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Your body language and whether you are nodding your head in agreement or pointing your finger

You facial expressions, such as whether you are smiling or frowning

Motivational interviewing

Motivational interviewing is used to help the person you support to develop their own intrinsic motivation. If motivation comes from within them, the person is more likely to reach a goal or change behaviour. Motivational interviewing is person-centred, which means it focuses on the individual needs of the person. It also directly involves the person in the process.

Motivational interviewing was first developed by psychologists Professor William R Miller, Ph.D. and Professor Stephen Rollnick, Ph.D. (1991) to address people who struggled with alcohol addiction.

Motivational interviewing asks open-ended questions, which help the individual identify why they want to change their own behaviour. They are more likely to succeed in changing their behaviour if they identify reasons for changing it.

Principles of motivational interviewing:

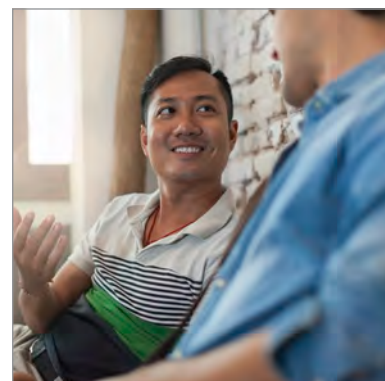
- ▶ The interviewer asks open-ended questions to encourage the individual to think for themselves.
- ▶ The interviewer provides positive affirmations.
- ▶ The interviewer uses reflective listening and provides summarising statements for the individual.
- ▶ The process promotes using empathy, warmth and acceptance.
- ▶ The main goal is to engage the individual and encourage 'change talk', which helps the individual motivate themselves.
- ▶ Goals set should be small, genuinely important, specific and realistic for the individual.

Motivational interviewing versus a coercive approach

Motivational interviewing is preferred to using a coercive approach. A coercive approach involves forcing a person to do something, such as change a behaviour. A coercive approach is less effective, because the motivation is external. They will find it hard to motivate themselves in the future, because they rely on external sources of motivation, such as being told what to do.

For example, if a person has problems related to smoking, and a doctor tells them they need to stop smoking, they are less likely to change their behaviour than if they decide for themselves that smoking is a bad idea, and they would like to quit.

The motivational approach is also preferred to a coercive approach because it is more person-centred and empathetic. The individual is central to the process, and therefore more likely to succeed with behavioural change.



Commonwealth legislation that protects individuals

- ▶ *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- ▶ *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- ▶ *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- ▶ *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- ▶ *Privacy Act 1988*
- ▶ *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*

Commonwealth legislation that protects older people

- ▶ For example:
 - *Aged Care Act 1997 (Cth)*
 - *Home and Community Care Act 1985 (Cth)*

State/territory legislation that protects individual's information

- ▶ For example:
 - *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)*
 - *Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic.)*

Human rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights describes the rights that should be attributed to all humans. The Australian Human Rights Commission (initially called the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission) was established in 1986 to deal with breaches of anti-discrimination laws and to promote human rights education.

This Act only covers actions or policies of the Commonwealth.

The Act promotes human rights for all people, and covers most forms of discrimination not already covered in the other Acts, including discrimination on the basis of medical history and criminal records.

Here are some relevant rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which you should think about when interviewing people you support, and other workers.

Relevant rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- ▶ All people are equal.
- ▶ No one should have their privacy, family, home or mail interfered with.
- ▶ No one should experience attacks on their honour or reputation.
- ▶ Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- ▶ Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

People you support and colleagues have the right to:

- ▶ receive information in an accessible form such as plain English, via interpreters or aids
- ▶ be treated equally
- ▶ be free from discrimination
- ▶ respond to any allegations
- ▶ have an independent third person or advocate with them.

Example

Communicate respectfully

Here are two examples of community services workers communicating with people receiving support.

Maintain cultural sensitivity

Jessica is a caseworker who has been working with a particular family for several months. The parents were born in Pakistan.

During a home visit, Jessica says that she is interested in learning more about Islam. The mother's face lights up. Ramadan had recently ended and her kitchen is full of treats made for the celebration that comes at the end of fasting. The woman makes tea and offers Jessica some sweets. She tells Jessica all about Ramadan. She also shares the story of her arranged marriage.

Jessica feels honoured to hear this woman's story. She learnt so much more than if she had read a book or attended a workshop. The trust and rapport that underscored the professional relationship was enhanced by this exchange.

