

Effective communication



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Why is this important?

- Effective communication and the accurate transfer of information between you and the person in your care are essential to ensuring safe patient care.

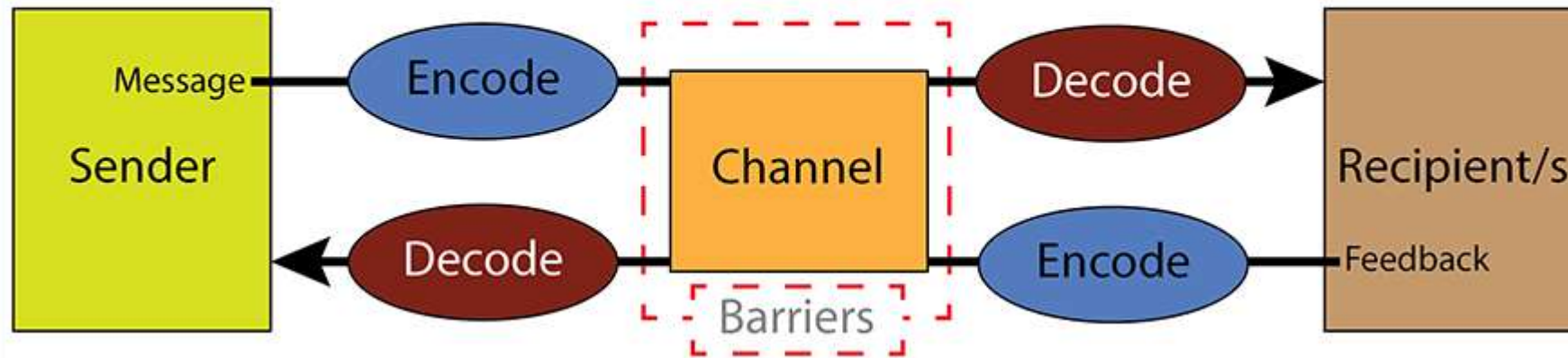
Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals in their report, A Roadmap for Hospitals:

“No longer considered to be simply a patient’s right, effective communication is now accepted as an essential component of quality care and patient safety”

- Higher patient satisfaction
- Improved adherence to treatments
- Reduction in psychological effects (depression/anxiety)
- Increased patient confidence or self-efficacy
- Symptom reduction
- Improved quality of life
- Increased survival rates

- The desired outcome or goal of any communication process is **mutual understanding**.

The Communication Process



Balancing Content and Connection



Helpful Rapport Building Behaviors

- Lean towards the person you are talking to,
- Look at the other person
- Nod and make encouraging sounds
- Use the other person's name early
- Ask the other person open questions
- Avoid contentious topics of conversation
- Use feedback to summaries, reflect and clarify
- Talk about things that refer back to what the other person has said
- Try to show empathy
- Be non-judgmental
- Give the reason first, then say you disagree.
- Admit when you don't know the answer
- Offer compliments, avoid criticism and be polite

Developing rapport is an essential part of every relationship. Without rapport, you would basically not have a relationship at all!

DEFINITIONS

- Effective patient-clinician communication: is the exchange of information between a patient and their healthcare provider, and includes communications with the family and carer. It involves two-way communication (spoken, written and non-verbal) that engages patients in decision making and care planning.
- It is tailored, open, honest and respectful and there is an opportunity for clarification and feedback.

Communication Strategies in Healthcare

- The Joint Commission suggests using the SBAR formula for effective communication.
- It provides a framework to communicate important information from one person to another.

- **Situation**—What is the problem or reason for the communication?
- **Background**—What background data and information is being used?
- **Assessment**—What are the behaviors or areas of concern? Summarize the facts.
- **Recommendations**—What is the next step? What do you think needs to be done?

Example

A research faculty member needs to give one of her students (Mark) feedback on his behavior in the lab:

- **Situation:** “Mark, I need to talk with you about your behavior working in the lab. You have typically been very high performing, but as of late there has been a change.”
- **Background:** “I have reports from numerous colleagues in the lab who work with you, as well as my own observations.”
- **Assessment:** “The reports are all basically the same—that when others ask you for help you become defensive or resistant. I have also experienced this with you multiple times in the last 4–6 weeks.”
- **Recommendations:** “The behaviors need to change so that the lab can perform better. Is there anything going on I should be aware of? How can I help you? I’d like to create a plan with you to help you get back on track.”

