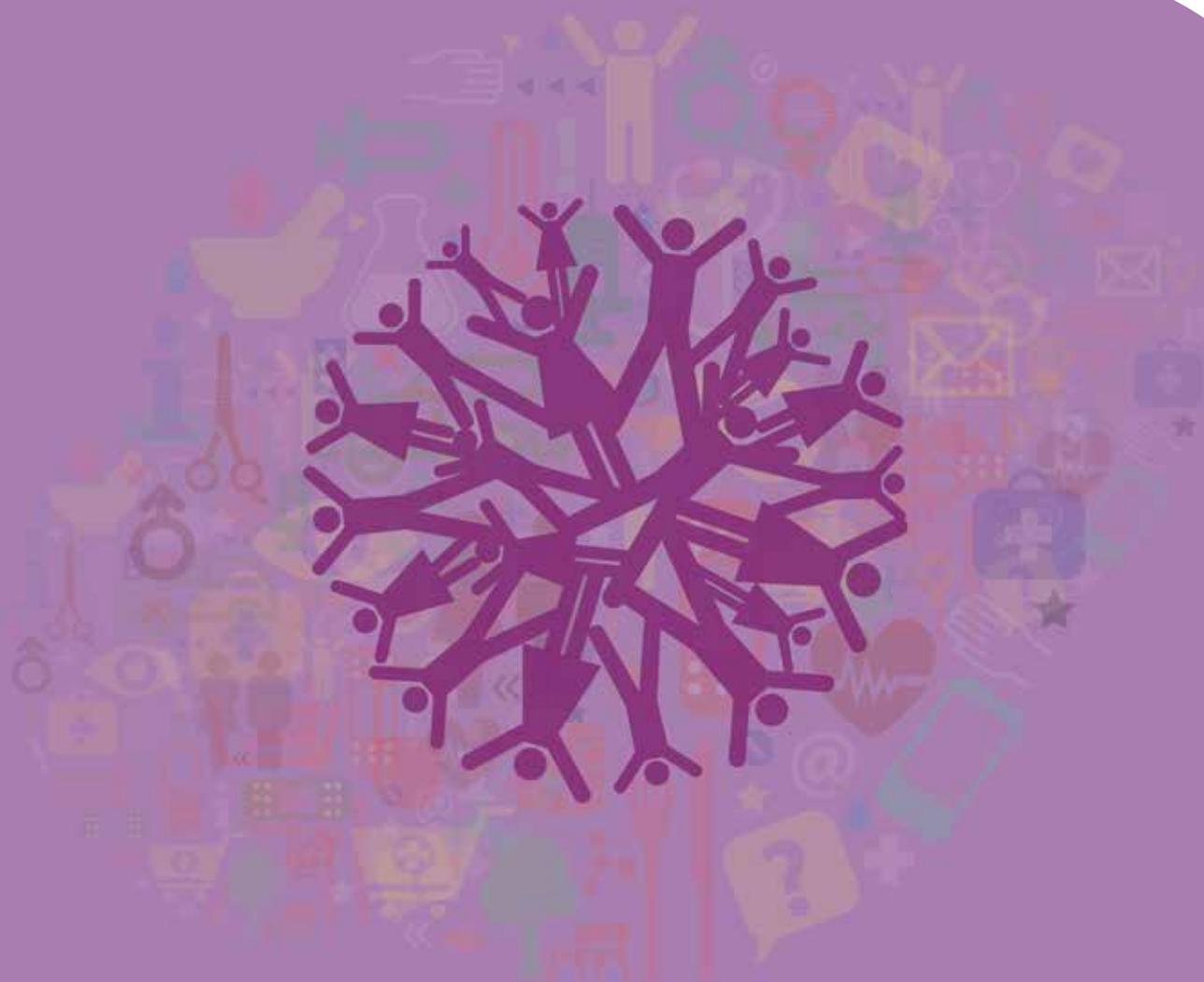


CHCCOM003

Develop workplace communication strategies

Release 2



Learner guide

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Aspire Version 1.2



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Version control and modification history

Version	Release date	Modification
Release 2, version 1.1	April 2017	First release
Release 2, version 1.2	August 2017	Minor corrections as part of our continuous improvement program

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CHCCOM003 Develop workplace communication strategies, Release 2

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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCCOM003 Develop workplace communication strategies*, Release 2. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this learner guide are detailed in the following table.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples and case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Examples of completed documents that may be used in a workplace are included in this learner guide. You can use these examples as models to help you complete practice tasks and learning checkpoints. ▶ Case studies highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where QR codes appear, learners can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help 
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There is a learning checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table outlines specific foundation skills noted for your learning in this learner guide.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities ▶ Managing your work and seeing how well you are going and making goals for yourself at work ▶ Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding how documents are presented and being able to navigate through documents ▶ Understanding industry- and job-specific terminology ▶ Interpreting key information in relevant documents ▶ Understanding routine workplace checklists and documentation
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents ▶ Communicating through written letters, email and online ▶ Recording progress; reporting incidents
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Clarifying instructions ▶ Providing information ▶ Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution ▶ Using body language to model desired behaviour and responding to others' body language
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance ▶ Interpreting measurements
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport
Planning and organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Planning your workload and commitments ▶ Implementing tasks ▶ Completing work on time ▶ Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks
Making decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding and applying decision-making processes ▶ Reviewing the impact of your decisions
Problem-solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identifying problems ▶ Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes and reviewing the outcome
Innovation and creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recognising opportunities to develop and apply new ideas ▶ Generating ideas by thinking of new ways to do something ▶ Making suggestions to improve work

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Technology and digital literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely ▶ Accessing, organising and presenting information ▶ Using equipment correctly and safely

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcomes	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1 Develop communication strategies	1A Identify internal and external information needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Identify competing or conflicting interests	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1C Develop a range of communication strategies to meet organisation needs and goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1D Develop a communication plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2 Establish communication protocols	2A Identify processes for adapting communication strategies to suit a range of contexts	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Develop processes and protocols in line with communication strategies	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Prepare information and resources to support the implementation of communication protocols	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident

Topic	Key outcomes	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 3 Promote the use of communication strategies	3A Present information to staff regarding communication strategies, protocols and organisation standards	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Model effective oral and written communication and provide mentoring and/or coaching to staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3C Maintain work-related networks and relationships to meet organisation objectives	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 4 Review communication practices	4A Obtain feedback from others to assess communication outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4B Record lessons learnt and identify opportunities for continuous improvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 1A Identify internal and external information needs**
- 1B Identify competing or conflicting interests**
- 1C Develop a range of communication strategies to meet organisation needs and goals**
- 1D Develop a communication plan**

Develop communication strategies

Community services work requires you to be able to communicate effectively and appropriately with co-workers, staff they manage and the individuals they provide services for. High-level strategies and skills are needed to share information, negotiate, question, inform and coach within an organisation, while interpersonal and networking skills are needed to develop and maintain relationships with strategic partners, stakeholders, clients and other organisations. You also need the ability to be flexible, to adjust your communication strategies to meet the needs of the individual and the situation.

1A Identify internal and external information needs

It is important for you to be able to identify what information is required within your organisation and by external stakeholders who engage with the organisation. Staff and management, including the Board where relevant, need information to support them in working effectively. External organisations or stakeholders need information on your organisation that differs from the needs of those within the organisation, and people receiving services from your organisation need information to make decisions regarding their own support needs.



Internal and external information

Organisations have information that is produced and shared inside the organisation and externally to other organisations, government departments, people who require services and the general public.

Here is some further information on internal and external information.

Internal information

Internal organisational information includes any information that staff and management require to provide effective services and interact with stakeholders. Information needs to be current and accurate and easy to access for all staff. This information could be policies and procedures, case management documentation, or internal emails and newsletters.

External information

External information refers to any information that is available to stakeholders outside of the organisation. This information could be about services and programs the organisation delivers, fact sheets and web pages on various issues relevant to the organisation, annual reports or funding reports.

Strategies for identifying information needs

Community services organisations must be able to identify their internal and external information needs. There are various strategies that can be used to identify what these information needs are.

Strategies include identifying the internal and external stakeholders who require or produce information; using direct questioning; holding focus groups; conducting surveys or planning meetings to identify what information you require from stakeholders and what information they require from you; and identifying the information that is already available within your organisation and what needs to be developed.



Stakeholders

There are various groups of people that need to receive information at particular times.

These groups include:

- ▶ internal stakeholders such as employees or team members
- ▶ volunteers
- ▶ management personnel or senior staff and Board members
- ▶ external stakeholders such as people receiving services, government agencies, businesses and groups the organisation has dealings with
- ▶ funding bodies
- ▶ other community services organisations
- ▶ the general public.

Information for stakeholders

The following outlines the various groups of people you may need to communicate with and examples of the type of information they may need to receive.

External stakeholders and people who receive services

May need to receive:

- ▶ written policies and procedures
- ▶ eligibility criteria and any fees applicable
- ▶ written documents about service details, agreements and programs
- ▶ advice about their rights and responsibilities in dealing with the organisation
- ▶ promotional material such as brochures and posters.

Representatives of client groups or organisations

May need to receive:

- ▶ meeting minutes and agendas, where applicable
- ▶ advice about issues and information on best practice
- ▶ briefings on new programs
- ▶ requests to be involved in promotional activities such as activity days.

Managers and staff in own organisations

May need to receive:

- ▶ meeting minutes and agendas and planning information
- ▶ professional development opportunities
- ▶ policies and procedures and reports
- ▶ project information and working documents
- ▶ case files, care notes, assessments and records.

Managers and staff of external organisations

May need to receive:

- ▶ information on services provided
- ▶ referral procedures
- ▶ eligibility requirements
- ▶ partnership information.

Members of the public

May need to receive:

- ▶ brochures or websites outlining services offered
- ▶ promotional information in print and online
- ▶ health and wellbeing fact sheets.

Academic institutions, public sector and community organisations

May need to receive:

- ▶ organisational information/overview
- ▶ websites including links to industry information
- ▶ health and wellbeing information
- ▶ industry standards.

Example

Identify internal and external information needs

Sally has recently begun working in a management role. She notices that staff regularly come to her office or email her with requests for information on eligibility for services. At a staff meeting Sally asks the staff what information they think they need in order to complete their roles. She also asks them what the best way to share that information would be.

Staff tell her a clear and simple flow chart indicating who is eligible for each of the programs run by the organisation would assist them and make it clearer for external organisations and workers as well.

Practice task 1

1. Name two types of external information needs.

.....

.....

2. Who are two internal stakeholders within an organisation?

.....

.....

Click to complete Practice task 1

1B Identify competing or conflicting interests

At times both within an organisation and between stakeholders there may be competing or conflicting interests. You may need to identify any possible conflicts of interest and have clear organisational policies regarding disclosure of competing interests by staff and management.



Competing interests or conflicts

Competing interests or conflicts refer to any situation where a staff member or organisation's primary interest (for example, communicating clearly with stakeholders) may be influenced by a secondary interest (for example, financial gain from selling the organisation case management software or personal validation from speaking to the media).

Concerns regarding competing or conflicting interests can arise in the following circumstances.

Financial interests

A situation where an individual or organisation can benefit financially from a decision and it could be considered that this benefit could influence their decision-making.

Other relationships

A situation where a familial or strong relationship exists that could affect the person's decision-making judgment.

Identify conflicting interests

A conflict of interest can be defined as a situation in which someone is in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made as part of their work role. This may mean someone developing a communication strategy that will benefit themselves or someone they have a close relationship with.

For example, a staff member at an organisation has developed a communication strategy that includes putting short video clips on the organisation's website. This staff member has a son who has a film-making company and he is hired to make the video clips – thereby benefiting financially from the strategy.

Identify competing interests

Competing interests are defined as those potential influences that may undermine the objectivity or integrity of an individual or organisation. Often competing interests can be identified through their financial component. This means that there is a financial benefit to a person or organisation that may influence their decisions. An example of a competing interest is accepting corporate funding from a business or corporation that manufactures a product that is harmful to the consumers (like tobacco or alcohol companies) and putting their logo on your communication documents.



Example

Competing or conflicting interests

Brenda is the chief executive officer (CEO) of a large aged care facility. The cleaning contract for the facility is about to expire and the organisation needs to tender for services. Brenda's partner owns a cleaning company and puts in a tender application. Brenda does not disclose to the Board that one of the tender applications is from her partner, and she recommends her partner's tender application to the Board. This is a clear conflict of interest as Brenda's partner (and possibly Brenda) will benefit financially from the situation.