Identify differences

Susan is a team leader in community services. She reports to Brian, a newly appointed manager. Susan finds Brian rude, demanding and intrusive. Brian thinks Susan is noncompliant, difficult and a troublemaker.

Susan is frustrated as she prides herself on her communication skills. She reflects on herself and Brian: their attributes, lives and ideas of how things should be done. She realises it is not surprising they are experiencing some conflict. There is large age gap between the two and gender difference. Susan comes from a sector where consultation and collaboration is usual. Brian comes from a hierarchical sector where autocratic management styles are valued. They will need to be aware of their differences in order to improve communication.

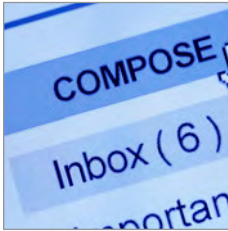
Examples of digital communication media used in the community services sector are provided below.



Web communication

Your organisation's website will display 'About' information, contact information, statement of policies, vision, mission and key outcomes, and may provide resource links.

The website is like a business card for your organisation, so should accurately reflect your organisation in full. Details should be up-to-date and relevant.



Email communication

Emails are an easy, efficient way to communicate with internal and external stakeholders. Email communication is generally a direct and simple form of communication and sometimes less formal than written documents. Emails representing the organisation will be more formal, and should be written using formal, polite language.

All forms of information can be sent by email, including written documentation, graphics, images and tables.

Remember that you represent the organisation when sending a work email, so always be respectful and polite. Check your spelling and ensure all content is correct. You should also check to ensure you are sending to the correct email address, and ensure that only people privy to the information will see the content.



Social media

Social media is a good way for organisations to build an online community, and reach a broad range of people. Social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Social media is primarily about relationship building. Again, you need to ensure that all information shared on social media accurately reflects your organisation.

Avoid sharing images of the people you support unless you have specifically asked for permission. Doing so without permission is a breach of privacy.



Podcasts and videos

Podcasts are audio recordings shared online. Videos can also be shared on social media, such as YouTube. Podcasts and videos are useful ways to share training material, or provide a comprehensive view of your organisation.

Again, ensure that all people represented in the video or podcast have given permission, and that the videos and podcasts accurately reflect the organisation.

From clients to supervisor

- ▶ Feedback about services
- ▶ Changes in needs or preferences

From supervisor to clients

- ▶ Information about services provided
- ▶ Changes in services or new services available
- ▶ Information about community options and events

Effective use of communication channels

Information in community services environments must flow freely so everyone receives information when they need it. The timely and accurate exchange of information is essential for staff and service users. Misinformation or late information may create mistrust and unease.

Communication channels must meet the needs of the people accessing the information. For example, an agency might have access to the national relay service so people with hearing or speech impairments can phone the organisation easily.

Make sure team members know when you are available to meet with them. Sometimes a face-to-face meeting is better than discussing something over the phone or in an email.

Some different methods of communication and examples for using them effectively are outlined below.

Touch**Example:**

- ▶ Handshake
- ▶ Placing hand on shoulder

When this method is used:

- ▶ This communication method is used to build trust. Support workers must consider the appropriateness of this action.

Reading**Example:**

- ▶ Reading aloud to an older person
- ▶ Reading workplace policies and procedures

When this method is used:

- ▶ This communication method may be required if the client has a vision impairment. Support workers must read their workplace policies and procedures to make sure they are performing their tasks correctly and according to all legal requirements.

6. What are two written correspondence protocols to follow when writing case notes?

Summary

1. Workers in the community services sector need to use effective communication strategies to build rapport, share information, resolve issues and defuse difficult situations.
2. To communicate effectively you must listen carefully and show empathy, give timely feedback, provide basic counselling, respect other cultures and negotiate positive outcomes.
3. Your communication should reflect a person-centred approach.
4. Interviews are an important part of many procedures in a community care environment. Adhere to organisational requirements when conducting interviews and use motivational interviewing techniques when appropriate.
5. People with support needs and staff should know their opinions and contributions are valued by the organisation. Feedback should be a two-way process. Staff members and clients should have the opportunity to share their experiences and provide feedback.
6. Being an effective communicator means assessing what specific needs people have and making a plan that responds to these needs. The profiles of service users and care plans should detail important background information and peoples' communication needs.
7. You need to manage inquiries and respond in a timely and appropriate way. Workers are seen to represent their organisation. The way they communicate should reflect workplace protocols and requirements.
8. Adhere to organisational guidelines regarding confidentiality and privacy to work legally and respectfully.
9. Workers need to communicate for a variety of reasons. The type of communication you use will depend on the context and purpose of the communication, as well as the purpose. You need to know how to communicate in a way that is appropriate for the medium and purpose. Follow protocols for written communication and make use of organisational style guides when you are not sure how to format written communication.

