

# **LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION**

**ASHA LEADERSHIP ACADEMY  
ON-DEMAND WEBINAR**

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# ASHA DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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- ◆ Financial: Nourse Leadership Strategies, Independent Contractor.
- ◆ Receiving compensation from ASHA for conducting this webinar.
- ◆ Non-Financial: None

# INTRODUCTION

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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- ◆ Describe effective leader communication skills
- ◆ Determine their natural communication style
- ◆ Explain how to communicate with impact during crisis or adversity

## AGENDA

- ◆ Key concepts
- ◆ Part 1: Essential communication skills
- ◆ Part 2: Communication styles
- ◆ Part 3: Communicating during change and adversity
- ◆ Wrap-up

## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THIS WEBINAR

- ◆ Print this guide
- ◆ Learning environment
- ◆ Stop the action
- ◆ Deepen your learning

## CORE LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

- ◆ Delivers messages in a clear, compelling, and concise manner
- ◆ Actively listens and checks for understanding
- ◆ Articulates messages in a way that is broadly understandable
- ◆ Adjusts communication content and style to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders
- ◆ Models and encourages the expression of diverse ideas and opinions
- ◆ Is aware of and adapts non-verbal behavior to ensure congruence with spoken messages
- ◆ Communicates empathically with others to help build trust and engagement

# PART 1: KEY CONCEPTS

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*The difference  
between mere  
management and  
leadership is  
communication.*

-- Sir Winston Churchill

Leader	Focus	Manager
Collaboratively & individually	Goal Setting	Top Down
Influence & Involvement	Power Orientation	Formal Power & Authority
Does the Right Thing	Action	Does Things Right
Asks "Why?"	Questions	Asks "How?" and "What?"
Commitment	Achieves Results	Compliance
People, Talent & Culture	Focus	Process, Systems, Tactics
Inspiration & Trust Building	Motivation	Punishment & Rewards

## ACTIVITY: PRACTICES OF SKILLED LEADERS

Reflect on the following questions: What are the practices of leaders who are skilled communicators?

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## PART 2: ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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One of the most fundamental ways leaders have impact on others is through communication.

Writers James O'Tool and Warren Bennis argue in the Harvard Business Review “we won’t be able to rebuild trust in institutions until leaders learn how to communicate honestly—and create organizations where that’s the norm.” They concluded that its essential to create a culture of candor where leaders need to make a conscious choice to support transparency.



Key benefits of good communication skills for leaders include:

- ◆ Ability to deliver messages that inspire your audience to take action
- ◆ Confidence when presenting ideas and the company vision to your team
- ◆ Effectively conveying your insights and recommendations

Ten key communication skills used by highly effective leaders includes the following:



Skill	Description
1. Active listening	
2. Adaptive to the needs of a specific audience	
3. Aligned non-verbals	
4. Clarity on complex topics such as priorities or strategy	
5. Empathetic to the emotions and experiences of others	
6. Inclusive and open to dissenting opinions	
7. Receptive to feedback	
8. Repetition using multiple channels	
9. Tell stories to enhance impact	
10. Visible leadership	

## ACTIVITY: LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Instructions: Reflect on the following questions about your skills as a communicator.

1. Which of the ten strategies on the previous page are you most skilled at using?
2. What are your biggest leadership challenges?
3. What strategies from the prior page might have a positive impact on your ability to overcome your leadership challenges?

## PART 3: COMMUNICATION STYLES

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Communication styles represent patterns of behavior associated with how leaders share or receive information. Skilled leaders understand that their preferences in how they receive information may or may not reflect the needs of others. Thus, they must adapt their approach to communication to maximize their impact with different types of stakeholders.

There are four types of leaders based on two key dynamics: how leaders make decisions and how leaders collect information.

From a decision-making approach, leaders prefer analytical or empathetic:

- ◆ Analytical leaders prefer a communication focus on organizational results and impact.
- ◆ Empathizer leaders prefer communication associated with people - their needs, values, and interactions.

From an information processing perspective, leaders prefer either conceptual or pragmatic:

- ◆ Conceptual leaders generally prefer a focus on more holistic perspectives, strategic ideas, and longer-term impact.
- ◆ Pragmatic leaders often emphasize focus on information related to details and practical solutions.

When combined, these four factors create predominant leadership communication styles:

- ◆ Analytical Pragmatist
- ◆ Analytical Conceptual
- ◆ Empathizer Pragmatist
- ◆ Empathizer Conceptual

# Communication Preferences

	Pragmatist	Conceptual
Analytical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear feedback and step-by-step procedures</li> <li>• Detailed facts and information relevant to your situation</li> <li>• Logical and factual evidence; accurate and organized</li> <li>• Focus: results, efficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logical framework and rationale behind ideas</li> <li>• Credible information from a competent, knowledgeable source</li> <li>• Clear, direct communications</li> <li>• Focus: independence, competence</li> </ul>
Empathizer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear feedback and step-by-step procedures</li> <li>• Practical applications &amp; personal stories</li> <li>• Address immediate needs of others in a practical, direct way</li> <li>• Focus: people, harmony</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term possibilities, especially for people</li> <li>• Connections and common ground</li> <li>• Use of metaphors, symbols, and other abstract language</li> <li>• Focus: people, values, potential</li> </ul>

## ACTIVITY: YOUR PREFERRED COMMUNICATION STYLE

Instructions: Reflect on the following questions and capture your thoughts below.

1. What is your preferred leadership communication style:
2. What are some situations where this style is effective and serves you well?
3. What are some of the limitations of your preferred communication style?
4. How do you need to adapt your communication style to have a greater impact with stakeholders who have a different preference?