Practice task 2

1. What are two circumstances in which you may see competing or conflicting interests?

2. What is a conflict of interest?

[Click to complete Practice task 2](#)

1C Develop a range of communication strategies to meet organisation needs and goals

You will need to develop a range of communication strategies to meet the needs of the organisation, including strategic and business plans. It is also essential to understand who may be a competitor for funding and for people who require services.

You will need to ensure communication channels within the organisation meet any special communication needs of staff, that there are clear official communication channels, that protocols and processes exist, and that crisis communication plans are in place. You will also need to recognise any possible barriers, restraints or difficulties in the organisation's communication channels.

Communication strategies should include an understanding of the role of traditional media as well as knowledge of digital media.



Communication strategies

Communication strategies are designed to help the organisation communicate effectively and meet the organisation's objectives. You need clear communication strategies that channel information promptly and appropriately to the right people with contingency plans for communication breakdowns. A range of communication strategies may be needed at various times to meet the needs of specific groups of people or individuals. There is also a need for communication plans for when a crisis occurs. Different strategies are required to work effectively with different individuals and in different situations. You will need to decide on the best strategy to communicate effectively with staff, with external stakeholders and with people receiving services. All strategies should be a good fit with the vision and values of the organisation, and strive for consistency and accuracy in sharing information.



Oral communication strategies

Oral communication strategies involve face-to-face and indirect communication methods, such as electronic or digital communications. Your job is to contribute to developing these strategies so they are easy for all workers to understand and follow and provide flexibility so they can select the most appropriate strategy for the situation.

The following are some oral communication strategies.

Discussions

Discussions include case meetings with people receiving services; planning meetings with team members and other organisations; networking groups; and informal conversations with team members. Discussions may need to be structured with a time frame and established goals and to be documented, so the actions and outcomes are on record.

Using discussions as a communication tool involves developing opportunities for informal discussions, where the focus is on spontaneous, creative thinking and problem-solving.

Formal and informal discussions within your organisation's communication strategy must assist in meeting broader organisational goals and directions.

Meetings

It is important to be able to develop, promote and implement meetings effectively to maximise efficiency. Meetings generally run best when they are chaired, there is an agenda, relevant documentation is sent prior, and actions and outcomes are clearly documented and disseminated to group members following the meeting.

Regularly check the template used for agendas to ensure it continues to meet the organisation's needs. It is also useful to assist other team members to develop skills in the various roles involved in a meeting, so tasks can be shared and meetings can continue if a regular team member is unavailable.

Presentations

Giving a presentation is an opportunity to represent the organisation to the public or to stakeholders. Presentations should be developed ahead of time and ideally the delivery of a presentation should be shared among team members. This avoids over-reliance on a single member, and ensures that skills are spread throughout the group.

A presentation strategy may include templates, tools and equipment, a written guide to public speaking, and briefing notes about using consistent messaging based on the communication strategy for promoting the organisation; for example, presentations should always include the organisation's logo, mission statement and contact details.

On-the-job coaching and mentoring

Part of your responsibilities in a team-leading, supervisory or managing role may involve providing on-the-job coaching and mentoring to new and existing staff members, work placement students and volunteers. Develop clear, documented guidelines so there is a consistent approach to how this support is offered to new members of the team, such as an induction checklist and a coaching manual. This allows other team members to share the role of coaching and mentoring and avoids any confusion over what information should be shared.

Written communication strategies

Written communication strategies typically exist alongside oral communication as part of a holistic communication approach. Written communication strategies may include minutes, case notes, reports, proposals, policies, procedures and submissions. There is more information regarding these types of written communication strategies in the following pages.

Minutes

Minutes are the written notes taken during a formal meeting to provide a permanent record of what has been said and what actions and outcomes are to follow. They should include who is present, the items discussed, outcomes reached, actions to be taken and the times the meeting began and ended. Your job may involve explaining the standard template and procedures used for taking and disseminating minutes to ensure there is a standard approach throughout the organisation; for example, minutes must be completed and circulated within 24 hours to participants and non-attendees.

Case notes

Case notes generally relate to a single person who is applying for, or receiving, services. Provide completed examples (deleting details for privacy reasons) so new staff can see the organisational procedure to follow. Be clear about organisational expectations and tools for case notes; for example, case management software. This may include how case notes are stored (for example, in a locked file or electronically) and completed (for example, handwritten or typed).



Case notes should also comply with confidentiality requirements and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). Part of developing communication procedures should be to decide where and how case notes are to be stored, and who is permitted to have access to them. This information may already exist at your workplace, in which case you simply need to implement the strategy within your work team.

Reports

Reports generally follow a standard format, depending on the nature of the report. In a community services organisation, you may be required to write program reports, team reports, incident reports, grant acquittal reports or financial reports. Regardless of the type, professional language and excellent written language skills are critical for writing an effective report. Remember that the ability to write a good quality report reflects on you, your team and the organisation. Make sure induction sessions include strategies for writing reports, with sample reports available so new staff can see the standard required and the procedures to follow.

A standard template for a report may include:

- ▶ a cover page with the title, date and author's name
- ▶ an executive summary explaining what the report contains
- ▶ an introduction
- ▶ an outline of issues, goals and directions or other requirements
- ▶ detailed information of methods, costs, processes and actions, including running text and tables or financial statements
- ▶ a conclusion or outcomes
- ▶ further recommendations or follow-up actions required
- ▶ appendices, if required.

Proposals and submissions

You may be required to develop written proposals or submissions for funding, for new programs, or to continue an existing program. Proposals may be internal, to gain support from the Board or senior management, or external to access funding. The following outlines the requirements for developing proposals and submissions.

Proposals

A proposal may be written for developing a new program, altering an existing one or to apply for funding. Ensure in the proposal you address any stated requirements such as grant application rules or requests for specific financial details or human resources information. A proposal may require supporting spreadsheets, graphics and illustrations.

Submissions

A submission is a formal application for funding or resourcing that is sent to an external agency or organisation. A submission may need to be written using a standard template provided by the agency or organisation, so take care to follow the instructions and supply all the information requested.

Frameworks

Make sure you are familiar with proposal and submission frameworks so you can advise anyone who has to complete one; for example, a proposal may be well written, carefully constructed and well presented, but it may not promote the organisation effectively or may not consider the direction and goals of the workplace.

Policies and procedures

Policies and procedures are a vital part of community services work, and it is likely you will be involved in developing, amending and implementing them in your work role. They should be developed in consultation with the people most likely to be affected by them and promoted widely as living, useable documents. Make sure staff members know where to access them. You may need to remind people of specific procedures during staff meetings or discussions. For example, there may be rules for dealing with the media and what types of information should be disseminated through written releases and interviews and who is responsible for this.

Alternative communication strategies

You may be communicating with service users, staff members, workers from other organisations, volunteers or members of the general public. Alternative communication strategies that can assist in making information accessible to all people are outlined below.

Large print and braille documents

- ▶ For older people
- ▶ For people who have a visual impairment

Audio, taped format or podcasts

- ▶ For people who have a visual impairment
- ▶ For people who prefer information in audio format
- ▶ For people who prefer to listen to information in small sections or in the privacy of their own homes

Documents that have been translated into a community language

- ▶ For people who do not read English to a level where they can easily understand written communication
- ▶ For people who can read English, but wish to receive complex information in their first language

Assistive listening devices

- ▶ For people who have a hearing impairment and are listening to a presentation, talk or workshop in a public location such as a lecture theatre
- ▶ Examples include audio loops or induction loop systems and sound amplifiers

Assistive communication devices

- ▶ For people who do not have intelligible spoken language
- ▶ People who have a physical and/or intellectual disability
- ▶ Examples include static and dynamic communication devices, communication boards and picture cues

Text-to-speech programs

- ▶ For people who require additional support to access computer word-processing programs or web pages, and who benefit from hearing written on-screen text read aloud
- ▶ For people with dyslexia, dysgraphia and visual impairments

Interpreters

- ▶ For communication partners who do not share a common spoken language
- ▶ For people who have a hearing impairment and communicate using Auslan or signed English

Develop communication strategies and plans

Part of your role may include developing appropriate communication strategies and plans for your team or organisation. A communication strategy or plan should reflect your organisation's overall strategic plan and its vision and objectives. You will need to consider how effective communication practices will help to achieve these objectives. You will also need to consider who your organisation is competing with to provide services and how your communication strategies will promote your organisation ahead of the competition.



Understand organisational needs and goals

Your organisation will have needs and specific goals and outcomes. Often these needs and goals are outlined and documented in business and strategic plans. These plans should include communication needs and goals with all relevant stakeholders.

Strategic plan

A strategic plan is an organisation's documented outline of its goals or direction and how it will achieve these goals. It may include the organisation's vision and values, organisational goals, actions required to achieve these goals and the priorities of the organisation. It should include communication objectives like promoting the organisation or information provision.

Business plan

A business plan is an organisation's business goals or objectives. It identifies the organisation's target market and outlines financial aims or issues. As the community services sector becomes more competitive, business plans indicating funding opportunities, partnership goals and financial management are increasingly important. The plan should include the role of communication strategies to meet these objectives.

Understand competitors

Community services organisations are increasingly required to tender competitively for funding opportunities. In addition, people are more able to choose and manage their own service provision (purchase services) which leads to other competitive situations. This means it is important for you to identify and understand your organisation's competitors. It also means that you, your staff and your organisation need to have clear communication strategies to promote your organisation and provide relevant information.

You need to know what your organisation's competitors are doing, what services they are providing and how they are promoting themselves to stakeholders. Some ideas on how you can gather knowledge about competitors can be found here.

Gathering knowledge about competitors

- ▶ Visit their websites.
- ▶ Collect promotional materials like brochures or posters.
- ▶ Ask people why they accessed your service rather than the competitors'.
- ▶ Explore their social media sites (for example, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn).

Organisational communication channels

Communication channels are pathways along which information, ideas, questions, problem-solving, teamwork and creativity can all flow. If these channels are open, then information flows with ease and communication can occur in both directions. However, if the channels become blocked, then communication can deteriorate or even stop completely.

Your organisation is likely to have official communication channels that outline correct procedures for communication within the organisation and to external stakeholders. For example, there may be procedures on who is able to make statements to the media on the organisation's behalf.



Organisations have sets of formal and informal protocols, and acceptable etiquette for communication. These protocols provide guidance of what is considered acceptable communication behaviour in the organisation. Protocols and etiquette guide how staff communicate with each other, how staff and management communicate and how staff and the people who engage with the organisation's programs communicate. This may include ensuring that communication is respectful, that appropriate methods are used, and that the other person's culture is considered.

Use media for communication

The media can be an effective way to communicate with stakeholders. The media is a collective term for a variety of media types like print (newspapers, magazines or journals), radio, television, advertising and social media. Media can communicate information on health and wellbeing, on programs and services, on special events, or on what makes your organisation unique.



Use traditional media

Newspapers, television, radio, magazines, newsletters and journals are often considered traditional media forms. While there is now a range of alternative forms of media to consider, traditional media still has a role in communicating with stakeholders. You probably listen to the radio on the way to work or watch television at home in the evenings, read an organisation's newsletter, or read a magazine when you are waiting for a doctor's appointment. This means there are opportunities to engage

with the general public, with people who need services or with other stakeholders using traditional media. This might mean a success story from someone who has received services in the local newspaper, or promoting an event on radio.

Digital media

Digital media, or new media, is a fast growing form of communication. Used appropriately, it can be a fast, cheap and effective form of communication with stakeholders and staff. Due to the accessibility of digital media, it is important for you to follow the organisation's procedures. You should also consider the etiquette required in these forms of media. For example, you should consider the volume of information shared on social media to avoid 'spamming' followers, ensure that comments are responded to quickly, and keep your personal social media separate to your organisation's accounts.

Digital media provides another way to market your organisation and your services to external organisations, to funding providers, to potential employees and to people who are looking for services to meet their needs. This could include promoting programs and events on your website, sending emails with promotional information, and promoting services to followers on social media.

Digital media

Websites

Organisational websites can contain information on staff, services, location, eligibility, fees and referrals. It can also provide a platform for providing information and links regarding relevant issues, new research and fact sheets.

Etiquette:

- ▶ Site is easy to navigate.
- ▶ Photos/video are culturally appropriate and reflect stakeholders' backgrounds.
- ▶ Information is kept current and accurate.
- ▶ Copyright laws are complied with.