Tips for Speaking with SBAR

- (a) Appropriate eye contact
- (b) Be simple and be clear when speaking
- (c) Calm tone of voice and volume
- (d) Done speaking—be quiet and listen
- (e) End with clarifying questions and summary

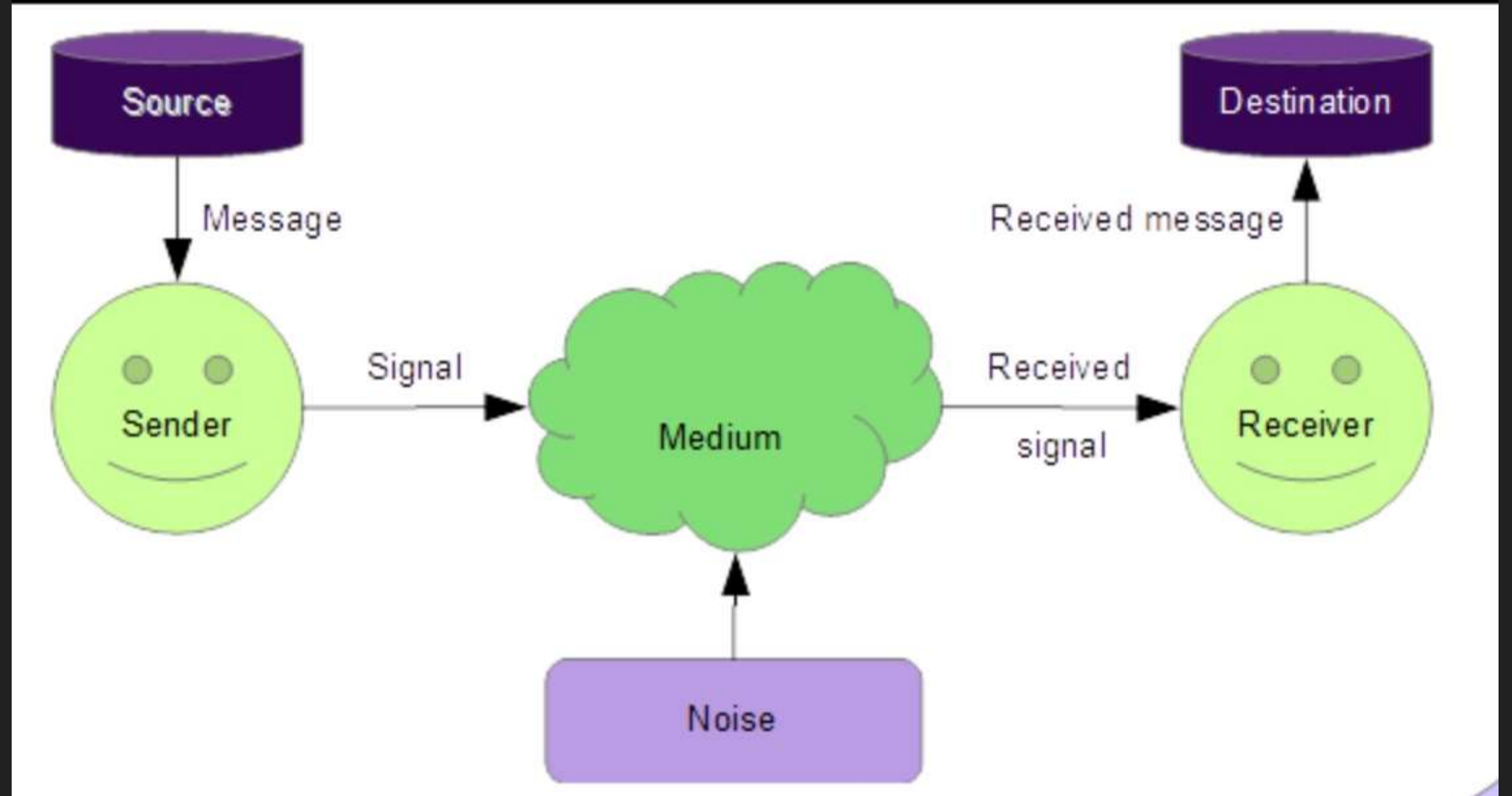
Effective Communication: Navigating a Complex Process