2B Access interpreter and translation services

Many communication needs can be addressed by working with a translation or interpreting service. An interpreter or translator may be very useful when a person speaks or reads little or no English. Using an interpreter or translator may help to make the person feel comfortable, as they are communicating with them in a language they understand very well. It also ensures they have access to accurate information, and can provide accurate information.

Translators and interpreters serve slightly different functions when addressing communication needs.

Here is an explanation of each.

Translators

- ▶ Translators convert the written word from one language to another.
- ▶ Use a translator to provide information to someone who cannot read English.

Interpreters

- ▶ Interpreters convert what someone says into another language.
- ▶ Use an interpreter to converse with someone who does not speak English.

The role of an interpreter or translator

Interpreters must understand exactly what the worker wants to communicate to the person they support. They listen to one person speaking a language and then interpret the words into the other person's language so both people understand each other. It is often necessary to get an interpreter when a person who doesn't speak English is admitted to a service.

By using an interpreter or translator, people you support may be able to direct their own care; self-advocate; make a complaint, request or suggestion; or make their own legal, medical and financial decisions more appropriately and effectively.

The following groups of people may benefit from the services of a translator or interpreter.

Here are some reasons why.

Past experience

What has happened in people's lives may affect how they communicate. Some people have lived a long time and have had many changes and experiences in their lifetime. You need to realise the people you work with will have different backgrounds and life experience; for example, you may care for a person who has come from a large family. They may be used to lots of family gatherings and feel isolated in the aged care facility. If you know about this past experience, you can try to spend extra time with them. You could make sure they are introduced to other people and are included in social functions.

Cultural background

Australia has people from many different cultures and countries. These different cultures make Australia an interesting place to live. The differences also make the workplace interesting. It is important to know about the culture of your persons and co-workers. The cultural differences might mean there are different languages or ways of behaving that affect communication. You need to know how to alter your communication to suit the culture of the people you are working with.

Overcome barriers to communication

Being sensitive and empathetic to another person helps you address barriers. Below is a list of ways to overcome barriers to good communication.

Overcoming barriers

- ▶ Understand that we are all different and have different communication needs.
- ▶ Be sensitive to and informed about any cultural differences.
- ▶ Repeat information in different ways to ensure understanding.
- ▶ Ask questions to clarify understanding.
- ▶ Make sure your communication is clear and concise.
- ▶ Choose an appropriate environment for the communication.
- ▶ Use aids and/or communication equipment as required.
- ▶ Use positive language.

Negotiate communication barriers

Anything that obstructs the actual meaning of a message is a barrier to communication. There are a number of strategies to use when negotiating communication barriers. It is much easier to work through problems if you have already established a trusting relationship.

Example

Identify and address communication barriers

Gary is facilitating an important meeting about team productivity. He finds that after team members contribute an idea, Piper, a support worker, always says something negative such as, 'That won't work'. Gary can see this is causing the group to start to get cynical about the whole process.

After the meeting, Piper agrees to catch up with Gary to talk about some of the concerns she raised in the meeting.

'I've worked here a long time Gary, and I do actually know some things,' says Piper.

'Are you saying that you sometimes feel you are not listened to?' asks Gary.

'Yeah, sometimes,' says Piper.

'I'm sorry if you feel that way, Piper. I wonder if you would be interested in giving me some of your ideas on how to resolve your concerns. Maybe that way we can move forward.'

'Okay!' says Piper.

The next week, Gary finds a document in his in-tray. Piper has developed some good strategies for resolving some of the team's productivity issues. Gary asks Piper to present her ideas at the next team meeting.

By listening to Piper, trying to understand her point of view and getting her involved in developing a solution, Gary has re-focused her mind on a positive resolution. Rather than constantly focusing on what won't work, Piper is given the task of finding what might work.



