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# EFFECTIVE TEAM WORKING AND COMMUNICATION

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# Introduction

In this essay I will be discussing the importance of effective team working and communication. Models of communication will be described and explained and related to how effective they are whilst communicating. Additionally, I will analyse how effective the different models are and highlight my understanding of the similarities and differences between them. Finally, I will give a brief example of an incident at my workplace and how effective communication helped me to assist a client.

## Communication and Teamwork

According to the dictionary definition communication is “*a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior*” (Merriam-Webster, 2020). There are various forms in which people can communicate, this includes, verbal/oral, written, non-verbal, physical non-verbal communication, paralanguage and visual communication.

Verbal communication entails the use of words and it can be face to face or over the phone or electronic device. It is one of the common effective methods of communication. Verbal communication is crucial especially when it is face to face as the individuals can gauge the response of the information being communicated. The individuals can observe body language, eye contact and encourage active participation of dialogue (EDUCBA, 2020).

Oral communication is equally a crucial way to communicate and it includes several components that should be taken into consideration such as, the tone and pitch of voice, the speed in which the speech is being delivered, the clarity of the speech, the visual cues which can be observed when face to face and the body language being displayed (EDUCBA, 2020). These are all important and should be considered when trying to communicate effectively (Collins, 2009). You should be mindful of your tone of voice when communicating verbally, the tone can convey a lot of information by emphasis on particular words. Therefore, knowing that your tone of voice can change the message's perceived meaning should make you aware of how you speak (Batten, 2008).

Written communication is also a common effective way to communicate, especially in the workplace. This can be done in different ways, such as emails, letters, presentations, electronic documents, text messages and written reports. The effectiveness of the communication will depend on the style of writing used, the grammar and how clear it is, (Chaturvedi, 2011) This is very important to bear in mind when communicating because it can determine how the information is understood and if the information has not been communicated effectively and clearly there could be mistakes made by the person who receives the information or the right action may not be addressed due to misunderstanding.

Non-verbal communication can involve the observation of body language (kinesics), gestures and facial expressions. This can be very useful at times, as sometimes individuals can reinforce how they feel by how they react to the information being communicated, it can reveal feelings and thoughts of the individuals, both the person sending the message and receiver. Moreover, the physical distance between the communicators (proxemics) can give extra information and meaning beyond the spoken communication, so it is vital to pay attention not just to spoken word but also to the non-verbal observations (Calero, 2005). Sign language is another form of non-verbal communication and it is a common way for communicating with individuals who are deaf (Kyle, et al., 1988). Movements of the

body can also send a signal about how a person is feeling, for example, if two people are communicating with each other but one individual is fidgeting, it can be disruptive and it could send a message that the person is not being attentive to what is being said. Additionally, crossed arms could infer that that you are being defensive or angry and rolled eyes or lack of eye contact could insinuate that you are not listening or could be classed as rude behaviour. Therefore, it is imperative to be cautious as to how you present yourself when communicating (Kennison, 2018). Our facial expressions can tell a lot about our state of emotions by the way in which our facial expressions can change when certain information is communicated to us (Frank, et al., 1989).

Furthermore, your appearance or style of grooming and dressing can demonstrate to others the personality of the individual. For example, how you present yourself when you go to work can give an insight of the type of person that you are; for instance by looking after your appearance and having good hygiene and grooming can illustrate how a person's character and attitude is. For instance, if you go to an interview, you are expected to make a positive expression by firstly, dressing appropriately for the interview and being well groomed. First impressions are very important and people can make judgements on a person based on what they see first even before they begin to speak (Sutton & Douglas, 2019).

Teamwork is very important in the workplace and in educational establishments. It is important to be able to work effectively within a team setting. By being able to communicate effectively within a team, deadlines will be met, tasks will be completed to a high standard and there would be a general feel of great satisfaction within the team (Larson, et al., 1989). Understanding different cultures is also crucial when working as part of a team. Culture can influence the thinking and behaviour of individuals, therefore, being aware that people behave a certain way due to their culture or background can help you relate better with them (Allender, et al., 2013). Working in the health and social care field, you will come across a diverse group of people, therefore, being mindful of how you communicate with them is key to receive positive outcomes in the relationship. This includes the relationships with the clients and with your colleagues.