Blogs/Vlogs

Provide an easily updateable platform to discuss, in written or video format, issues, information or services.

Etiquette:

- ▶ If comments are allowed, they must be monitored and responded to.
- ▶ Copyright laws are not breached.
- ▶ Get permission to use photographs.
- ▶ Do not spam readers.

Social media

Social media refers to a range of platforms like Facebook and Twitter that allow instant short communication with followers. Communication can be visual, audio, video or written and is easy to update and to access. Social media also allows stakeholders to provide feedback or comments.

Etiquette:

- ▶ Monitor regularly and respond quickly to comments.
- ▶ Do not overwhelm followers with posts.
- ▶ Be respectful.
- ▶ Keep it interesting – use multimedia.
- ▶ Do not breach copyright laws.
- ▶ Get permission to use photographs and to 'tag' people.

Email

Written communication that has replaced, in many situations, mail and memos. Can also include attachments like videos, written documents or photos.

Etiquette:

- ▶ Include a clear subject line.
- ▶ Only reply all when necessary.
- ▶ Use professional language.
- ▶ Reply to emails in a timely fashion.

DVD/CD-ROM

Variety of information can be recorded on discs and provided to stakeholders.

Apps

Applications accessible on mobile devices that can provide services or information

Aspects of communication channels

Communication channels can be synchronous where all parties are present. This includes face-to-face conversations, meetings, telephone calls and video chats.

Communication channels can also be asynchronous, which means that communication is sent and received at different times. For example, text messages, emails, notices on a message board or posts on social media are all asynchronous. You will need to decide which aspect of the communication channels available to you will best convey the information in each situation. It may be likely that using more than one communication channel will be the most effective way of communicating.



Special needs of personnel

An organisation's communication channels should include any special communication needs of the staff. It is important for the organisation to ensure that all personnel can use appropriate channels to communicate effectively. Some examples of special communication needs are listed below.

Special communication needs

- ▶ Communication disabilities involving hearing, vision, speech or memory impairments.
- ▶ Language differences; for example, English as a second language.
- ▶ Cultural concerns related to gender, age, social expectations or body language.

Processes and hierarchy

Your organisation is likely to already have a set of communication protocols in place alongside official communication channels. Official communication channels transmit organisational information such as goals or policies. Messages in an official communication channel follow a chain of command. This usually means that information flows from managers to staff. For example, in most organisations any concerns or issues are usually communicated to your line manager directly rather than broadcasting them to the entire organisation or going directly to the CEO. There may even be a communication flow chart which directs staff to whom they should contact regarding specific issues.



Most organisations also have an unofficial communication channel, also known as the grapevine. This falls outside of the chain of command seen in official channels.

Your organisation is also likely to have either formal or informal rules for how communication should occur. This is the organisation's etiquette (or standard) for communication. This may include the type of language that is acceptable, how meetings are run, rules for using social media in the workplace, and how acceptable group emails are.

Example

A range of communication strategies to meet organisation needs and goals

Rod works in a large organisation that operates in multiple sites. He is aware that staff often do not know what is happening at other sites and that staff only have the opportunity to meet together twice a year at large staff meetings. This means that staff are not using the resources available on different sites and are not referring to other programs internally.

Rod develops an internal communication strategy to improve communication practices between sites. He asks managers at each site to provide him with brief weekly updates on programs, staffing and issues and publishes them in a newsletter that he emails each Friday afternoon to all staff.



1D Develop a communication plan

A communication plan is a road map for how your organisation will share information with internal and external stakeholders. Organisations need a clear communication plan to guide communication practices. This plan may be part of a larger business or strategic plan and should reflect the objectives and values of the organisation. This communication plan needs to explore how the organisation communicates with all stakeholders both internally and externally.



Communication plans

Effective communication can be challenging. If communication with stakeholders is not done well, or the correct communication channel is not chosen, there may be misunderstandings, inaccurate or inappropriate information for a particular stakeholder, the wrong communication media used, or stakeholders not receiving the required information. The organisation needs to plan for how communication will occur and what communication strategies will be included in the plan. Planning will help you identify the types of information and frequency of communication required by different stakeholders. This will lead to clear, appropriate and effective communication.

Aspects of a communication plan

- ▶ Method of communication
- ▶ Organisational protocols
- ▶ Time frames
- ▶ Identified staff
- ▶ Organisational standards to be used
- ▶ Identified stakeholders

SWOT analysis

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis is a useful tool that is used to understand the organisation's communication strengths and weaknesses. It also allows you to identify the opportunities and threats that the organisation faces. Conducting a SWOT analysis can help develop an effective communication plan by identifying what the organisation is doing well and where communication could be improved. It will also identify opportunities to promote the organisation and how communication could be a threat.



What to include in a communication plan

Your organisation or team communication plan needs to be a clear document that ensures all communication practices meet the organisation's objectives. Communication plans will look different for each organisation or team, but will generally include what will be done, who will do it, and how it will be reviewed. A communication plan should include and consider the following.

Methods

Methods for disseminating information include emails, SMS/text messaging, newsletters, formal reports, brochures, leaflets, posters, face-to-face contact, telephone calls, web pages and electronic devices. The plan should include communication strategies that continually promote the organisation and its achievements.

Responsibility

Responsibility for disseminating information should be noted. Such tasks could be carried out by managers, team leaders or the communication officer. Strategies and resources for communicating with people who have English as an additional language or use assistive technologies need to be articulated.

Monitoring

The communication plan should outline the cycle of development, implementation, evaluation and review to ensure the strategies remain effective and meet the needs of the organisation and the individuals who work within it. Your organisation may have a specific process for monitoring and reviewing plans.

Law and ethics

The communication plan should take into account legislative and ethical requirements for equality and non-discrimination, as set out in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth), the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth), the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) and the *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cth).

Factors impacting communication plan

There are several factors that can impact a communication plan and should be considered when the plan is being developed. These factors include political, economic, social and technological factors, which are described below.

Political factors

Political factors could include current government policy regarding communication with a department or reporting requirements. It could be any forecast changes in focus for the government in the community services sector, which could impact funding. It could be a change in government (for example, you may need to make new contacts). You will need to consider current and pending legislation in your plan.

Economic factors

Economic factors include the impact of funding or funding changes on the communication plan. What is your organisation's budget? How will this impact the communication resources you can purchase or use? How will this impact on staffing and who is responsible for aspects of the communication plan? Will you need to spend more time and resources promoting your organisation in order to attract fee-paying people?

Social factors

Social factors could include the cultures and languages present and how this impacts communication with stakeholders. You should also consider current and changing demographics in your area; for example, is there an increase in migrants or young families or elderly people?

Technological factors

Technological factors include any current or emerging technologies that could impact your plan. For example, how does your organisation use social media? Is the technology you use appropriate for the stakeholders involved?

Barriers to, restraints and difficulties of communication plan

There are a number of different barriers to communication with stakeholders. It is important to identify barriers and consider what you can do to remove them as part of your communication plan.

The following shows some of the barriers to communication that may exist, and what actions you could take to address them.

Linguistic barriers

It may be difficult to discuss and negotiate with someone who has limited English because you will have trouble understanding each other.

Strategies to address them:

- ▶ Use an interpreter or direct the person to a member of staff who can communicate in their preferred language, if appropriate.
- ▶ Explain clearly. Avoid using terminology or jargon.
- ▶ Learn a few words of the person's first language.
- ▶ Use pictures to convey meaning.
- ▶ Prepare information in the person's preferred language.

Cultural barriers

Cultural expectations may relate to:

- ▶ body language
- ▶ appropriate conversations between men and women
- ▶ protocols such as avoiding eye contact or not wearing shoes in a house
- ▶ introductions and communicating with appropriate people within a family or community.

Strategies to address them:

- ▶ Learn about cultural expectations and differences in relation to acceptable body language and conventions for resolving difficulties in other cultures.
- ▶ Clearly explain what you will do and why and how this may differ from their experiences.

Physical barriers

Barriers that may limit understanding or attendance may include:

- ▶ limited hearing or vision, or an inability to speak
- ▶ an age-related condition such as dementia
- ▶ an inability to access a location due to a physical disability.

Strategies to address them:

- ▶ Use pictures to represent words or an electronic device that speaks for them.
- ▶ Select an accessible location for a person with limited mobility.
- ▶ Include a carer, interpreter or support person in the discussion.

Psychological barriers

A person may be emotionally impaired and unable to 'hear' or understand what you are saying.

Strategies to address them:

- ▶ Reassure a person who is sad, angry, upset, confused or fearful of the results of discussions.
- ▶ Give the person time to adjust.
- ▶ Speak slowly and clearly.
- ▶ Arrange to have someone with them as support.
- ▶ Check on the person's wellbeing following discussions.

Environmental barriers

The place you have chosen to discuss a conflict may have background noise, distractions, other people in the area, flickering lights, excessive heating or cooling, or be an inaccessible or uncomfortable location.

Strategies to address them:

- ▶ Look around the environment before beginning to communicate, and think about what factors may affect communication.
- ▶ Ask the person if a specific factor is a problem for them, and find a location that is appropriate.

Listening barriers

People may not listen carefully because they are:

- ▶ only hearing what they want to hear
- ▶ not paying attention
- ▶ too busy thinking of a reply
- ▶ distracted by emotions
- ▶ trying to speak over who is talking.

Strategies to address them:

- ▶ Be aware of listening blocks so you can identify when they are occurring.
- ▶ Concentrate on obtaining everyone's attention.
- ▶ Speak concisely so people do not lose their concentration and the flow of the discussion.

Financial implications of communication plan

Community services organisations often work within tight budgets and need to balance the benefits (or return on investment) of developing a communications plan against the cost of developing it (the budget). If an organisation overspends on resources such as human resources (salaries), technology (hardware, software and running costs), cost of printing and cost of web design and maintenance) to develop a communications plan, they are unlikely to achieve a return on their investment.

Consider what return the organisation may expect for the financial resources that are invested in the plan. This could be in terms of numbers of people accessing services, an increase in service provision to a specific target group, or attracting additional funding.



Crisis communication plans

A crisis communication plan is a plan to protect the organisation's reputation and to prevent any negative threats. If a situation or event threatens the expectations of stakeholders and can impact the organisation's performance or may lead to negative outcomes then a crisis communication plan should be implemented. A crisis is a serious situation and the plan should be developed to manage these rare situations.

Communication strategies that are appropriate for a crisis communication plan include the following.

Communication strategies for crisis communication

Researching information on risks specific to your organisation prior to developing the plan

Having clear procedures for crisis communication, including who will make decisions and who will handle different aspects of communication

Planning and preparing templates or information to release to the media or use on digital media forums

Planning for how information will be disseminated in a crisis to internal and external stakeholders

Evaluating the effectiveness of the plan post-crisis and make any relevant changes to the plan

Example

A crisis communication plan

Organisation X provides supported accommodation for people who have been released from forensic psychiatric facilities. Steve, who has been living in the accommodation service for six months and is doing well, did not return after a trip to the shops last night. Unfortunately, this morning the police have contacted the organisation to tell them that Steve is under arrest for stabbing his mother. The media begins calling immediately and soon there are media cars outside of the organisation.



Organisation X implements their crisis communication plan. The plan outlines who will communicate with the media and how this will be done without violating privacy or confidentiality. It includes a strategy for a media release and for granting interviews.

Practice task 4

1. What four factors should you consider when developing a communication plan? Give an example for each.

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2. What are two communication barriers to consider when developing a communication plan?

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Click to complete Practice task 4

Summary

1. You need to identify the information needs of both internal and external stakeholders.
2. Communication strategies and plans need to identify competing or conflicting interests within the organisation.
3. Organisations need to develop a range of communication strategies to meet needs and goals.
4. Organisations need to consider a range of factors when developing a communication plan.
5. Organisations must consider barriers and financial implications to a communication plan.

Learning checkpoint 1

Develop communication strategies

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in developing communication strategies.

Part A

1. Explain what a conflicting interest is and what a competing interest is, and provide an example of each.

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2. What are three ways you could develop an understanding of your competitors?

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3. What is traditional media and how can it be used to provide information to stakeholders?

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4. Explain why your organisation should have a crisis communication plan.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Brian has begun work recently as a team leader in a community outreach service. The service provides case management, counselling and practical support to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Many of the people receiving services have a mental illness or have issues with drugs or alcohol. Staff members work across multiple sites and typically spend some time in the office and some time out working directly with the people they provide services to. Staff come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The stated vision of the organisation is 'Quality support by people who care'.