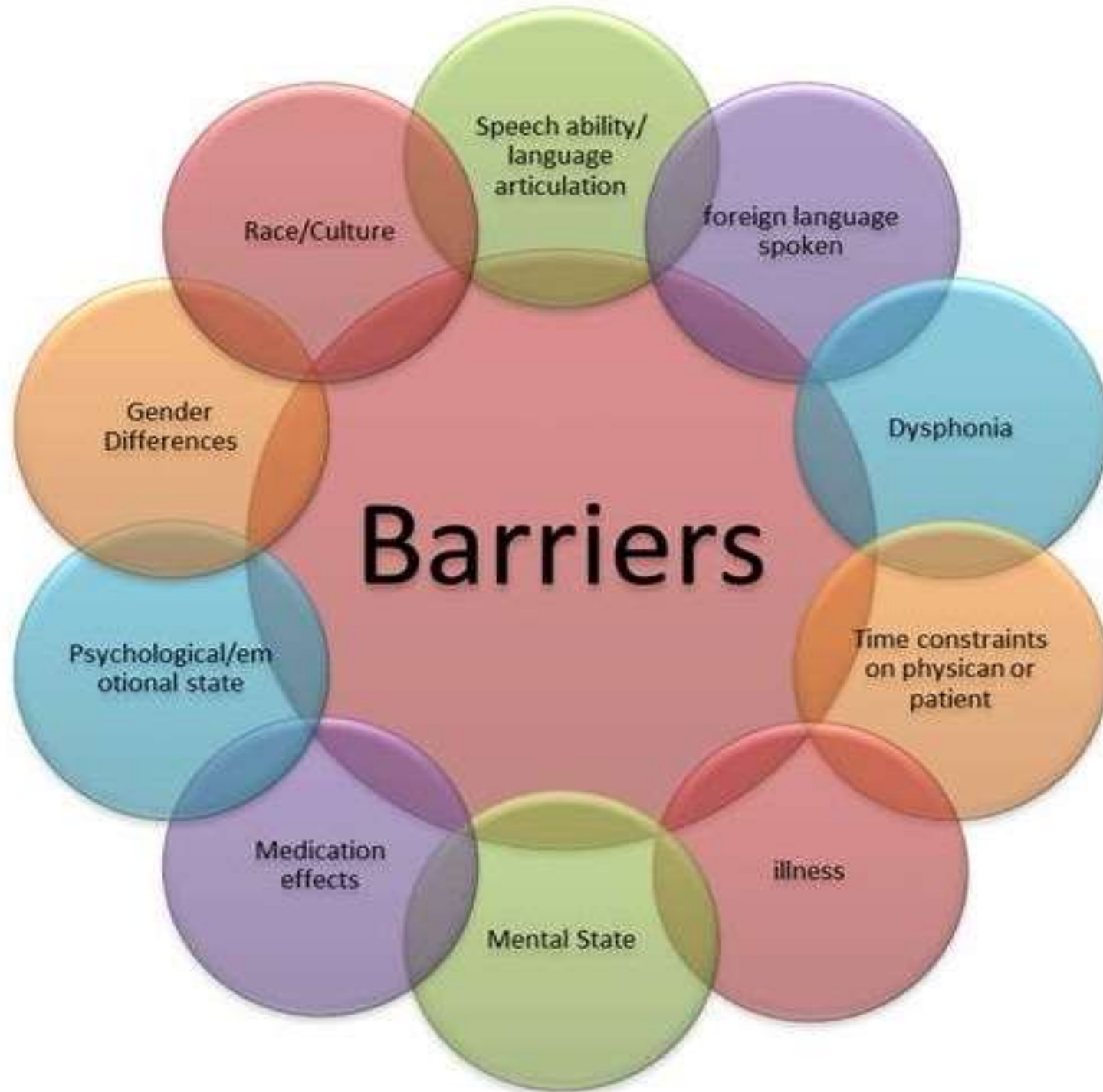
Recalculation

- (1) communication is a complex process
- (2) communication is fundamentally a human activity

Miscommunication:

