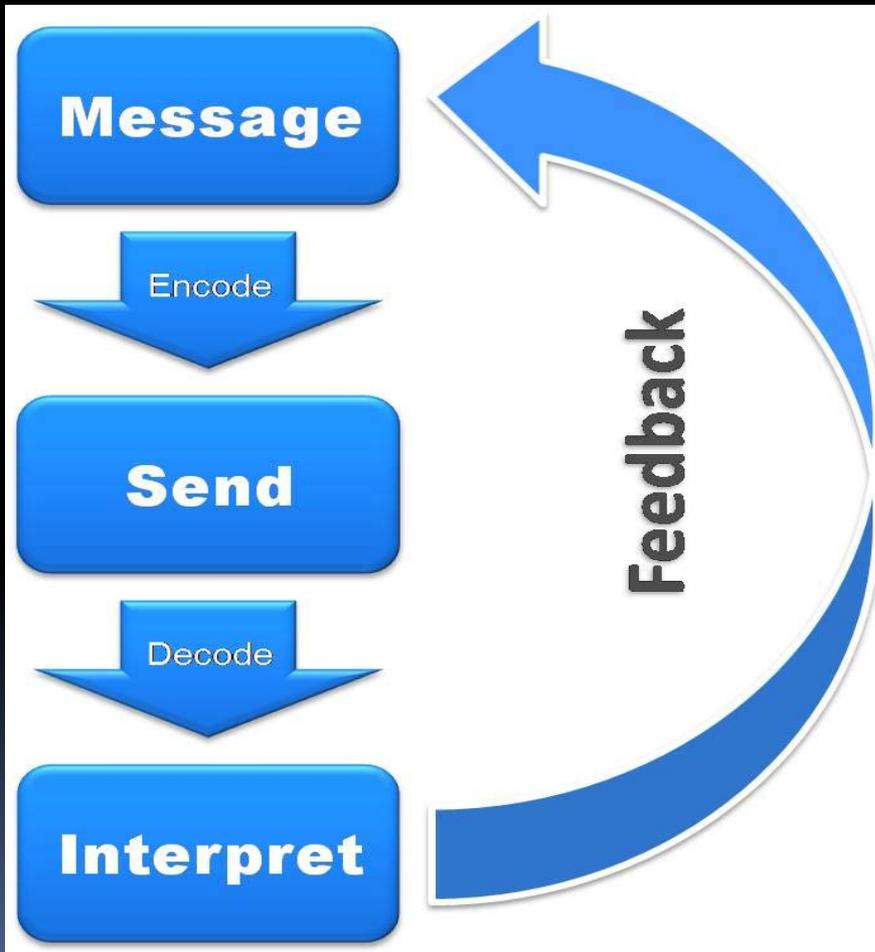




The essence of communication

- Personal process
 - Occurs between people
 - Used as a means to influence others
 - Expression of thoughts/emotions through words/actions
 - Tool for controlling/motivating people
 - A social and emotional process
- 

Communication process simplified



- Messenger with a message
- Encoding
- Channel for communication
- Receiver receives the message and decodes



Communication process simplified

- This process works as follows:
 - The messenger has something to communicate, a message.
 - The messenger will encode his message with words, behavior and body language that he senses will help him to best communicate this message according to his intent.
 - The message will go through a channel, a means of communication such as e-mail, face to face or phone conversation, letter, presentation.
 - The receiver will then decode the message using conventions, cultural or contextual background, and language skills.
 - The message he receives might or might not meet the intent of the messenger.
- 



General communication issues

- Problems with communication can pop up at every stage of the communication process
- At each stage, there is the potential for misunderstanding and confusion based on multiple variables



Your opinion please

What stands in the way of effective
communications?





Barriers

■ Language Barriers

- Different languages / accent / dialect
 - Vocabulary
 - Semantic gaps
- 

Barriers

- Cultural Barriers

- Age
- Education
- Gender
- Social Status
- Cultural Background
- Temperament
- Health
- Beauty / Popularity
- Religion
- Political Belief
- Ethics
- Values
- Motives
- Assumptions
- Aspirations
- Rules/Regulations
- Priorities

Barriers

- Organizational Barriers
 - Poor Organizational Culture /Climate
 - Stringent Rules/Regulations
 - Status / Relationship Complexities
 - Inadequate Facilities / Outdated Equipment
 - Opportunities Of Growth /Improvement
 - Poor Lighting / Noise
 - Staff Shortages



Barriers

■ Interpersonal Barriers

□ Employers

- Lack of trust in employees/volunteers
 - Lack of knowledge of non-verbal clues
 - Different experiences
 - No consideration for employee/volunteer needs
 - Wish to capture authority
 - Fear of losing power or control
- 



Barriers

- Interpersonal Barriers
 - Employees/volunteers
 - Lack of motivation
 - Lack of cooperation / trust
 - Fear of penalty
 - Poor relationship with the employer.
- 

Most common forms of communication

- Spoken Word
- Written Word
- Visual Images
- Body Language



Its not what you say...