A recent communications survey in the workplace found that there is poor recording of client confidential details, a lack of understanding of legislation about communications records and frequent cases of staff complaining they had not been told about changes in the workplace that affected them. In one significant case, a staff member learnt that the organisation was moving offices by reading the local newspaper rather than hearing about the change at work.

Brian has been asked by senior management to develop a communications plan for his organisation.

1. Draft a communications plan for Brian. Complete the following:

a. List the internal and external stakeholders relevant to the plan.

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b. Identify the internal information needs.

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c. Explain how you could include the organisation's business and strategic plans.

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d. Explain how you might use a SWOT plan to develop this communication plan.

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e. Identify any special communication needs of staff.

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f. Identify one of each of the following types of factors that may impact this plan:

- Political
- Economic
- Social
- Technological

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g. Name the two communication strategies that will be included in the plan and how one of the strategies will be presented to staff.

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h. Explain one way digital media will be used to promote the organisation to potential clients and associated etiquette for that type of digital media.

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i. Identify one official communication channel to include in the plan. What organisation processes and hierarchy should be considered? Identify two possible communication barriers.

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2. List two financial considerations for this communication plan that should be included in the budget.

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Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Identify processes for adapting communication strategies to suit a range of contexts**

- 2B Develop processes and protocols in line with communication strategies**

- 2C Prepare information and resources to support the implementation of communication protocols**

Establish communication protocols

A communication protocol provides a framework for a particular type of communication and should include the personnel involved (who communicates with whom), what should be communicated (the extent and limits of communication) and any legislation or organisational standards that must be considered. Organisations need clear and effective communication protocols to ensure communication both internally and with external stakeholders contributes to the organisation's goals and provides stakeholders with the best possible services.

2A Identify processes for adapting communication strategies to suit a range of contexts

An essential component of any effective organisation is good and consistent communication strategies as they ensure that all stakeholders, including staff and people receiving services, have timely access to the information they require, in an easy-to-understand format that meets their immediate needs. There are, however, contexts that may require adaptation of even good communication strategies to meet needs. You must be able to identify when communication strategies need to be adapted.



Contexts requiring adapted communication strategies

Staff members in a community services work team often come from a variety of backgrounds, have different abilities and a wide range of experiences. It is useful to consider how these different experiences, abilities and backgrounds may influence the types of communication strategies you choose to use or whether the communication strategies need to be adapted in your specific working context.

Some examples of contexts that may need adaptation of communication strategies are listed below.

English as an additional language

According to the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, over 15 per cent of Australians speak a language other than English at home, and there are around 200 languages spoken in Australia, including Indigenous languages. In any Australian workplace, it is quite likely that some of the staff members will have learnt English as an additional language. This can be an asset, but it may mean that some staff may need extra support to build English written and verbal communication skills.

Educational level and demographics

Statistics from 2011 provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that people who work in the community services sector are typically female (around 84 per cent) and more than half are aged over 45 years. Many have completed Year 12 or higher qualifications, but only 20 per cent have completed a bachelor degree or higher. This informs us to some extent about the potential communication needs of a typical community services workforce; that is, that some support may be required for complex and lengthy writing and speaking tasks.

Confidence and experience

Written and verbal communication skills improve with practice and support and, as skills improve, so does confidence. Some people may not have had very many opportunities to practise these skills and so may lack confidence in doing tasks such as taking minutes, writing reports, developing proposals and plans or giving a presentation. Extra support such as training and coaching can assist in building confidence and experience, as can having appropriate workplace expectations, without causing stress or anxiety for a staff member. Most importantly, you can provide staff members with opportunities to practise communication skills in a supportive environment.

Different communication styles and techniques

Some people are highly verbal and prefer to do most of their communicating face to face or over the phone. Other people prefer written communication and are more comfortable with emails, text messages and other written documents. Most work roles require people to use a combination of communication styles and techniques. It is useful to encourage people within a team to utilise their strengths, but also to encourage skills in non-preferred areas of communication. This broadens the overall skill set of your work team and makes sure that, as a group, you can continue to develop as effective communicators.

Disabilities that can impact communication

It is likely that some staff members will have disabilities that will impact the communication strategies are used. For example, a person may have a hearing disability that may require other staff to learn how to communicate effectively, such as facing the person when talking. The person may have a learning disability that makes written tasks challenging and may require support with equipment or alternative communication strategies.

Behaviours of concern

In some community services contexts, work is done with people experiencing high levels of stress and trauma, as well as perhaps experiencing mental health issues or using alcohol or other drugs. On occasion this can lead to behaviours of concern, which may include aggressive behaviour. You may need to learn to adapt communication strategies to include diffusion of aggressive situations and procedures to ensure the safety of staff and others.

Adaptations that may be required

Adaptations to communication strategies must address the particular context. You may find it useful to discuss the context or situation with individual staff to assess what their communication needs are and to decide together what adaptations will improve communication. For example, you may discuss how communication strategies can be adapted to meet the needs of people with hearing impairments with a staff member who has a hearing loss.



Adaptations may include ensuring that written and verbal communication occurs at staff meetings to meet different communication styles of the team. It could mean training for the team to communicate effectively with a hearing impaired staff member, or ensuring a computer has an appropriate screen cover to assist a staff member with a learning disability to read more easily. Cultural diversity training may also be a way to facilitate effective communication within the team.

Identify processes for adapting strategies

Adapting communication protocols requires a series of steps to be taken in order to work effectively within a particular context. It is important to identify an appropriate process and follow it to ensure that the adaptation meets the organisation's objectives and values. Begin with reviewing the communication strategies your organisation has in place. For example, analyse the demographics of the team in terms of culture, language, experience and communication styles. Consider whether the communication strategies you are using meet the needs of everyone on the team. If not, you should decide how the strategies can be adapted. This should include a conversation with team members to gain their input. Develop a proposal to adapt the organisation's communication strategies and discuss with relevant stakeholders within the organisation.

Below is another process you could follow to adapt a protocol.

Adapting a protocol

Consider who will be involved in the process and set up a meeting.

Be clear on the purpose – why does this protocol need adapting?

Identify changes that are required.

Document changes.

Implement new communication protocol within the organisation.

Example

Adapt communication strategies to suit a range of contexts

Ruth manages a team of staff who provide perinatal support services to young parents. The team meets regularly for case discussions, and Ruth has an open door policy for informal discussions with the team. The organisation has a policy that all case notes must be updated within two days of any interaction with a young person. Ruth notices that one staff member, despite frequent reminders, does not complete the written case notes in the electronic system. Ruth meets with the staff member to discuss her concerns and discovers that the staff member has difficulty reading computer screens. She describes to Ruth how the writing on the screen swirls around. Ruth and the staff member discuss options and Ruth discovers that a simple coloured screen cover and changing the font and background colour will make working much easier for the staff member and allow her to complete written communication requirements.



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Practice task 5

1. What are two contexts in which a communication protocol may need to be adapted?

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2. Describe an adaptation to a communication protocol that you could make for each context you provided in question 1.

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[Click to complete Practice task 5](#)

2B Develop processes and protocols in line with communication strategies

Communication strategies provide a framework for communication within the organisation, and these strategies then guide the development of processes and protocols that identify steps to good communication practices. These processes and protocols provide staff with clear guidelines for communicating within the organisation and to external stakeholders. It is important that you ensure that processes and protocols are in line with agreed organisational communication strategies to provide consistency and clear understanding.



Processes and protocols

The organisation's communication strategies outline the communication goals and methods with all stakeholders. These strategies must guide the development of processes and protocols to ensure consistency in communication, particularly to external stakeholders. They should include any legal or ethical considerations, and should follow legislative and organisational guidelines relating to privacy and confidentiality, informed consent, discrimination and duty of care.

Some other issues to consider when developing these processes and protocols are listed below.

A communication process or protocol should include:

- ▶ what is being communicated
- ▶ who is being communicated with and who within the organisation is responsible for the communication
- ▶ when the communication should take place
- ▶ how much detail should be included
- ▶ what format should be used (for example, phone, meeting, email, text, letter)
- ▶ who and how will communication be followed up
- ▶ whether there are mandatory reporting requirements for this communication and how they will be addressed.

Legal and ethical considerations relating to communication

Any organisational processes or protocols must be in line with relevant legislation and meet basic ethical requirements in community services. You should be familiar with legislation that relates to communication and ensure that these guide the development of processes and protocols. Legislation relating to privacy, mandatory reporting and discrimination are particularly important.

You should also be familiar with your sector’s ethical guidelines and how they impact communication (for example, being non-judgmental and respectful). Your specific sector may have its own code of ethics (for example, the Youth Work Code of Ethics).

You can read an example of a code of ethics at <http://aspirelr.link/acwa-ethics-and-standards>

Privacy, confidentiality and disclosure

When discussing a person’s situation, always be aware of maintaining their privacy. You must protect confidential details. You always need the person’s consent if you wish to talk about their situation. People are often happy to give their consent because they know you want to help.

Maintaining confidentiality is part of respecting a person’s privacy and individual rights. In practice, confidentiality means not discussing an individual’s personal information unless they have given their consent for this to happen. There are exceptional circumstances that do enable you to disclose private information but this is generally only when you become aware that someone may harm themselves or someone else.



You can read more about privacy, confidentiality and disclosure at:

- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/law-handbook-privacy-confidentiality>

Collection, use and storage of information

In March 2014, new legislation affecting privacy laws came into effect. It amended the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and introduced 13 new Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), which replaced existing privacy principles. These APPs apply to government agencies and many private sector organisations, including health service providers.

Here is more information.

Collection, use and storage of personal information

- 1

Open and transparent management of personal information

Ensures that organisations manage personal information in an open and transparent way.
- 2

Anonymity and pseudonymity

Requires organisations to give individuals the option of not identifying themselves, or of using a pseudonym. Some exceptions apply.
- 3

Collection of solicited personal information

Outlines when an organisation can collect personal information that is solicited. It applies higher standards to the collection of ‘sensitive’ information.
- 4

Dealing with unsolicited personal information

Outlines how organisations must deal with unsolicited personal information.

- 5 Notification of the collection of personal information**
Outlines when and in what circumstances an organisation that collects personal information must notify an individual of certain matters.
- 6 Use or disclosure of personal information**
Outlines the circumstances in which an organisation may use or disclose personal information that it holds.
- 7 Direct marketing**
An organisation may only use or disclose personal information for direct marketing purposes if certain conditions are met.
- 8 Cross-border disclosure of personal information**
Outlines the steps an organisation must take to protect personal information before it is disclosed overseas.
- 9 Adoption, use or disclosure of government-related identifiers**
Outlines the limited circumstances when an organisation may adopt a government-related identifier of an individual as its own identifier, or use or disclose a government-related identifier of an individual.
- 10 Quality of personal information**
An organisation must take reasonable steps to ensure the personal information it collects is accurate, up to date and complete.
- 11 Security of personal information**
An organisation must take reasonable steps to protect personal information it holds from misuse, interference and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. An entity has obligations to destroy or de-identify personal information in certain circumstances.
- 12 Access to personal information**
Outlines an organisation's obligations when an individual requests to be given access to personal information held about them by the organisation.
- 13 Correction of personal information**
Outlines an organisation's obligations in relation to correcting the personal information it holds about individuals.

Discrimination

Discrimination means treating different categories of people in an unjust or prejudicial manner –especially on the grounds of race, age or sex. In Australia there are Commonwealth and State laws that make it illegal to discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender or race. You are required to work within this legislation, which means that any communication process or protocol must meet these standards. Here is more information on specific discrimination legislation.

Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)

This legislation aims to:

- ▶ stop discrimination based on age
- ▶ protect everyone's legal rights regardless of their age
- ▶ help others understand that everyone has the same rights
- ▶ remove barriers that stop older people from joining in work activities and being part of society
- ▶ remove stereotypes and false beliefs about older people.

Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)

This legislation aims to:

- ▶ promote equality before the law for everyone, regardless of their race, colour or ethnic origin
- ▶ make discrimination against people on the basis of their race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin unlawful.

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

This legislation aims to:

- ▶ prevent discrimination based on gender or marital status
- ▶ prevent sexual harassment.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

This legislation aims to:

- ▶ prevent discrimination on the basis of disability
- ▶ promote fairness to individuals who have a disability and their families.

Duty of care

Community services organisations and workers have a responsibility to provide a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of people in receipt of their services and their colleagues. Legislative and regulatory obligations underpin an organisation's policies, which determine the procedures to guide service delivery that promotes and enhances the safety and wellbeing of people. When developing communication processes and protocols, you must ensure that your duty of care is taken into consideration. This relates to what is communicated and how. You should consider the impact of any communication on staff and people receiving services.

