



ACTION PERIOD GUIDE: 3

Engaging in Unstructured Communication

After Learning Session 3, participants will be able to:

- Recognize elements of unstructured communication that support effective teamwork
- Identify their own personal communication style
- Apply communication techniques discussed in the webinar

Overview of learning session content:

- Identify common barriers to successful communication
- Explain how triangulation and sense-making can lead to communication breakdowns
- Differentiate between listening and hearing
- Explore strategies to help improve communication on your team

Action Period outcomes:

Explore unstructured communication:

- Communication styles
- Sense-making
- Judger-Learner Mindset
- Direct communication
- Triangulation
- Listening

Working towards a certificate of completion:

Each week there is **one required group activity**. The group activity needs to be completed and submitted for each Action Period by your team leader in order to receive your certificate of completion. We do encourage your team to do at least one additional optional activity to maximize your learning throughout the Action Series. You are not required to submit optional activities. Questions? Don't hesitate to ask culture@bcpsqc.ca.

All learning sessions are mandatory, and attendance is required for certificate of completion. Please provide confirmation of attendance on your action period homework submission that all team members attended the learning session for this module or viewed the recording.



Your Action Period Work:

*Each Action Period will have one mandatory team activity. For this Action Period there will be a personal activity required as pre-work prior to coming together to work on the team activity. The personal activity is **not** required to be submitted. The **team activity** must be submitted by the **team leader** to culture@bcpsqc.ca to receive credit for a certificate of completion. We also provide a list of options for additional team-based activities and encourage you to try at least one!*

Personal Activity (Pre-Work Required)

Personal Reflection

(estimated time is 10-15 min)

1. Think about the team you currently work on and how you communicate.
 - What elements are working really well?
 - Are there opportunities to improve your team's communication? If so, what could be improved?
 - What impact does sense-making, judger-learner mindset and triangulation have on your team? Are these concepts enhancing team communication or hindering them?
 - What did you learn at this week's webinar that you could start personally applying?
2. Individually, take the **Communication Style Self-Assessment** (attached).
 - a. Were you surprised with the results of your own communication style?
 - b. How do you think your style affects how you work on your team?



Team Activity: (Required)

Activity 1 (Required): Team Communication Styles

(estimated time is 45-60 minutes)

1. Come together with your team and share the results of your communication style assessment. Be sure to assign someone to scribe your team discussion.
 - Allow each person to describe his or her communication style. If you are working in a larger team, ask members who have the same results to group together to discuss their communication style. Invite one member of the group report out to the larger team.
 - Remember, everyone has their own unique communication style and one is not better or worse than another.
2. Once everyone has reported out on their style, consider and discuss these questions:
 - What do you have in common and what is different about your styles?
 - What improvements could you make to your team's communication to take into consideration the variation of styles on your team?
 - How do you think you could leverage communication style differences to strengthen your team?

Using the provided **Team Communication Style Worksheet** (attached), submit a summary of your team's communication styles and strategies you're going to employ to support differences to culture@bcpsqc.ca by . For easy reference, consider posting the completed product in a visible area in your workplace.

3. Revisit your teamwork agreement
 - Based on your discussion about communication styles, does your teamwork agreement need to be updated? Do ground rules need to be set around how you communicate?
 - Consider the modality, formality, and frequency of your team communication when updating the agreement.

Resources needed for this activity:

- Completed communication style assessment (see attachment)
- Completed team communication style worksheet (see attachment)
- Your teamwork agreement



Important: Please have your team leader submit your Team Communication Style Worksheet to culture@bcpsqc.ca by **JANUARY 4, 2021** to ensure you get credit towards your certificate of completion.

Team Activities: (Optional)

Optional – Activity 2 - Just listen

Optional – Activity 3 - Guided Discussion on the Power of Questions

Activity 2 (Optional): Just Listen

(estimated time is 20-30 minutes)

Listening is an incredibly important part of good communication; however, it is a skill that people often ignore in team activities. This exercise can show team members how to listen with an open mind.