■ Be professional

- You are always being judged by what you say and how you say it
- You can be a great EMS provider and yet you can be a total jerk (offensive, aggressive, uncaring, overly lighthearted, etc.)
- You need to be able to read the patient, the family and the overall situation

Its Greek to me

■ Terms / Language

- Challenges when people are new and you assume that they know what you are talking about
- Challenges when communicating with folks from other organizations (they don't speak your language)
- Challenges when communicating with patients and families (they don't read your textbooks)

Hearing vs. listening

- Hearing
 - Physical process, natural, passive
- Listening
 - Physical as well as mental process, active, learned process, a skill



Can you hear me now?





Active listening

■ Listening

- One of the most important skills you can have.
 - Has a major impact on your job effectiveness
 - Has a major impact on the quality of your relationships with others.
- 

Active listening

- Active listening:

- Don't just wait for your turn to talk
- You should be able to repeat back the message in your own words
- You don't have to agree with it, just understand it





Face to face

- There are three basic elements in any face-to-face communication:
 - words
 - tone of voice, pitch and emphasis
 - body language
- 



Face to face

- These three elements account differently for the meaning of the message:
 - Words account for 7%
 - Voice tone, pitch, and emphasis accounts for 38%
 - Body language accounts for 55% of the message.
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What are you looking at?

- Eye contact
- Facial expressions
 - smile
 - raised eyebrows
 - furrowed forehead
- Posture/body language