Here is more information about duty of care.

Duty of care

Duty of care is the obligation a person has to act in a way that would not cause harm. This means being careful that communication is respectful and takes into consideration the wellbeing of the person whether they are a staff member or person receiving services.

Negligence

Negligence occurs when duty of care has been breached and harm to either person or property ensues. It is the legal and ethical obligation of any community worker, supervisor or organisation to ensure that people using services are not exposed to unnecessary or unreasonable risk.

Dignity of risk

The rights of people to dignity and choice, upheld in legislation and service standards, also require that duty of care or safety is not used as a reason to limit a person's freedom or personal choice. A support worker's adherence to duty of care and safety must be coupled with the concept of dignity of risk, which means that a person has the right to make their own choices and to take risks. These rights must be considered in any communication process or protocol.

Mandatory reporting

In some circumstances, community services staff are required, by law, to report abuse, neglect or violence. Each state and territory has their own legislation regarding mandatory reporting. The main differences are regarding who must report and what types of abuse or neglect must be reported. It is your responsibility to be aware of your mandatory reporting obligations and to develop appropriate communication protocols to meet these obligations both internally and to the reporting body. You must be alert to and aware of your reporting obligations relating to:

- ▶ elder abuse
- ▶ abuse of people with disabilities
- ▶ domestic violence
- ▶ child abuse or neglect
- ▶ suspected abuse or neglect of any person.



Informed consent

Informed consent refers to the need for organisations to obtain a person's permission before releasing confidential information to a third party, or before the person participates in a program. Informed consent must be part of any communication process or protocol.

Examples of when and why informed consent should be included in communication processes can be seen below.

When to include informed consent in processes

To know how, why and when to share a person's information with another person or organisation

To provide clear information in a format that is understandable for the person

To provide clear communication of programs and services and the person's options

To ensure the person understands they can refuse or withdraw consent

When documentation is kept noting the person's consent (this could be a signed consent form)

When providing interpreters or other resources to ensure the person understands the information provided

Ensure the information is accessible to all

From a legal and ethical perspective, communication must be accessible to all stakeholders regardless of their age, disability, gender or race. By definition, communication is an exchange of information between communication partners, so if one partner has not understood the message, then communication has not been successful.

Here is how you can ensure information is accessible to all.

Ensuring accessibility of information

- ▶ Consider the most likely communication scenarios that occur in your workplace and the strategies and processes that may be needed for these.
- ▶ Meet the needs of and demonstrate respect for the cultures and languages of your organisation and the people who receive services.
- ▶ Analyse the demographics of the people living in a particular local government area to identify the community languages spoken and cultures represented.
- ▶ Make sure any information is inclusive and free from discrimination, insensitive language and anything that may cause offence.

Processes and protocols

A communication process is the set of steps you take in order to achieve successful communication. A communication protocol is a set of expected practices in communication for your organisation. These processes and protocols that should cover all forms of communication used by your organisation including phone, face-to-face, meetings, email, texting and social media. They should be guided by your organisation's communication strategies to ensure consistency of message and process.

Communication processes and protocols should address some of these issues below.

Internal communication hierarchies

There should be a clear process for communication within your organisational hierarchy. Generally staff would communicate directly with their line managers or supervisors; however, in some situations they may need to communicate with a person who deals with a specific task or issue. For example, there may be a person delegated to complete intake assessments or to manage mandatory reporting requirements.

Talking to the media

It is important for an organisation to be clear and consistent in communication with the media. To facilitate this, most organisations delegate one person (often the CEO or communication manager) to communicate with the media through press releases or interviews. Staff need to understand the organisation's protocols regarding media involvement.

Using social media

Social media can be a useful way to communicate with stakeholders; however, there needs to be clear protocols on how social media is used by the organisation. This includes who will update social media, and who will monitor it to ensure any responses are addressed immediately.

Organisational protocols and etiquette for communication

A starting point for developing communication processes and protocols is to ensure that you have clear knowledge and understanding of any current protocols that exist within the organisation. This could guide your development of any new protocols, but may also reduce the amount of work you need to do as existing protocols may just need updating or may already meet the communication needs of the organisation.

Communication etiquette refers to the often unwritten rules and expectations of an organisation regarding communication. Etiquette is likely to be in line with the organisation's values and could include expectations of respectful communication, culturally appropriate communication, timely communication and channels of communication.



Example

Processes and protocols in line with communication strategies

Bill works for a large community services organisation. He has always been a 'go it alone' sort of employee. He sees little need for corporate communications and the world of policies and procedures. He prefers to simply do his day-to-day job well and avoids contributing much to team meetings, discussions and reviews of systems and processes.

One day Bill is particularly happy with the work he has completed on an outdoor construction project with a group of clients who are homeless and volunteer supporters. On a whim, he calls the local newspaper. They visit the site and Bill is surprised when they quickly begin photographing the clients and interviewing the volunteers. The questions seem aggressive and confrontational, and focus on the organisation's involvement in a recent court case – of which Bill knows only a few vague details. The clients and volunteers rapidly become distressed, and Bill finds himself out of his depth.



An unflattering article and several photos appear several days later in the newspaper, and Bill is called into his manager's office to explain his inability to follow workplace procedures, as Bill should have contacted the media and communications department rather than calling the newspaper personally.

Bill has learnt a valuable lesson about following procedures and the importance of organisation-wide communications strategies. Unfortunately, Bill's manager is left to resolve the complaints by volunteers and clients, report to her own manager about the breach of procedure in their work team and identify the communication gaps and issues that led to this situation.

Practice task 6

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Alison is supporting Zoe after she was released from an inpatient clinic. Alison notices that Zoe seems quite stressed and finds out that her regular psychologist is on holiday for three months and Zoe does not have another one lined up. Alison briefly mentions to Zoe that she will look into it before the end of her shift.

Alison contacts a counselling service and faxes through Zoe's details and mental health history and sets up a counselling session for Zoe.

1. Explain privacy and confidentiality and why it is important in this situation.

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2. Explain informed consent. What could Alison have done to ensure Zoe gave informed consent?

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Click to complete Practice task 6

2C Prepare information and resources to support the implementation of communication protocols

Communication protocols are practical guidelines and, once developed and documented, need to be implemented by your team or the whole organisation in order to be useful. You will need to share the communication protocols with staff in the most effective manner. In order to do this, you will need to prepare clear and concise information and resources to support staff in the implementation process.

Information and resources to support the implementation of protocols

Decide what types of information and/or resources staff need in order to implement a communication protocol. Think about the specific communication needs of your staff, and how much time will be required for each method in comparison to the time you have to implement the protocol.

Who needs to know about the protocol and how will the protocol be clear and useable for staff? What format will be most effective in sharing this information and should you discuss it at a staff meeting or place posters in prominent places?

You may develop these resources yourself, or find existing resources that you could adapt, keeping in mind that you must consider any relevant copyright laws. You can model the communication protocol by demonstrating clear communication in the way you implement the protocol.

Resources that can be used to implement a protocol include:

- ▶ written resources like a summary or an example of the protocol
- ▶ visual resources like graphs or a flow chart demonstrating the protocol steps
- ▶ a slideshow to use at a staff meeting outlining and demonstrating the protocol
- ▶ a prepared case study or role play to provide staff with an opportunity to practise the protocol
- ▶ digital resources such as an email outlining the protocol with links to the documentation
- ▶ posters in appropriate places reminding staff of the protocol or small reminders placed near phones or computers.

Example

Information and resources to support the implementation of communication protocols

Claire has developed a communication protocol about responding to telephone inquiries to the organisation. Claire presents the information at a staff meeting and prepares a flow chart, which outlines who calls should be forwarded to depending on the type of inquiry. She hands the chart each staff member. Claire takes questions at the meeting and adds the extension numbers of relevant staff to the flow chart to make it easier to use. She then follows up by ensuring that a copy of the flow chart is laminated next to each phone in the organisation.

Practice task 7

1. What types of resources could you use to help implement a communication protocol?

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2. What should you consider when deciding what information or resources to use when implementing a protocol?

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Click to complete Practice task 7

Summary

1. Communication strategies may need to be adapted to meet the requirements of different contexts.
2. Organisations will need to develop processes and protocols that provide the steps to implementing communication strategies. Communication protocols and processes should consider ethical and legislative requirements.
3. The implementation of communication protocols will require the preparation of appropriate information and resources.

Learning checkpoint 2

Establish communication protocols

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in establishing communication protocols.

Part A

1. Explain what informed consent is and why it is important.

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2. How can communication protocols support mandatory reporting obligations?

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3. Explain what a communication protocol should include.

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Part B

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow.

Scenario

You have been asked to develop a communication strategy to promote a new program to potential participants. The program will work specifically with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

1. What process would you use to adapt existing communication strategies?

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2. What are the legal and/or ethical considerations?

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Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Present information to staff regarding communication strategies, protocols and organisation standards**

- 3B Model effective oral and written communication and provide mentoring and/or coaching to staff**

- 3C Maintain work-related networks and relationships to meet organisation objectives**

Promote the use of communication strategies

It is important that organisational communication strategies are not just documents stored in a file somewhere, but are part of daily work practice. You must ensure that all staff are aware of communication strategies and protocols and that they have the information they need to communicate effectively in line with these strategies. You will also need to model these communication strategies to staff and ensure that you provide appropriate coaching to new staff – or to all staff when there is a new protocol or strategy.

Communication is, of course, about building and maintaining effective relationships with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that the objectives of the organisation are achieved.

3A Present information to staff regarding communication strategies, protocols and organisation standards

All staff need to be clear on the communication strategies, protocols and standards of the organisation. This supports clear and consistent messages and communication both internally and with external stakeholders. In presenting communication strategies and protocols to staff, you will need to decide what information particular staff need, and the most effective way of presenting this information to them, including the format you will use, the equipment you might need, and how you will prepare to present the information.



Presentations

If you are required to present information to staff at your organisation, it is crucial that each presentation is conducted professionally and the audience is provided with accurate, up-to-date information in a relaxed setting. A high-quality presentation will leave an audience with a positive impression of both the presenter and a clear understanding of the content of the presentation. With practice, you will develop skills in choosing material appropriately, presenting effectively, and adapting your material and approach to suit the needs of the audience.



Types of presentations

Presentations may be regular informal presentations during team and staff meetings or they may be more formal training opportunities.

Here are some examples of presentation types.

Formal presentation

A formal presentation is a planned and professional format, requiring research, preparation and the ability to present material confidently in a predetermined way. These are suitable for providing information to the community; for example, at meetings, conferences, seminars, open days or information sessions.

Workshop

A workshop is an interactive presentation that may combine some formal delivery of content with audience participation through guided activities and questions. These are suitable for a group of professional colleagues who work in a similar area, have similar levels of knowledge about a topic, and learn well by 'doing' rather than simply listening.

Panel discussion

A panel discussion is a group presentation where several professionals present information and respond to questions about a specific topic in a panel format. A panel discussion works well at a conference where representatives of different agencies may present current findings from research and share experiences with the audience.

Internal forums

An internal forum is a presentation given to people who are directly involved with your organisation, such as management, staff members, support workers or volunteers. Even when you present to an audience you are familiar with, such as team members, you are representing the organisation, so you must be professional and well prepared. It is essential that you understand the audience and their needs and present the information appropriately.

You may need to present information on communication strategies, protocols and standards to different people within the organisation. Some of these presentations are described below.

Other types of presentations

- ▶ Overview of the organisation's communication strategies at a team meeting, staff meeting or planning session
- ▶ Explanation and discussion of a communication protocol and how staff will be implementing it at a workshop or training session
- ▶ Outline of the organisation's standards and expectations of staff at a staff meeting, or workshop
- ▶ Formal presentation to senior management or the Board

Prepare for the presentation

When giving a presentation, prepare the information well beforehand so you are confident about the topic. Consider the staff you will be presenting to and choose the media appropriately. Be familiar with the venue where you are presenting and its facilities. Time how long it takes you to set up any equipment safely, give your presentation, respond to questions and then pack away your equipment afterwards. Your presentation should follow a logical sequence, and you should introduce your topics clearly and effectively. Ask colleagues to suggest queries an audience may have to help you prepare for questions.