1. In advance of the session, print off and cut the set of index cards. You will need 4 cards for every 2 people in your group. Each card will have a different discussion topic listed on it (e.g. the role of culture in health care, trust in your work, your hopes for improving communication on your team, etc.).
2. Ask everyone present to pair off.
3. Provide each pair with their own set of four index cards.
4. One partner blindly chooses a card and then speaks for three minutes on what they think and feel about that topic. Their partner cannot speak during this time – their primary goal is to listen. The other partner can keep the time.
5. After three minutes, the listener has one minute to recap what their partner said. They cannot debate, agree, or disagree – only summarize.
6. Next, the roles switch and teams begin the process again.
7. Debrief as a team.
 - How did speakers feel about their partners' ability to listen with an open mind?
 - Did their partners' body language communicate how they felt about what was being said?
 - How did listeners feel about not being able to speak their own views on the topic? How well were they able to keep an open mind? How well did they listen?
 - How well did the listening partner summarize the speakers' opinions? Did they get better as the exercise progressed?



- How can we use the lessons from this activity in our day to day work?

Resources needed for this action:

- Just Listen Index cards (attached) – print before coming together as a team

Activity 3 (Optional): Guided Discussion on the Power of Questions

(estimated time is 20-30 minutes)

In our day to day lives, we can relate to others with judger and learner mindsets. But what are these? How do they influence how we interact with others? Most importantly, how might these mindsets impact the success of our team?

Let's unpack these concepts a bit. When we are in a judger mindset, our thinking may be reactive and blaming. The "judger" mindset reacts with evaluative thinking: what's wrong with this person? Why can't they get it right?

In learning mode, however, we are reflective and curious. By contrast, a "learner" approach holds the judgments and assumptions about others at bay.

As a team, discuss:

1. How a judger mindset may influence how you work together.
2. How you could apply more of a learner mindset in your day to day work.
3. What steps you could take to check in on your learner mindset practice.

- Note: see questions for daily practice below.

Individual Learner Practice

At the end of a day or week consider how often you practiced a learner versus a judger mindset. Where did the balance sit?

As you work to cultivate a learner mindset, the following questions can assist you:

1. What do I want for myself, others and the situation?
2. Am I in a learner mindset or in a judger mindset?



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3. What assumptions am I making – about myself, others and the situation?
4. How else can I think about this?

Adapted from: Marilee Adams, Change Your Questions, Change Your Life

Resources needed for this action:

- None - just an open mind

*There is a Coaching Session on **December 10, 2020 from 12:30pm-1:30pm.**
There is no formal agenda. This is an opportunity for you to customize your Action Series experience and tailor your learning to your team. During the Coaching Session you can ask questions, share your experiences or talk through a tricky situation your team may be experiencing. An organizational development consultant who works with the Council will be leading the discussion and provide group support.*

*The next Learning Session will be on **January 7, 2021 from 12:30pm-1:30pm.***

Additional Resources

If you are interested in doing some further reading on the topics we covered today, here are a few articles that we recommend.

*Role of Effective Teamwork, Communication in Delivering Safe, High-Quality Care
(attached)*

*Interprofessional communication in healthcare: An integrative review
(attached)*

*Teamwork and Communication in Healthcare
(attached)*

Interested in learning more about differences in styles? Check out this great podcast! Listen to this podcast to get an overview of another way for you and your team to recognize how your personality may impact your team's chemistry. The podcast can be found here: <https://hbr.org/ideacast/2017/03/how-personalities-affect-team-chemistry.html> (also downloadable on iTunes).



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Gossip versus Venting

A nice article from the Harvard Business Review about the difference between office gossip and venting.

<https://hbr.org/2016/11/how-to-tell-the-difference-between-venting-and-office-gossip>

A little bit of humour

Here is a link to a funny clip from the television show *Everybody Loves Raymond* as he models reflective listening. Always good for a laugh!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VOubVB4CTU>