Practice task 7

1. Describe how emotional factors may contribute to the development of communication barriers.

2. Describe how mistrust may contribute to the development of communication barriers.

Engage a mediator

If you are engaging mediators for conflict resolution, you need to ensure they are skilled and experienced professionals. Here are some tips for finding a mediator.

Tips for engaging a mediator

- ▶ Check if your organisation has an employee assistance program (EAP) and if mediation is available as part of this service.
- ▶ Ask your manager if your organisation has a list of mediators who have been used before.
- ▶ Find out if there is a reputable counselling service in your existing network that offers a mediation service.
- ▶ Find out if you are funded by, or affiliated with, a government department that provides mediation or can link you to a government mediation service.
- ▶ Ask other trusted professionals for a recommendation.
- ▶ Ask incorporated mediation associations for recommendations. However, be aware that such associations may receive a fee for the referrals they make.
- ▶ Familiarise yourself with the Law Council of Australia's statement about the ethics in the practice of alternative disputes resolution.
- ▶ Consider interviewing a mediator prior to engaging their services.

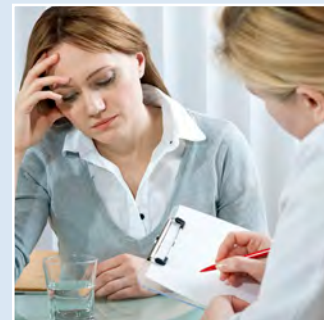
Example

Defuse conflict according to organisational requirements

Andrea is the daughter of a person Tammy has recently been supporting. Andrea meets Tammy to learn more about the agency. After greeting her warmly, Tammy discusses the services her organisation provides. Andrea asks questions about finance. Her friends have told her service providers are only in it for the money, that standards are not high and she's concerned her mother will be 'ripped off'.

Tammy gives Andrea her full attention and does not interrupt while she is speaking. Without agreeing with her, Tammy shows that she respects her views and shows concern that she is upset. Tammy repeat some of the things Andrea has said to check Tammy understands the points she is making and to show she is listening. When Andrea expresses her concerns, Tammy asks her what might help her in this situation. Together Tammy and Andrea decide on the following actions:

- ▶ Andrea will bring her mother to a music night in the facility and stay for the duration so both of them can learn more about the environment.
- ▶ Tammy will give Andrea a copy of the organisation's most recent annual report and will make herself available if Andrea or her mother have any questions about it.
- ▶ Tammy will also make an appointment for her to meet the director of nursing so she can learn more about how the organisation is managed.





Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Develop an agenda and prepare to facilitate a meeting**
- 3B Communicate details of meeting in accordance with protocol**
- 3C Contribute to and follow meeting objectives**
- 3D Provide opportunities to explore issues**
- 3E Use strategies to encourage equal participation**
- 3F Identify and address communication needs of participants**
- 3G Facilitate conflict resolution**
- 3H Keep records in accordance with requirements**
- 3I Evaluate and improve meeting processes**

Facilitate meetings

Meetings are opportunities for people to express their views and concerns, and address specific issues. Meetings may be one-on-one, or may involve more people. You may facilitate meetings with people you support to develop their individualised care plan. You may facilitate meetings with staff members to address a workplace issue. There are many different meeting objectives.

Implement and use mechanisms and strategies that facilitate discussion and encourage people to participate in this process. It is useful to plan these discussions. Set objectives and prepare agendas. Review and improve the communication strategies you use when facilitating discussions to ensure you are meeting the needs of all involved.

3B Communicate details of meeting in accordance with protocol

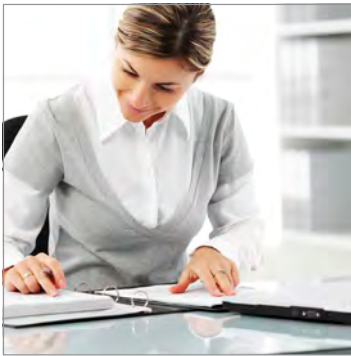
Communication is an essential element of running a successful meeting. Before, during and after, communicate with all participants and other stakeholders, such as those affected by outcomes in the meeting.

Communication may be done by email, phone or face-to-face. Invite others to ask questions, clarify and provide feedback. If people are involved in the process, they are more likely to engage with the objectives of the meeting.

Follow your organisation's style guides and communication protocols when preparing reports before and after the meeting.