- ▶ Presentation preparation requires:
 - ▶ researching for the presentation
 - ▶ selecting the media
 - ▶ meeting audience needs
 - ▶ providing time for questions
 - ▶ setting the time line for the presentation
 - ▶ preparing the order of the presentation.

Research for the presentation

Staff need to be confident that you can be trusted to provide current and accurate information. Material that is not relevant, is of a poor quality or has no factual basis does not help to ensure understanding of a communication protocol or strategy. Research your topic if necessary using internal and external sources of information. Be clear on the purpose of the talk and the needs and interests of your audience.



Select the media

Presentations often combine a visual and a verbal element to engage an audience. A well-researched presentation may be unsuccessful if it is presented through the wrong medium, or without images and a varied approach to bring it to life. However, some presentations are more effective if you simply talk directly to the audience without using audio-visual technology, which may dominate the information and distract the audience. It may be more appropriate to use a workshop format to engage staff members and to utilise their expertise.

Consider the following when selecting media.

Slides

Many people use electronic presentation software such as Microsoft PowerPoint, which allows you to create a slideshow that may incorporate movement and sound as well as still images. Your organisation's logo and date of presentation should be included as a header or footer on each slide. You may want to develop a template to ensure all presentations follow the same format. Ensure that you use a large font size and slides do not contain too much written information.

Practise

Practise beforehand so you know how to operate the data projector (which can display a presentation directly from a USB device or laptop), and how long your presentation will last whilst using the equipment. You also need to check that slides and text can be seen and read easily from the back of the room.

Aids

Be aware of assistive technology you may have to use, such as an audio loop for people with a vision impairment that is turned on from a central point; large venues usually have a speaker's lectern that contains technology operating devices, so check these during your preparations.

Work health and safety

Make sure cords are taped down and that equipment does not block walkways or exits. Do not try to move heavy equipment by yourself. Some people prefer to present from behind a lectern to reduce their need to move around the room, thereby reducing the chance of tripping on objects such as cords.

Meet audience needs

There are factors you need to consider to ensure your presentation communicates the required information to the staff members as effectively as possible. These include the following.

Focus, language and pace

- ▶ Arrange your content to suit the particular group you are addressing; for example, take their prior knowledge of the subject into consideration.
- ▶ Ensure the information you provide is accurate and current.
- ▶ Stay on topic. If you get side-tracked, you will lose their concentration.
- ▶ Use language that is easy to understand; in some cases, industry-specific jargon is acceptable and needed.
- ▶ Always speak clearly and at a comfortable pace for easy listening.

Cultural protocols

Address any cultural protocols; for example an 'acknowledgment of country' that recognises the traditional owners of the land on which the gathering is being held is important. It can be made by anyone and is a sign of respect for the Aboriginal community.

Other considerations may include protocols relating to:

- ▶ handshaking
- ▶ touching another person
- ▶ making eye contact.

Provide for people with disability

Before making your presentation, consider the special needs of staff and meet those needs by:

- ▶ facing towards people who use speech reading or other assistive technology
- ▶ simplifying complex ideas and matching visuals and spoken content closely for people with language or cognitive difficulties
- ▶ checking that a facility has an audio induction loop system available, or working with a signing interpreter who can translate/interpret your spoken content.

Information formats

- ▶ Provide handouts, information leaflets, brochures and other informative materials that staff may need to follow up the presentation.
- ▶ Provide a large-print version of handouts when appropriate.
- ▶ Offer information in languages other than English where relevant.

Each of these supports takes some degree of preparation beforehand, so it is worth thinking about the individual needs of staff.

Provide time for questions

You should always provide time for questions to allow staff the opportunity to interact. Some people feel let down if they are not allowed to comment or pose a question to the presenter about an issue that arises from the presentation. It is important to consider the following.

When to provide time for questions

Depending on the presentation content, you may prefer to have questions asked either throughout the presentation or after it, although you may need to be flexible on this to meet your audience needs. Some audiences may not be able to wait until the end of a presentation as they may forget their question or have difficulties making a cognitive link back to earlier information. You should also try to anticipate the types of questions that may be asked and be prepared with responses.

How to invite questions

When appropriate, you may prefer to invite audience members to write their questions on a whiteboard during a break in the presentation, so the information can then be referred to visually as well as verbally. This strategy is useful as the basis for workshoping or discussion activities after a formal presentation. This approach also means audience members can ask questions as you move around the room, and encourages anyone who is shy about asking questions in a large group to feel able to question you in a less intimidating way.

Set the time line and prepare the order

Confirm the length of time the presentation will take. Plan each part of the presentation by allocating time to each component to ensure you do not go over the prescribed time. A presentation that runs over time can interfere with work schedules and staff may become bored and restless. Time yourself giving the presentation. Allow for nervousness, the type of audience, digital technology and questions.

Presentations often follow a specific order, as outlined below.

Acknowledgment of country

You should provide an 'acknowledgment of country' statement, which shows respect to the Aboriginal people who own the land on which the presentation is occurring.

Introduction

You may introduce yourself if not all staff have met you. Greet the staff and briefly explain what your presentation is about. Be clear and concise.

Housekeeping

Depending on the location, you may need to cover housekeeping items such as, toilet locations, time for questions, breaks and meals, and assistive technology requirements. Make sure the staff are fully aware of the emergency evacuation procedures.

Presentation

Use audiovisual technology correctly and safely. Watch the audience as you speak to gauge interest and attention. Ensure you stick as closely as possible to the timing for your presentation, and leave time for questions from the audience.

Resources and references

Some speakers show a list of references they have used or sources they have mentioned in case people wish to refer to them. If you have materials for distribution, decide when you will distribute them and let the staff know this.

Conclusion

Conclude your presentation clearly and effectively, rather than simply trailing off with a comment such as 'Well that's about all'. You could conclude with a statement about what the next step in implementation of the communication strategy or protocol will be.

Questions

Encourage questions, making sure you take them from a range of people. Repeat the questions so everyone knows what was asked. Keep responses brief. If you don't know the answer, say so and refer them to someone who can answer them.

Moving off

After the presentation, you may need to make yourself available for individual questions, spend time packing up your equipment or hand out brochures or information pages related to your presentation and organisation.

Make the presentation

Arrive early so you can set up equipment and check everything is working. Remember to have a glass of water close by in case your throat gets dry.

Think back to the last time you watched a skilful presenter: how did they make you feel about themselves and their work? What features do you remember about how they presented information and engaged the audience?

Some presentation strategies to consider are below.

Presentation strategies

- ▶ Use gestures and body language effectively.
- ▶ Do not overdo hand gestures; use them effectively to emphasise key points.
- ▶ Make eye contact and smile at various audience members to reach out and engage them from the start.
- ▶ Refer to your notes only occasionally.
- ▶ Speak slowly and modify your voice so everyone can hear – especially if you are not using a microphone.
- ▶ Check that the audience understands what you are saying by observing their facial expressions; notice whether they are becoming restless.

Consider audience needs

It is important to be aware of your audience; for example, your audience may include people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Communication barriers are very common and it is helpful to learn how to engage with CALD people as an audience.

Always speak clearly and respond appropriately as people may have difficulty hearing or do not have English as their first language.

Here is what you need to consider in meeting audience special needs.

Aids

If an audience member uses assistive technology, you may need to paraphrase a question so everyone understands what has been asked before you proceed to answer it. For example, you may say, 'So you are asking what happens if there is no disabled parking permit available in the client's home for use during outings?' This ensures everyone knows the topic of the question.

Signing

Consider the needs of audience members who are relying on a sign language interpreter to provide information to them. You may need to pause briefly after a question has been asked so the interpreter can sign it, and then give your answer. Allow time for the interpreter to present your response. Talk with the interpreter prior to the presentation so you can clarify the best way of working together.

Interpreters

The same applies if you are working with an interpreter who is interpreting from your language to another language. Ensure the interpreter is prepared and ready to begin before you start speaking; you need to build small breaks into what you say so it can be interpreted. You may like to practise with an interpreter before you begin your presentation so you feel comfortable talking in this style. You also need to consider how much time this will add to the overall length of your presentation and plan accordingly.

Example

Present information to staff regarding communication strategies, protocols and organisation standards

Luke has just developed a new communication protocol regarding the use of the organisation’s social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter. Luke knows that many staff are active on social media and are enthusiastic to participate in these forums; however, in order to ensure the content on social media is accurate, timely and appropriate, the organisation is putting in place a specific protocol.



Luke organises a time slot at a staff meeting to discuss the protocol with staff. He prepares a handout that includes a flow chart indicating social media responsibility. He also prepares a brief verbal overview of the protocol and prepares as much as possible for potential questions from staff. Luke makes a brief 10 minute presentation at the staff meeting outlining the new protocol. He gives staff the handout and briefly explains it. He then takes another 10 minutes of questions. Luke wraps up by explaining that the protocol will be implemented immediately and that it will be reviewed in six months. He also invites feedback from staff via email at any point.

Practice task 8

You have been asked to present information at a staff training day about the organisation’s communication strategy for promoting programs to external stakeholders.

1. Discuss what type of presentation you would use and why.

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2. What do you need to consider in terms of your audience?

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Click to complete Practice task 8

3B Model effective oral and written communication and provide mentoring and/or coaching to staff

While it is important for organisations to have clear communication strategies and protocols and to present these to staff, often the most effective way of ensuring effective communication is by modelling it for staff. This means ensuring that your verbal and written communication follows the organisation's strategies and protocols and that it is clear, accurate and meets the organisation's standards.

You may also want to actively mentor or coach staff members in professional and effective communication during professional supervision sessions, by scheduling specific times, or by taking informal opportunities as they present themselves.

Communicate professionally

Team leaders and managers play an important role in modelling positive, professional conduct when communicating in verbal or written forms.

You communicate professionally by:

- ▶ listening actively to others
- ▶ using professional and courteous language
- ▶ avoiding discrimination, stereotypes and inappropriate jokes or comments that may offend
- ▶ adapting your communication method to suit the needs of the other person
- ▶ ensuring all written communication is accurate and professional
- ▶ using communication technology appropriately.

Act as a role model

Modelling can be a powerful tool for teaching knowledge, skills and values. Learning from role models occurs through observation and reflection. It allows staff to see managers 'walk the walk' and allows you to demonstrate specific skills and encourage staff when they are doing well.

Strategies to become a better role model are listed below.

Strategies to become a better role model

- ▶ Be aware of what you are modelling and the impact you are having on staff.
- ▶ Ensure that you are demonstrating communication that meets the standards and protocols of the organisation.
- ▶ Demonstrate respectful communication with staff and all other stakeholders.
- ▶ Make time to reflect and discuss what is being learnt with staff.
- ▶ Make an effort to articulate what you are trying to model to staff.

Model appropriate behaviour

It can sometimes be challenging to know that staff are watching you and modelling their behaviour on what they see you do; however, staff are much more likely to 'do as you do' than 'do as you say'. It is important that you pay attention to not just what you say, but how you say it. Make sure you are personally meeting organisational standards regarding professional and respectful language, and that you follow communication protocols when communicating with staff or external stakeholders. Also consider the impact of cultural diversity in terms of language and body language.



Model effective written communication

In order to model effective written communication, you must ensure that all written communication that you produce follows organisational standards, strategies and protocols. This means that you need to carefully review your written communication before it leaves your desk to ensure that emails, letters, reports and case notes are accurate, professional and appropriate. Ensure you also check the basics like spelling and grammar, appropriate format or letterhead, and appropriate fonts. You should also check that you are following protocols; for example, what is your organisation's protocol on forwarding joke emails to everyone in the organisation?



Mentoring and coaching

Mentoring and coaching are effective ways of encouraging improved communication in your organisation. These strategies allow you to work alongside staff to increase their verbal and written communication skills and to encourage best practice.

Below is a definition of mentoring and coaching.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a relationship between two individuals based on a mutual desire for development towards career goals and objectives. It pairs a skilled or experienced mentor to provide encouragement, challenge assumptions, support ideas and share experiences with a less-experienced mentee.

Coaching

Coaching uses qualified people to work with staff to improve their effectiveness and performance, to develop their skills and to deal with issues before they become problems.

Principles of mentoring

There are principles that ensure that mentoring is done effectively and meets good practice standards. Principles of mentoring are listed below.

Important principles of mentoring

- ▶ Regular, consistent contact between the mentor and mentee
- ▶ Mentor has appropriate skills and experience
- ▶ Both parties are willing to learn and grow
- ▶ Clear purpose to the mentoring relationship
- ▶ Confidentiality is maintained
- ▶ Boundaries of the mentoring relationship are clarified

Principles of coaching

Coaching includes supporting a person to develop and practise skills. Below are some principles of coaching to consider.