## PART 4: COMMUNICATING DURING CHANGE & ADVERSITY

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Leadership communication is particularly critical during change and transition. Change is often perceived negatively by organizational members. As part of an overall change management strategy, leaders must communicate to help people move through their emotional coping process. By doing so, they are far more likely to help staff embrace change and view it positively.

## STAGES OF COPING



Loss



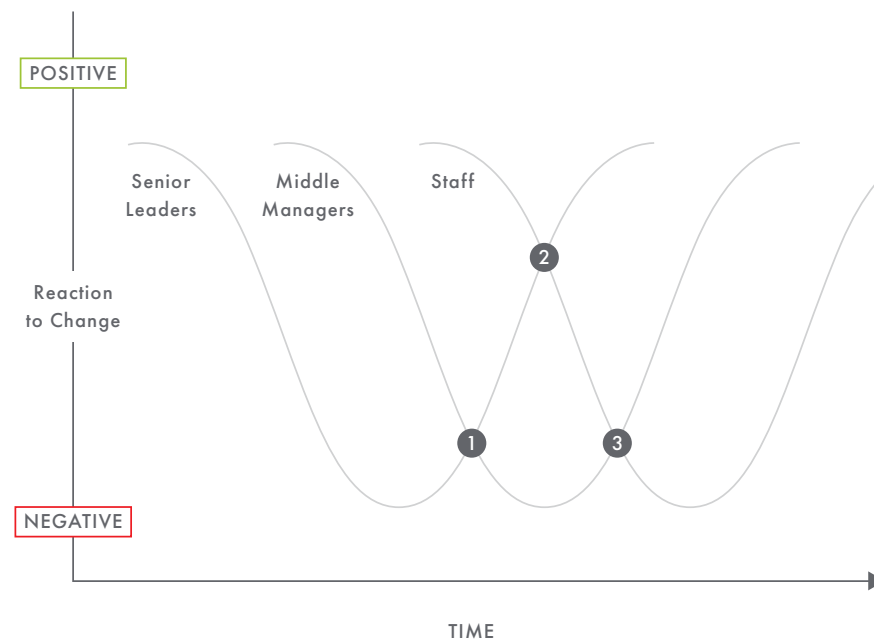
Discovery



Integration

- ◆ Stage 1: Loss and doubt that involves paralysis and resistance
- ◆ Stage 2: Discovery and exploration, moving from anxiety to anticipation
- ◆ Stage 3: Integration and acceptance, leading to confidence and focus.

Misaligned communication during change can happen when leaders communicate based on their mindsets and ignore those of their followers as illustrated below (points 1, 2 and 3 in the graphic).



## STOP-START-CONTINUE

One compelling way leaders can enhance their communication during change efforts is using the Stop-Start-Continue framework. Uncertainty is one of the biggest stressors for people experiencing significant change. This approach to communicating helps move stakeholders through their stages of coping with change by helping reduce uncertainty.

For example, a company was going through a significant reorganization to enhance customer service and evolve its culture to be more collaborative. To help staff cope with the impending changes, a senior leader created a stop-start-continue analysis to guide his communication efforts for front-line staff:

Stop	Start	Continue
Developing strategies without consulting colleagues	Sharing information with colleagues in other departments	Departmental meetings to share project status updates
Transferring customers calls to voicemail in other departments	Calling colleagues in other departments to get a live representative on the phone before transferring a customer call	Annual holiday party and company picnic
Approaching managers with problems	Approaching managers with solutions and ideas	Employee awards for demonstrating company values
Annual bonuses based solely on individual performance	Annual bonuses based on division achievements and individual performance	Preference for internal candidates versus external hires
	Training programs to enhance team effectiveness and collaboration	Annual survey of employee engagement to measure the extent to which staff feel included in decisions by their managers
	Performance evaluations that include feedback from peers	
	Cross-functional process improvement teams to enhance customer service	



## ACTIVITY: COMMUNICATING IN CHANGE & ADVERSITY

Part 1: Reflect on the past 18 months in your organization in light of the COVID pandemic. To what extent did you organizational leaders ensure their communication to staff effectively recognize and address their emotional state? What would you have done differently?

Part 2: Reflect on a current change effort in your organization, team, or volunteer leadership role. Using the stop-start-continue worksheet below, capture examples of behavior or practices that will stop happening as a result of the change, start happening or continue happening.

Behaviors and practices that will STOP....	Behaviors and practices that will START...	Behaviors and practices that will CONTINUE...

# SUMMARY

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- ◆ There are ten critical behaviors that leaders should use to effectively communicate.
- ◆ One's natural communication style may or may not address the needs of followers.
- ◆ Skillful leaders recognize the emotional states of their followers in crisis and change when planning communication strategies.
- ◆ Uncertainty is a major stressor for people during change.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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Bridges, W. (2017). Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change.

Harvard Business Review Press (2013): HBR's 10 Must Reads: On Communication.

Landry, L. (2019). Eight essential leadership skills. Harvard Business School Online. Available at: <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/leadership-communication>

Neill, C. (2018). What is leadership communication? Available at: <https://youtu.be/fCQr9mj5XWg>

O'Toole, J. & Bennis, W. (2009). A Culture of Candor. Harvard Business Review Press. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2009/06/a-culture-of-candor>

Thompson, S. (2021). 27 key principles of leadership communication. Virtual Speech. Available at: <https://virtualspeech.com/blog/key-principles-of-leadership-communication>