Document all information



An important part of distributing information and maintaining communication flow is to ensure agendas, minutes and any information discussed in a meeting is available as a document soon after the meeting or discussion. Make sure this information is in a form that is accessible to all participants.

Be aware of each participant's needs so everyone is treated equally. Remember to apply the full range of communication skills.

Make a list of tips you can give to someone planning a meeting that they can use to ensure people's individual needs are catered for.

Organisation communication protocols and style guides

Your organisation may provide a specific template to use for taking minutes, and collating a report about meeting outcomes. These templates should be used as they ensure consistency and quality and that ethical and quality standards and practices are maintained. Your organisation will have specific guides for preparing written communication and documentation. A large organisation is likely to have developed its own style guide.

Style guides may specify:

- ▶ the type of language to use (formal, informal)
- ▶ key information to include (date, time, location, name of facilitator)
- ▶ use of organisation logo
- ▶ use of organisation vision and mission statements
- ▶ whether documentation should be digital or printed
- ▶ anti-discrimination, equality and privacy standards and procedures.

If participants go off-topic, use communication strategies to guide them back to the meeting objectives.

Communication strategies you can use when following meeting objectives are listed below.

Communication strategies

- ▶ Simply and clearly communicate objectives throughout the meeting.
- ▶ Ask participants if they understand what the objectives of the meeting are.
- ▶ Be assertive, using positive, confident language and tone of voice to keep the meeting on track.
- ▶ Ensure that all participants have the opportunity to speak about the objectives.
- ▶ Clarify the objectives if participants become confused.

Example

Follow meeting objectives

Narelle has been asked to facilitate a meeting about sexual harassment in the workplace. She has disseminated the agenda to all participants, who are all female. She has asked participants to bring any key evidence, and anecdotes of sexual harassment in the workplace to the meeting. She has also pre-warned participants that the meeting may be emotionally draining, and she has allocated a half-day of leave to all participants following the meeting.



Narelle starts by introducing the objective of the meeting, which is 'addressing sexual harassment in the workplace'. She asks participants if they are clear about what this means, and they all agree they are.

Narelle follows the agenda she sent to all participants. When it comes to sharing personal anecdotes, several of the participants are very engaged with their story. Some of the stories go off track, and participants start talking about personal issues relating to the perpetrators of sexual harassment.

Narelle realises it is a sensitive topic, but she needs the meeting to stay on track, and meet its objectives, which is to develop actions to address sexual harassment.

'I'd ask you all to stay on topic,' says Narelle. 'Shall we start brainstorming some actions we could take?'

The participants agree.

Below are some reasons you may need to facilitate negotiations in a meeting, and communication strategies you can use to facilitate negotiations. Optimal outcomes are also listed.

Reasons for negotiation

- ▶ Reasons you may need to facilitate negotiation in meetings include:
- ▶ two or more participants disagree about one of the issues raised
- ▶ two or more participants are having difficulty communicating effectively
- ▶ a person feels they need further support
- ▶ a worker is negotiating a pay rise
- ▶ a worker is negotiating for better work conditions.

Communication strategies to use in negotiations

- ▶ Remain impartial and objective.
- ▶ Avoiding making a pre-judgement about a person or situation.
- ▶ Allow each party time to express themselves.
- ▶ Actively listen to participants, and encourage other participants to listen to each other.
- ▶ Identify the specific issue being negotiated.
- ▶ Identify the options.
- ▶ Identify common ground.
- ▶ Clarify and review options.
- ▶ Reach an agreement.
- ▶ Follow up with all parties to ensure all parties are satisfied with the outcome.

Optimal outcomes

- ▶ It may be challenging to reach a solution that everyone is happy with. An optimal outcome is the best possible outcome that can be achieved from the negotiation. The following are optimal outcomes:
- ▶ Both parties are satisfied.
- ▶ Both parties feel they have been heard and understood.
- ▶ Conflict is reduced.
- ▶ An opportunity for further negotiation has been planned.

The bored one

There may be one or more group members who are uninterested in the task. They may be preoccupied, inattentive or fail to turn up for the meeting. They may feel superior and wonder why the group is spending so much time on the obvious. To keep people motivated, the supervisor can assign the bored member a task like collating information, recording ideas on the board or recording the minutes. Bring them into the group. If you allow them to sit back, things may get worse and others may decide not to participate either. Negative feelings can transfer to other group members.