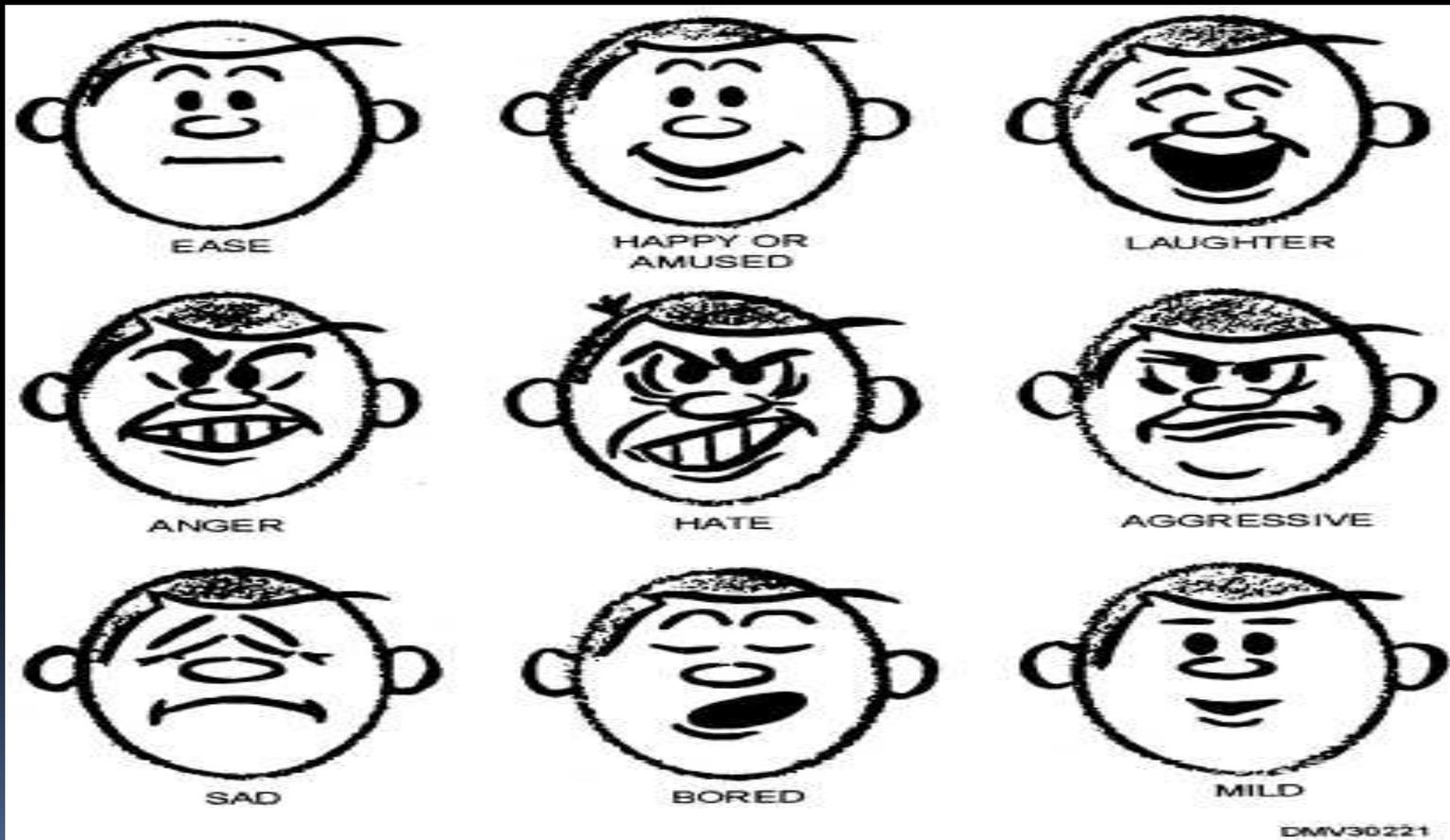
Non-verbal communications

- Eye contact:
 - signals interest in others.
 - eye contact with audiences increases the speaker's credibility.
 - making eye contact opens the flow of communication and conveys interest, concern, warmth and credibility.



Non-verbal communications

- Facial expressions



Non-verbal communications

- Smiling transmits:
 - Happiness
 - Friendliness
 - Warmth
 - Liking
- If you smile frequently you will be perceived as more likable, friendly, warm and approachable.
- Smiling is often contagious.





Non-verbal communications

- Posture and body orientation:
 - You communicate numerous messages by the way you walk, talk, stand and sit. Standing erect, but not rigid, and leaning slightly forward communicates that you are approachable, receptive and friendly.
 - Furthermore, interpersonal closeness results when you face each another person. Speaking with your back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling should be avoided.

Non-verbal communications



Texting

- Recipe for disaster when it comes to effective communication
- Instant communication/gratification
- No social boundaries

Texting is a brilliant way to miscommunicate how you feel, and misinterpret what other people mean.



Email

- The average office worker now sends or receives 121 emails a day (2015)
- E-mail remains the most common form of communication in the business space



The email reality

- We misunderstand the tone of an email almost 50% of the time
 - *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*



Email

- Easy yet challenging - why?
 - Emails are official correspondence
 - Re-read prior to sending
 - Make sure there is a pathway for questions



Telephone

- Be clear as to who you are and what your message is
- Wait for your turn to speak
- Never, ever hang up on anyone



Written communications

- Supervisors/managers usually have to document:
 - Adverse/unusual situations
 - Employee actions/disciplinary actions
 - Reference proper sections of agency – or State – policy
 - Watch “little things” – such as spelling, grammar, and

Verbal Communication Don'ts

- *Do not:*
 - instantly react and mutter something in anger.
 - use technical terms and verbiage not understood by majority of people.
 - speak too fast or too slow.
 - speak in inaudible surroundings, as you won't be heard.

Verbal Communication Don'ts

- *Do not:*
 - assume that everybody understands you.
 - interrupt the speaker.
 - jump to the conclusion that you have understood every thing.



Recipe for effective communications

- Focus on language and pronunciation.
 - Work on voice tone, pitch, and emphasis
 - Work on body language.
- 



Recipe for effective communications

- Think , then speak.
 - Do not speak too fast.
 - Use simple vocabulary.
 - Do not speak only to impress someone.
 - Look presentable and confident.
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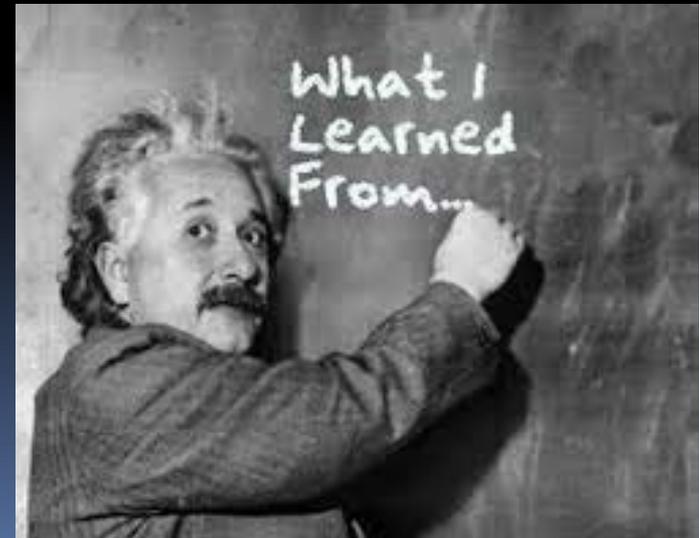


Recipe for effective communications

- Listen more
 - Look at the way others communicate – emulate when you see something that works
- 

Take home message

- Communication isn't easy but it does not have to be difficult
- Practice effectively communicating with those around you and you will become better at it.





Thank you...

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