Principles of coaching

- ▶ Build the person's confidence and self-esteem – create a safe space
- ▶ Validate understanding – develop a shared view between coach and team member through listening and engaging
- ▶ Set goals
- ▶ Generate options – encourage the person to generate options for the situation
- ▶ Motivate the person to take action and to practise skills
- ▶ Review and acknowledge improvements

Provide coaching and mentoring in communication

Effective, high-quality communication is vital at all levels of community services work. For some staff members, however, being able to communicate well in written and spoken English may not come easily in all situations. Some staff may require additional support to build skills and confidence in communication whether in formal or informal situations.

Communication opportunities in a community services workplace

There are many opportunities to communicate in a community services workplace and many chances for you to provide coaching or mentoring to build skills and improve performance.

Some communication requirements in different community services workplaces, and the key performance areas where coaching or mentoring attention may be focused, are described below.

Residential aged care facility

Type of communication: Case notes

Coaching/mentoring focus:

- ▶ Clear and legible handwriting
- ▶ Record details objectively
- ▶ Avoid slang or inappropriate language
- ▶ Good spelling and accuracy of information
- ▶ Include all required details to meet organisational requirements

In-home respite care for clients with a disability

Type of communication: Care plan/individual client plan

Coaching/mentoring focus:

- ▶ Include all detail to enable effective care
- ▶ Use clear, simple and accurate language that can be read and understood by workers
- ▶ Adhere to privacy and confidentiality requirements

Carer support

Type of communication: Verbal presentations to groups of carers

Coaching focus:

- ▶ Provide appropriate information
- ▶ Use humour
- ▶ Respect individual differences and needs
- ▶ Have the ability to project their voice
- ▶ Adhere to time frames and topic requirements

Youth outreach

Types of communication:

- ▶ Age-appropriate posters, brochures, web pages and blog posts
- ▶ Case notes
- ▶ Critical incident responses

Coaching/mentoring focus:

- ▶ Use appropriate language
- ▶ Include key information
- ▶ Use a blend of visual and written information

Community support for new arrivals in Australia

Types of communication:

- ▶ Multilingual documents, brochures, posters
- ▶ Translated information, documents and fact sheets

Coaching/mentoring focus:

- ▶ Accurate translations
- ▶ Appropriate translator choices
- ▶ Use a mix of visual and written information

Coaching in communication

Coaching is a formal procedure that requires a set timetable and framework. As a coach, your role is to provide support and training to help a staff member build new skills and extend existing ones.

Here are some considerations in making available coaching to staff.

Your role as a team leader or manager

As a team leader, you may need to be:

- ▶ proactive; that is, provide support before a skill is required (for example, before a staff member gives a verbal presentation at a conference)
- ▶ reactive; that is, respond to a problem, concern or complaint (for example, respond to a document you have received that does not meet the required standard).

Coaching team members

The person you are coaching must be comfortable with the situation, and understand and agree to the coaching program's aim and objectives. Effective coaching calls for good interpersonal and communication skills, and coaching strategies such as demonstrations, providing feedback and arranging opportunities for practise. Watch experienced colleagues if you have not coached before and ask for their tips.

Drawing on the skills of others

You may be able to draw on the skills and expertise of other team members to provide additional coaching support at times when you are unavailable. This is a highly effective strategy as it encourages broad skill development throughout a work team, and prevents reliance on a single person to provide all the coaching and training support. Sometimes it may be an option to engage an external training provider for coaching.

Coaching guidance

Here is a process to follow when providing coaching to staff.

Coaching process

- 1** Identify where the person needs to improve. This may be a proactive or reactive strategy.
- 2** Set aside coaching time and prepare a plan so both parties are clear on what support is being provided, time lines and the desired outcome.
- 3** Do not assume the person has any prior knowledge. Instead, spend time exploring strengths and areas for improvement with them.
- 4** Give clear, precise information. Break down complex tasks into sections so the parts become more manageable and easier to understand.
- 5** Ask open questions to encourage dialogue, such as, 'How do you feel about talking at our next meeting?' rather than a question that can only have a yes/no response.
- 6** Show rather than tell, so the staff member observes you performing a task, such as going through the process of developing a written document.
- 7** Provide good-quality practice opportunities that are meaningful, practical and offer scope for improvement.
- 8** Provide feedback in a meaningful and positive way, focusing on what has been done well in addition to where improvements can be made.
- 9** Monitor improvements and difficulties over time, so you can modify your coaching approach as needed and ensure that progress continues to be made.

Example

Model effective oral and written communication and provide mentoring and/or coaching to staff

Gemma was asked to present information about a new outreach project at a conference. She has never spoken in front of a group before, and is extremely nervous. Her supervisor observes her first attempt at presenting the information in front of a small group from their work team.

This is Gemma's introduction:

'Hi, I'm Gemma. I'm, um, going to talk to you, er, about our youth outreach project. We started with five, I mean, a small group of about five adolescent boys who were coming each week to our drop-in centre. (Pause while Gemma consults her notes). The project started with a meeting, well, actually first we put up some posters around the community, but then it was only really the same five who were interested, so that's how we started ...'

Clearly Gemma's nerves have got the better of her, and she needs some support in preparing her material and presenting confidently.

Gemma's supervisor:

- ▶ talks to her about how she feels giving a presentation
- ▶ shows her a link to a website with tips on public speaking
- ▶ praises her for having the courage to attempt her presentation in front of a team, and reassures her that they are all on her side and want her to do well
- ▶ helps her draft an introductory sentence to begin her presentation
- ▶ discusses the importance of speaking clearly and slowly
- ▶ provides practise opportunities
- ▶ organises for the marketing department to work with Gemma to prepare professional slides for her presentation.



3C Maintain work-related networks and relationships to meet organisation objectives

An important part of your role is likely to be developing and maintaining relationships to support and promote your organisation. Effective networking involves recognising and nurturing valuable work-related relationships to achieve objectives. This means an important strategy for effective communication is maintaining networks and relationships both internally and externally with other organisations and individuals.



Types of work-related networks

A network is a term for all those links and relationships you have with other people or groups as part of your work duties. Many networks exist in a community services workplace, including the following.

Internal networks

Networks can exist within a single work team, where a group of people work closely with each other on a regular basis and with similar work tasks. Team or group members can share information and experiences to promote learning.

A wider network also exists across an organisation, where key people may interact on a semi-regular basis for the purposes of sharing knowledge and information or tasks, or providing support related to their area of expertise.

External networks

An extensive external network includes other service organisations, government departments, community groups and the public sector. These may be local networks in a geographical area, networks for a specific sector like youth work or disability, or broader community services networks. There are also online networks; for example, you may take advantage of networking websites such as LinkedIn, which allows you to build networks according to specific work interests. Always be wary of the information you share in an online context. Never share personal details or confidential organisational information in an open forum.

Importance of work-related networks and relationships

There are numerous benefits to networks, including their ability to help your organisation meet its objectives regarding communication and service provision. The benefit of networks is that they are an effective forum for sharing information between team members and organisations. They can support your organisation's communication strategies by helping to promote programs and services to a broad range of people in a short period of time.

Networks can assist organisations to learn what others are doing, about best practice, or what is new in the sector. They also provide a forum to share resources. For example, you may be able to learn how another organisation is using social media to engage with stakeholders and to share information. You can take this back to your own organisation to add to your existing or new communication strategies regarding social media.

Networks also provide opportunities to identify possible partnerships or projects that can be collaborated on.



Use networks to share information

Each network requires access to varying types and levels of information and different approaches for communication. This will depend on who is represented in the network.

Some examples of strategies that could be used with different networks to share information are below.

People who receive services and stakeholders

- ▶ Regular face-to-face meetings or get-togethers
- ▶ Newsletters (print or electronic)
- ▶ Blog posts
- ▶ Brochures and fact sheets
- ▶ Program-specific mailouts or emails
- ▶ Confidential information about a specific person sent only to that person or their nominated contact person

Managers and staff in other organisations

- ▶ Professional network meetings and online networking groups
- ▶ Professional events such as conferences
- ▶ Communities of practice through professional bodies
- ▶ Training events
- ▶ Email contact
- ▶ Phone contact
- ▶ Updates on social media

Representatives of client groups or organisations

- ▶ Initial contact with representative may be via phone or email, or through their website
- ▶ Follow up initial contact with face-to-face contact where possible
- ▶ Relationship can be maintained over time using electronic or face-to-face methods as appropriate

Members of the public

- ▶ Website
- ▶ Brochures, posters or visual displays
- ▶ Information sharing at shopping centres or information days
- ▶ Phone contact to respond to queries or requests for support or information

Members of the public may become service users and will then require different levels of communication.

Consultants and private organisations

- ▶ Face-to-face and follow-up electronic communication, particularly if contact is for a predetermined time such as when a specific project is being completed by the consultant or organisation
- ▶ Contact may be frequent and time-consuming for a short period, then may fade to a minimal or 'on call' contact

Academic institutions, public sector and community organisations

- ▶ Maintain contact with key people in universities and TAFEs
- ▶ Semi-regular face-to-face contact
- ▶ Email contact
- ▶ Phone contact
- ▶ Newsletters
- ▶ Presentations and special events such as talking to a group of students at a TAFE about expectations during a work placement

Provide information and promote organisation to client's people who require services

Multiple community services organisations often provide services to the same person, or another organisation will provide a service to a person who also needs services your organisation provides. Effective networking means that it will be easier for organisations to provide information to people who may require services and for referral processes to go smoothly.

People are accessing digital media to gain access to services they require more regularly. They view websites and link to social media for information and programs.

Good networks mean that other organisations may provide links to your website or mention your programs or services on their social media sites. All of this means easier access for people to information on your organisation.



How to maintain work-related networks

Often community services staff feel like there is not enough time to network; however, the benefits of maintaining work-related networks is worth the time invested. To maintain effective networks, you need to contribute on a regular basis and build relationships based on trust and respect. The networks you participate in may range from simple information-sharing and support between colleagues to associations with membership requirements and fees.

Here are some suggestions for maintaining these networks.

How to maintain effective networks

- ▶ Attend networking meetings regularly – choose networks that provide the most benefits due to their location, commonality of services or diversity.
- ▶ Build relationships with significant people who can contribute to your organisation meeting its objectives.
- ▶ Maintain an up-to-date LinkedIn profile and link to relevant people.
- ▶ Create opportunities to meet with colleagues both formally and informally.
- ▶ Provide relevant information to networks – remember a good relationship is two-way, so provide information and support where appropriate.
- ▶ Keep current and accurate contact details for network members.

Example

Maintain work-related networks and relationships to meet organisation objectives

An objective of Mary's organisation is to increase referrals from other organisations. With this in mind, Mary joins two networks and begins to attend regular meetings. The first network is for service providers in her local region. Mary meets representatives from a wide range of government and non-government organisations and is able to share information about her organisation's programs and how they can be accessed. Mary gets a phone call almost immediately after the first meeting with a referral, and records show referrals coming regularly from members of this networking group.

The other network Mary joins is for other organisations like her own across the state. Again Mary is able to share information about her own organisation and many network members tell her it will be useful to have her contact details as they are often approached for services from people outside of their catchment area.



Practice task 10

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow.

Scenario

You are a team leader in a community outreach workplace with a team of 15 full-time and part-time staff. You have been informed by senior management that there will be a round of facility closures and mergers happening in the coming weeks, but all staff positions will be retained and there are no current plans to decrease staff numbers.

The key piece of information to share with staff is that they will not be made redundant and they should continue to work together during this period of change. You have been asked to call an urgent staff meeting to communicate the news to your team, after which you will all view a live video stream of your CEO addressing all staff members.

1. How would you use your internal network to initiate rapid contact in this situation? Identify what type of communication you would use to call the meeting and justify your communication choices.

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2. How could you use the organisation's website and social media accounts to inform external stakeholders about the changes?

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Click to complete Practice task 10

Summary

1. Staff need to have information regarding new or adapted communication strategies and protocols presented to them in an appropriate format.
2. Team leaders and managers should model effective oral and written communication to staff.
3. Mentoring and/or coaching is an effective way to improve staff communication practices.
4. Networking can be an effective way to share information and promote the organisation.
5. Maintaining work-related networks and relationships is important in achieving the organisation's objectives.

Learning checkpoint 3

Promote the use of communication strategies

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in promoting the use of communication strategies.