- External
- Internal





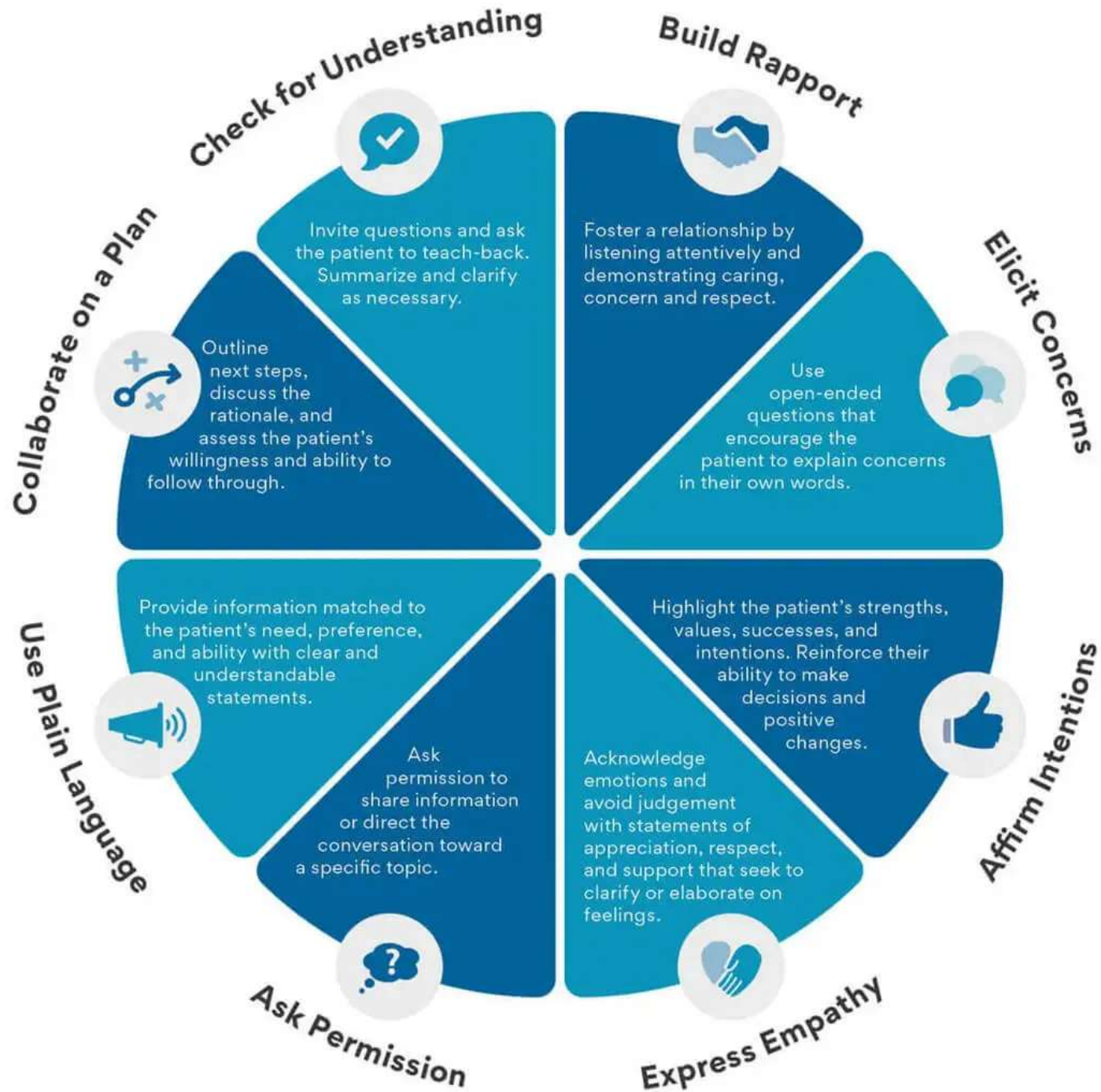
Listening: An Important First Step

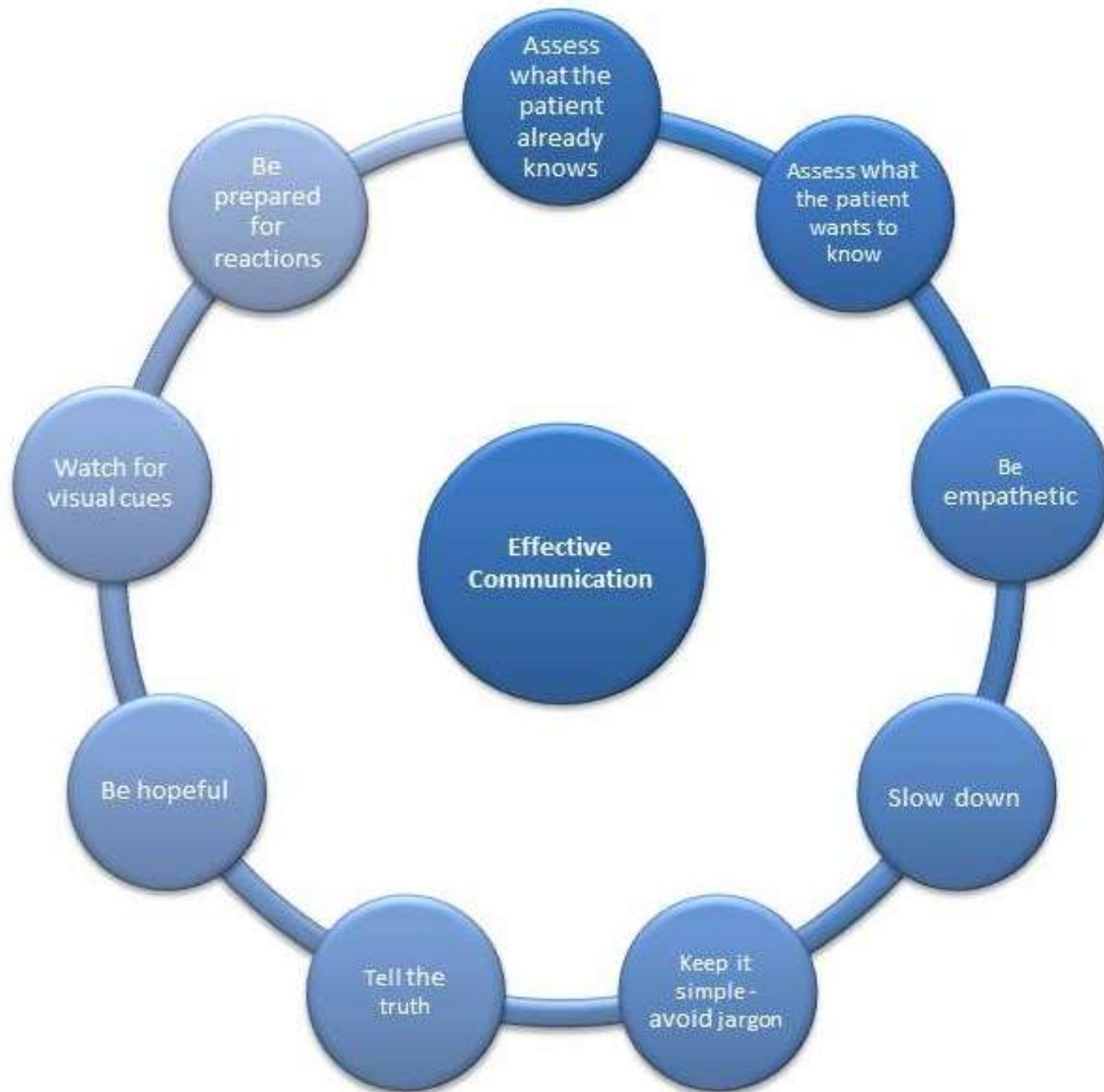
An important first step to 'recalculate' for effective communication is to listen with your ears and your eyes.

- H: Have an open mind and closed mouth
- E: Eye contact
- A: Ask quality clarifying questions
- R: React with empathy and honesty
- T: Trust

Communication is an art

- Communication is a challenging process. As much as communication is a skill, communication is also an art that needs to be acknowledged and cultivated.





Essential elements of effective patient-clinician communication

Element	Purpose	Outcome
Fostering relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To build rapport, trust and good relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improved satisfaction and experience with the health serviceTrust in the health serviceA decrease in healthcare provider stress and burnout

Two-way exchange of information

- To ensure accurate diagnosis and interpretation of symptoms
 - To engage with a person to gather relevant information
 - To share meaningful information in a comprehensive way
 - To check that a person understands the information provided
- Increased diagnostic effectiveness and improved health outcomes
 - Less medical errors
 - Increased and shared understanding of a person's care, needs and preferences
 - Decision making based on complete and accurate information
 - Improved partnerships between people and their healthcare providers

Communication is not the same as broadcasting, or simply sending out information.

It is a two-way process. In other words, it involves both the sending and receiving of information.

Conveying empathy

- To build rapport, trust and good relationships
 - To deliver quality health care
 - To acknowledge and treat the patient as a person
- Improved satisfaction and experience with the health service
 - Improved partnerships between people and their healthcare providers

Engaging patients in decision-making and care planning

- To reach agreement on problems and plans
 - To facilitate self-management
 - To recognise that the person receiving care as an important role in co-producing their care
 - To ensure that decisions are appropriate, realistic and reflects the person's preferences and goals for their care
- Improved health outcomes
 - People having a better understanding of their care plan and treatment
 - Improved adherence to care and treatment
 - Increased ability for a person to self-manage their care
 - Improved satisfaction by a person of the decisions made about their care

Managing uncertainty and complexity

- To manage a person's expectations
 - To keep the person informed
 - To ensure that care is appropriate to the changing needs of a person receiving care
 - To ensure that critical information is not lost when care is transferred between teams
 - To ensure new information is communicated and considered
- A reduction in the potential distress, anxiety or confusion arising from changes to care
 - Improved satisfaction and experience with the health service
 - Treatment and care matching the care needs of the person
 - Improved health outcomes