

Lesson 1: Message Clarity & Great Explanations

The principle: Where's Waldo?

The communication behaviors: Core message clarity; explanations; comprehension checks

Why the behaviors matter: Message clarity is the irreducible start point for safeguarding against the variety of communication challenges found in healthcare environments.

CORE MESSAGE CLARITY:

Identify your core message

- What's your conversational goal? Action, information, or support?
- What's your one-sentence core message? (w/why statement)
Request template: We need to X, because of Y.

Communicate your core message

- Question
Not urgent: ask a permission question to grab attention
Urgent: state the need to talk
- Core
Communicate one-sentence core message w/"why" statement
- More
Elaborate, redirect, or explore as necessary
- Question
Query to check their comprehension of the core message
Use clearinghouse questions at end of your interactions

EXPLANATIONS & COMPREHENSION CHECKS:

1. Great Explanations

Restatements: Restate & reiterate

Bundling: Use 3's & visual cues when possible

Examples/stories: Short, with main point clear

2. Comprehension Checks

Make it about your explanation

Provide an external reason for checking

Have people put it in their own words

Implementing the behaviors:

- Use the ideas about message clarity and great explanations from this lesson to establish and then communicate an important message to a patient or caregiver. Record what happens on the reflection sheet for this lesson.
- Stretch goal: Use this lesson's ideas to communicate an important message to an anxious, stressed-out, or frustrated patient or caregiver.

For more information:

Read Chapter 8 of *Stop Talking, Start Communicating*