When communicating within a team, you should be mindful of the degree of knowledge of the team members. You should consider using language that is easy and clear for all team members to understand (Haas & Mortensen, 2016). If the other team members find it difficult to understand what is being said or the language that is being used, it can result in the task not being completed correctly or the aim and objectives not being met because of a lack of understanding (Hackman, 2002).

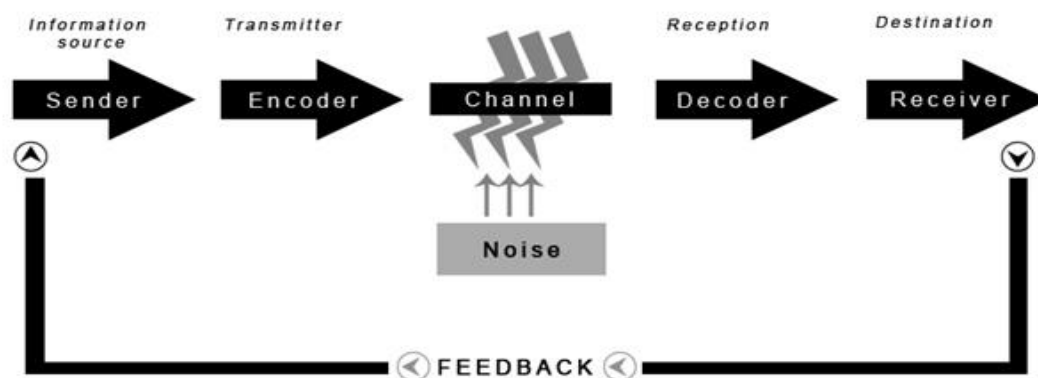
## **Models of communication**

There are numerous models of communication which can help to illustrate the human communication process, these are conceptual models.

The Shannon Weaver model is one of the first major models that was developed by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver in 1948 (Cobley & Schulz, 2013). It is a linear theory; the concept of the model entails a mathematical theory of communication. It consists of four parts. The sender, message, channel and receiver. It was especially invented to aid the effective communication between the sender and receiver and the factors which affect the delivery of the message were pointed out, this is called "noise".

This model was first designed to enhance the technical communication (Communication Theory , 2017). Due to transition error or noise the message that is being relayed cannot be well understood by the receiver. This is a good illustration of how we should be mindful of the mode of communication we decide to use. Many factors can cause information that is being communicated to be mis-understood in the process. For instance, a telephone or video call conversation can be disrupted due to poor signal, therefore information that is being communicated could be unclear.

The advantages of the Shannon Weaver model are, it is a two-way process and makes the model relevant in regular communication. Additionally, communication is regarded as quantifiable in the model. Nevertheless, the model is more applicable for interpersonal communication rather than team or communications to a broad group, moreover, as human communication is not mathematical in nature, the model can be seen as a “misleading misrepresentation of the nature of human communication” (Businessstopia , 2018).



SHANNON-WEAVER'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

(Communication Theory , 2017)

The Schramm Communication Model which is a cyclical communication model comprising all of the basic principles of communication (Janse, 2019). It offers a classical approach to an explanation of communication and it can be used to decide how communication between two individuals works when they are swapping information, thoughts and perspectives. Similarly to the Shannon Weaver Model, it is based on the theory that communication is a two way street, meaning, there has to be a sender and a receiver, additionally it also has another element which is the message itself. The sender and the receiver must encode and decode the message to decipher the message correctly. The receiver plays a crucial part in the communication process because they are supposed to receive the message, process it and respond accordingly to what they have received. The reply from the sender is the feedback. This can be related to my work place, where I have to listen or read recommendations which have been forwarded to our team and then we have to do assessments according to the information we have been given in order to find the best way in which we can support our clients. Feedback can be verbal and non-verbal. We usually express feedback in writing mostly through email, with factual evidence to clearly communicate the outcome or action plan which has been decided.