Part A

1. How is role modelling a useful tool for team leaders and managers?

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2. Describe five principles of mentoring.

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3. Give two examples of how you could provide coaching to a team member.

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4. Give one example each of an internal and external network or working relationship that you may need to maintain.

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Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Scenario

Your organisation has just developed a communication strategy for promoting the organisation and programs on social media including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The strategy outlines the following:

- ▶ The purpose and objectives of the strategy, which is to promote the organisation to current and potential clients and to increase engagement with these stakeholders
- ▶ Who will be involved in implementing the strategy
- ▶ The digital media that will be used, which is Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- ▶ Relevant legislation and standards, which relate to privacy, discrimination, informed consent, duty of care



Topic 4

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 4A Obtain feedback from others to assess communication outcomes**

- 4B Record lessons learnt and identify opportunities for continuous improvement**

Review communication practices

Communication strategies and protocols should be living documents that are reviewed, changed and improved regularly. Even the best strategies may be less effective over time or with changes in context. Your organisation will experience changes to staff, objectives and technology that will make reviewing communication practices vital.

It is important for organisations to seek feedback about their communication practices both internally from staff and from all other stakeholders. There also needs to be a process for recording feedback and outcomes from communication practices and using this information to improve practice in the future.

4A Obtain feedback from others to assess communication outcomes

Feedback from others within and outside of your organisation can be an effective way of evaluating your communication strategies and protocols. There are a variety of strategies you can use to elicit feedback, including formal and informal options. Feedback will help you to understand what is working and what is working less well, and will assist in improving strategies and practice in the future.



Review communication practices

As part of an overall communication strategy, it is important to review communication practices on a regular basis to ensure they are meeting the needs of your organisation as well as the organisation's objectives. There may be a specific person in your organisation who is responsible for developing and reviewing overall workplace communication strategies or you may do it as a team or be responsible for certain aspects yourself.



Reviews of communication practices should take place to ensure that strategies and protocols comply with relevant legislation and with the organisation's standards and policies. Reviews also assist in assessing whether communication practices are meeting the needs and objectives of the organisation and its stakeholders across different contexts. Finally, it is useful to evaluate whether the communication practices are effectively promoting the organisation internally and externally, including the services provided, the organisation's achievements and its values.

You may also decide to conduct a regular formal review of your team's communication strategies to ensure you are following organisational standards and that strategies fit well within the broader organisational communication strategy. You may also need to review communication practices within the team, within the organisation and with external stakeholders.

Evaluation processes

An evaluation of communication practices should be a structured process of assessing the success of communication strategies and protocols in meeting the objectives of the organisation and to reflect on the lessons learnt. The evaluation process can be broken down into stages which include planning for the evaluation, collecting information, and reporting on the information gathered.

Evaluation can be summative or focused on the outcomes of your communication practices, or it can be formative or focused on how your communication practices can be improved or a combination of both. To decide what type of evaluation you should use, you need to decide what the purpose of your evaluation is. What information do you need? You should also consider if you want to evaluate all of your communication practices, or simply focus on a specific individual or set of strategies or protocols.

Here are some possible steps to consider in an evaluation process.

Evaluation process
Determine the objective or purpose of the evaluation – what do you want to learn?
Determine who needs to participate in the evaluation – internal stakeholders, external stakeholders or specific individuals?
What is your time frame for the evaluation to be completed?
What budget do you have – can you afford an external consultant to do the evaluation or will someone within the organisation be completing it?
What methods will you use – do you need to use a specific tool like an online survey tool?
How will you report your evaluation findings? What will you do with the information you gather?

Obtain feedback

One way to evaluate communication practices is to obtain feedback. Feedback is part of continuous improvement within an organisation. It is important that the people you seek feedback from understand the need for continuous improvement and the role their feedback will play in this process. People are more likely to be forthcoming in providing feedback if they understand why it is being done and it will not impact them negatively. When obtaining feedback, consider what you need to know and who can provide you with useful feedback. You should consider a variety of sources of feedback, including team members, people who receive services and external stakeholders.



Feedback methods

Feedback can be obtained using a variety of methods; you will need to decide which method will be most effective in gaining the feedback you require. For people to effectively participate in a feedback process, it must be seen as having value and relevance, so select the methods best suited to your target group and the situation. Feedback on communication practices will provide information on what is working well and what strategies and protocols need to be adapted or improved to meet the organisation's objectives.

Here are the feedback methods you may consider using.

360-degree feedback and individual interviews

360-degree feedback is provided anonymously using an online survey with a common set of questions, and from all directions – management, staff members, peers, colleagues and others can all be invited to provide information via the survey. Information is collated and used for professional development or performance appraisal purposes.

Interview feedback is obtained through individual questions and discussion. Interviews can provide very specific information about processes and systems within a team or organisation, although their success varies depending on the interviewer, the questions asked and the rapport established. Interviews can be conducted with individuals or with a group.

Observation

It can be wise to step back and allow another staff member to chair the meeting while you conduct observations. Observations can be biased by your own attitudes and emotions. For this reason, use observations in combination with other methods for a more complete picture.

You may decide to observe the participation of an individual or several people in the team. Areas to note include their contribution to discussions, body language, interaction with other team members, the questions and comments, and their general professionalism, such as their appearance, behaviour and attitudes to others.

Formal evaluation forms

Evaluation forms should use a consistent question style, and be trialled before use to ensure any ambiguities or difficulties are corrected. Questions often provide multiple-choice or scaling responses as this style is perceived as being quicker and easier to complete than open-ended questions.

Questions should be written with either three or five possible options, with the central option being a neutral or middle choice. Always include a section for comments to give the person an opportunity for an extended response.

Obtaining feedback from team members may occur via a formal written evaluation form. Limit your questions to no more than 10.

Review communication channels

Once communication channels have been developed and have been operational for a period, it is important to conduct a review of how well they are functioning. This can be achieved in the following ways.

Formal review

A formal review can occur as part of a regular cycle of policy updates and reviews. It is done to measure objectively how well communication is functioning in the team and the organisation as a whole, and to take action to remedy any problems.

Informal feedback

Informal feedback from staff may be a part of the day-to-day running of a team. It will involve managers and leaders taking note of information provided by staff and acting on feedback from staff about problems with communication.

Training, coaching and professional development activities

Training, coaching and professional development activities may focus on improvements needed in communication skills, presentation skills, written materials and methods for disseminating information.

Feedback from people receiving services

Feedback from people who receive services from your organisation can be formal (such as a complaints form or letter, or questionnaire) or informal (such as a comment about a problem or issue). Your response to feedback must be prompt, courteous and effective. You should also consider soliciting feedback from family members and significant others with the consent of the person receiving services.

Review communication networks

To be effective, work-related networks must be regularly reviewed to ensure they are appropriate and continue to contribute to the organisation's requirements. You should review how the networks you participate in support the organisation's objectives and whether your participation is in line with the organisation's communication strategies. It may also be worth evaluating if alternative or new networks may be more effective in supporting the organisation's objectives.

Remember: communication is two-way, so also review your contribution to the networks and whether you can improve your interactions.



Identify changes

Once you have obtained feedback, you need to analyse the results, prioritise the issues and determine solutions. This may be a simple matter of altering a specific arrangement, such as having all meetings start at 9.30 am rather than 9.00 am to ensure all staff can be present, or it may involve a more complex process of addressing issues, discussing possibilities and planning for long-term change.

Here are some examples to consider.

Meeting times

Several staff members comment on a feedback form that meeting times present problems as they often see clients during the day while children are at school, and meetings during school hours decrease the time they have available to see clients.

Things to remember:

- ▶ Check if other staff have issues or concerns with meeting times.
- ▶ Ask staff to nominate two meeting times that would better suit their needs.

Participation

During a 360-degree feedback process, a manager receives feedback that they tend to take over in meetings and do not allow other people to finish speaking.

Changes required:

- ▶ The manager will implement a rotational system where each team member is invited to chair the meeting once a month.
- ▶ When chairing, the manager will aim to facilitate discussion without interrupting.

Information

Observation shows that most members of the work group do not participate well when they are asked to discuss a paper on changing care note procedures that has been distributed with the agenda.

Changes required:

- ▶ A summary will be distributed with the main paper, with the issues listed clearly as bullet points.
- ▶ A statement of the action needed by team members will also be distributed before the meeting.

Example

Obtain feedback from others to assess communication outcomes

A manager organises weekly team meetings to update staff on any relevant information or issues. The meetings often last at least two hours. The manager asks for feedback from the team to assess the effectiveness of the meetings. Feedback from the team is that much of the information presented at the meeting could be disseminated by email as it does not need to be discussed as it is often followed up by an email from the manager anyway. The team members suggest that fortnightly meetings where topics that require discussion would be a better use of time.



Practice task 11

Your manager has asked you to evaluate the communication strategies used within a group of male participants who have completed a 10-week anger management course at a community centre, with a view to making any necessary changes for the next course.

1. Explain the process you would use to evaluate the communication strategies used.

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2. How would you get feedback from the participants?

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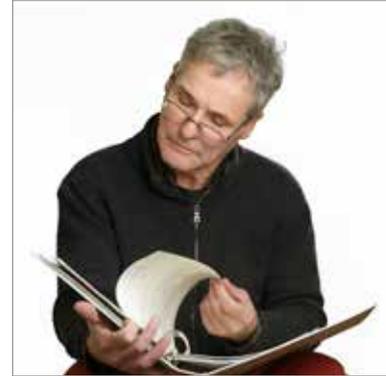
Click to complete Practice task 11

4B Record lessons learnt and identify opportunities for continuous improvement

Evaluating communication practices and seeking feedback is only useful if you use the information gathered to improve the organisation's communication strategies and protocols. You should consider how you will record the lessons that are learnt from the evaluation and what themes or patterns present themselves in the process. This can then be used to improve communication practices.

Record lessons learnt

Reviewing and evaluating communication practices provides opportunities to learn about what is working well and what strategies and protocols can be improved based on the information gathered. It is important that stakeholders who take the time to assist you in evaluating the organisation's communication practices are able to see the outcome of their participation. Recording the lessons learnt in a summary document or report provides a way to share what has been learnt with the stakeholders that participated and with those directly involved in developing and implementing communication practices.



The reports or summary documents can then be attached to the minutes of relevant meetings and stored as a part of these documents.

Identify opportunities for continuous improvement

The lessons learnt from evaluating communication practices can be used to identify opportunities to improve those practices immediately and over time. For example, it may be useful to include this information in the organisation's SWOT analysis.

Continuous improvement in an organisation means constantly improving practices and processes in incremental steps. Continuous improvement is the process of ensuring communication practices are continually improved. It means identifying any issues or opportunities and adapting and implementing communication strategies and protocols to address these.



The opportunities for continuous improvement need to be recorded and communicated to appropriate people. This might be the organisation's management team, the Board and/or staff members. There may need to be a team identified who will work on improving existing communication strategies and protocols, and developing new ones where appropriate.

Example

Record lessons learnt and identify opportunities for continuous improvement

Mike has collated surveys completed by stakeholders regarding their knowledge of the organisation’s services and programs. From the information gathered, Mike identifies several clear themes. While many external stakeholders know the organisation, they cannot name any of the specific programs provided. Mike completes a report that summarises what lessons can be learnt from the survey information for the management team. He also lists opportunities he has identified to improve the organisation’s communication strategies with external stakeholders like providing program brochures to staff at external organisations. He presents the report and his recommendations for continuous improvement to the management team at their team meeting.



Practice task 12

Conduct a review of your organisation’s digital communication practices with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people. This should include your organisation’s website and social media accounts.

1. Identify how well the digital media communicates information to CALD people accessing it.

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2. Identify how well the digital media promotes the organisation and its programs.

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3. Identify at least three gaps or missed opportunities to communicate with CALD people.

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4. List three recommendations for improving the website and/or social media accounts. Include who should be involved and a time frame for each recommendation.

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Click to complete Practice task 12

Summary

1. Obtain feedback from relevant stakeholders to assess whether communication practices are meeting the objectives of the organisation.
2. Follow evaluation processes to assess communication practices.
3. Record lessons learnt from reviews and feedback from stakeholders.
4. Identify opportunities for continuous improvement and implement changes to communication strategies and protocols where needed.

Learning checkpoint 4

Review communication practices

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in reviewing communication practices.

Part A

1. Describe three ways you could elicit feedback from team members regarding communication practices.

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2. Explain what continuous improvement means in relation to communication practices and how lessons learnt from evaluation can be used in this process.

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