The arguer

The arguer likes to be the centre of attention and enjoys arguing for the sake of it. The supervisor should resolve conflict but should not get into an argument with the arguer. Bring others into the discussion. If the conflict is personal, cut it off. Try to keep the discussion moving and minimise the opportunity for confrontation.

The shy one

Some people would like to participate but are too shy to speak up. They prefer to speak to one person rather than a group. They need to be encouraged and given positive signs that what they say is valued.

Group dynamics and processes

When facilitating meetings, it helps to be aware of how individuals within a group or meeting interact, and the effects this interaction have on other participants. This interaction is often referred to as group dynamics. Group dynamics are unconscious, psychological forces, or undercurrents, that influence behaviour and performance. Often people in groups adopt distinct roles and behaviours.

Dynamics are created by the nature of the work, personalities within the team, their working relationships with others and the team's work environment. Group dynamics can support team performance through positive behaviours, or hinder it through negative behaviours that result in unproductive conflict, mistrust and demotivation, for example.



Strategies to improve group dynamics

Teams or groups with positive dynamics trust one another, make decisions collectively, take responsibility for their individual and team performance and hold one another accountable. People's behaviours in groups with poor dynamics can disrupt work, impede decision-making and lead to poor choices.

Example**Facilitate conflict resolution**

Laura has practised general nursing and psychiatric nursing. Her area of expertise is working with older people as a gerontic nurse. Laura has had significant involvement in supporting staff, older people and their families to deal with issues.

She says that when family members are concerned about the person in their family who is receiving care, it can be a very stressful and emotional time for everyone.



Laura has some techniques for supporting staff members to come to their own solutions when issues arise with a family member. Her first response is to offer them some time out in a private space to talk about their issues. She does this at a quiet time or when there are other staff to cover the workload for a short period of time.

If this does not work, Laura invites the staff members to a staff-only meeting she facilitates. Each person talks for five minutes at the beginning of this meeting, ensuring that staff are heard and have equal voice in the process. From there, Laura asks questions to clarify the experience of people and supports them to come up with agreed actions to resolve the situation. Conflict is avoided because there is no perceived support for one party over another.

Occasionally, Laura has worked with staff who are unwilling to engage in the process of mediation or who do not follow-up on the agreed actions of the meeting. In these situations, Laura seeks the involvement of her manager and implements the formal processes of the relevant grievance or disciplinary processes.

Practice task 16

1. Describe how you could facilitate resolution if conflict occurs between two participants at a meeting.

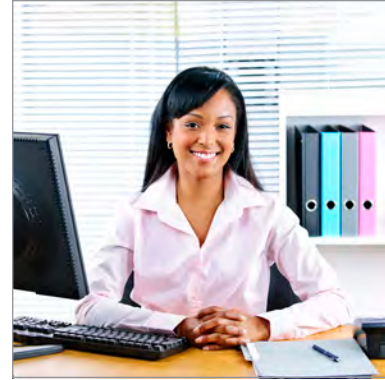
2. Describe why collaboration is preferred to confrontation in a discussion.

Collate and report evaluation results

Collate the information you obtain when conducting an evaluation. This may involve summarising evaluation forms and making a note of key improvements in an evaluation report.

Reflect on areas of your own development. Make a list of personal and professional development you could undergo, such as attending an interpersonal and leadership training course.

Identify areas where the team can make improvements.



Communicate lessons learnt and opportunities for improvement

Evaluation is most beneficial if you and others can learn from previous experience, and make improvements.

Sensitively inform others about evaluation outcomes. Be objective and specific. For example, if meeting objectives weren't achieved because of communication difficulties, address the specific difficulties that occurred and discuss options for improvements.

Provide sandwich feedback to others in a positive way. Sandwiching involves giving person positive feedback about their performance, then constructive feedback, and ending with positive feedback. If feedback is delivered negatively, the person may become confrontational and defensive.

Ways to communicate feedback and opportunities for improvement are outlined below.

Communicate feedback

- ▶ Team meetings
- ▶ Emails
- ▶ One-on-one meetings
- ▶ Informal conversations
- ▶ Feedback report

Improvement opportunities

- ▶ Face-to-face training
- ▶ Online training
- ▶ Individual supervision
- ▶ Attending conferences
- ▶ Journals and articles
- ▶ Role-plays and simulated exercises