It is crucial to have an open communication environment in the workplace, for effective communication to take place. Feedback should be provided at any given opportunity to improve communication and also the services and relationships between colleagues and clients (Janse, 2019).

Poor communication in the workplace can lead to poor individual and team performance (Hackman, 2002), it can also lead to work being done incorrectly, for instance, when referrals come through and they are not assessed correctly, it could lead to the client being placed in the wrong accommodation, or not receiving the correct support that they require.

Berlo's SMCR Model of communication is made up of four elements which describe the communication process. These different components are influenced by different factors such as the sender of the message, the communication style (written, verbal, nonverbal) the attitude in relation to the audience. These are elements that should be considered when communicating,

## **Workplace case study**

At my workplace, where I work for Hestia Housing, we help rehabilitate and reintegrate people with mental health issues and substance abuse back in the community after discharge from hospital. I once had a client who was a heavy drug user and eventually had a mental health breakdown. He had to be taken to hospital where he stayed for a couple of months, once he was discharged, he was referred to our organisation. Upon reading his referral notes, I contacted him and made an appointment for an assessment. I was able to actively listen to him empathetically. I allowed him to express himself freely. I could sense that he felt that most people he had interacted with in his life did not take him seriously, therefore, he had lost hope. But he was able to open up to me and expressed that all he would like to do is be housed in a different area from where he has lived all his life. He wanted to have a fresh start and not go back into drugs, therefore, by being moved to a completely new area, he felt that it would be the best solution to help him get back on track with his life, somewhere he could meet new people and start working and not rely on benefits. He had not worked for numerous years, so he lacked confidence. I was able to think quickly and suggest he could start by doing voluntary work a few days a week so that he could regain his confidence. Then after some weeks he could look for paid work. I was able to communicate effectively with the client and in doing so, we came up with a solution to help him which included advising him how to manage his finances. After a few weeks he settled into his new community, started regaining his confidence and he was living independently. Upon reflection, I used the Communication Accommodation Theory, I was able to adjust my communication style to allow the client to feel comfortable and communicate effectively with me. Through divergence, I was able to highlight the client's identity and then accommodate his needs to what our services could offer him.

## **Conclusion**

Communication is a key component in our daily lives, effective communication is essential for us as individuals and as a group of people to relay information adequately with each other. Understanding the need to communicate effectively will help us with our relationships, in our workplaces, educational establishments and our homes. Additionally, understanding that communication should be matched accordingly to the audience or recipients for the information to be clearly understood. The different models of communication help us to have a better understanding of communication and this can help

us with how we relate with information processing. Being able to communicate effectively within a team will help with meeting the aims and objectives of the given task and the overall performance of the team.

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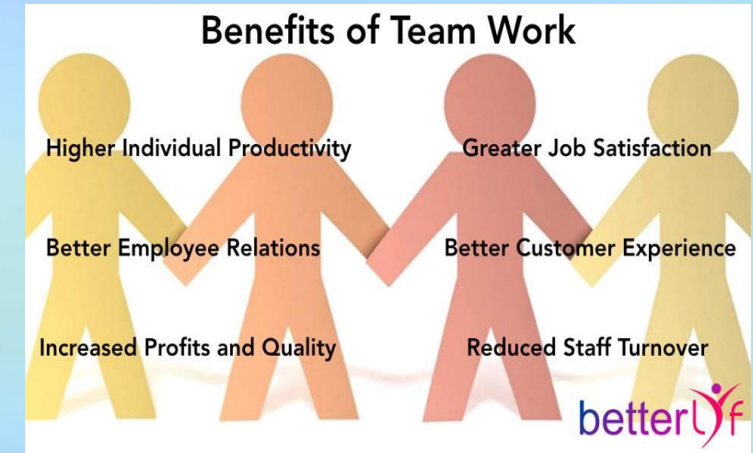
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# Benefits of Team Working

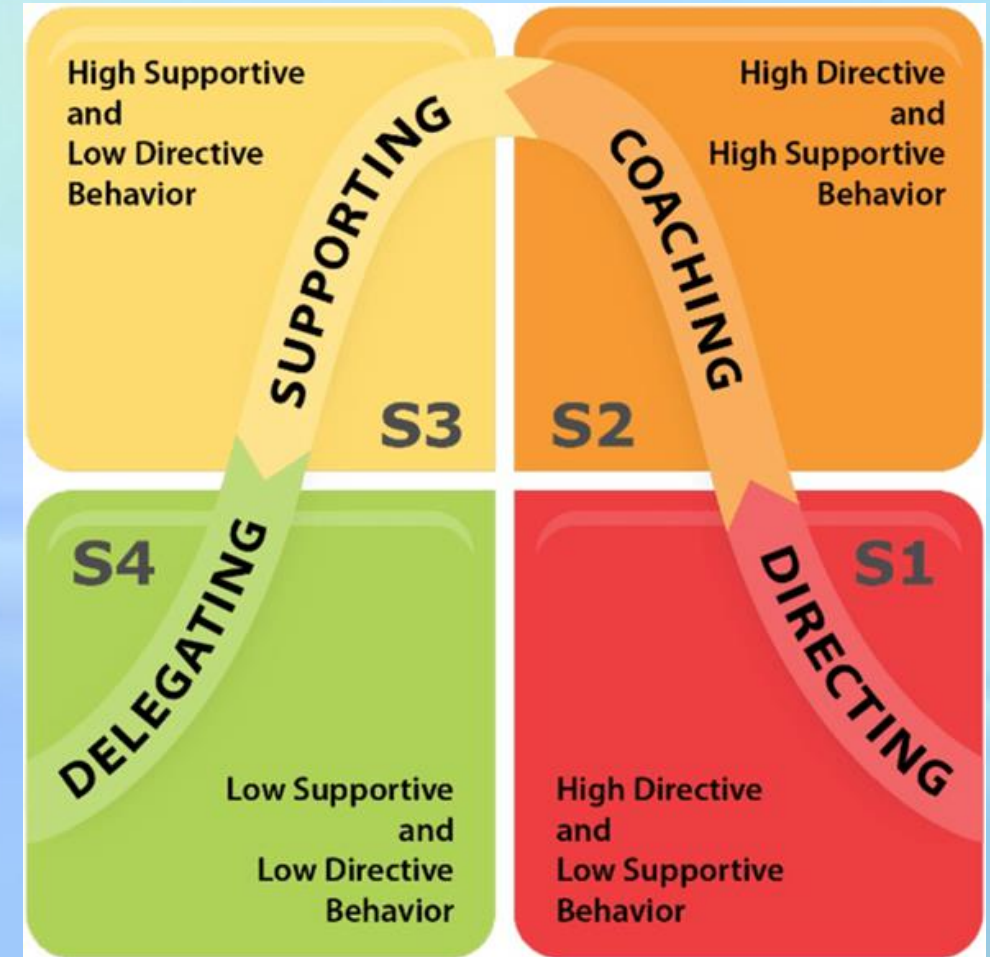
- Goals achieved faster, (Drotter, 2011).
- Diverse perspectives shared, (Rampton, 2019).
- Workload is shared, (Butterfield, 2010).
- Increased knowledge (shared contribution/ different perspectives stimulate thinking) (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004).
- Patience and tolerance is learned (West, 2012).



# Hersey and Blanchard Leadership Model

- Situational Leadership theory.
- Adoptive, flexible style.
- Suggests that there is no singular leadership style is better than the other.
- The model proposes that leaders should adjust their leadership styles to the team according to their abilities.
- The model suggests that successful leadership is a mixture of task relevant and relationship relevant.

(Kenton, 2020)



(Steindl, 2017)

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## Effective Team working – Presentation Speaker notes

### 1<sup>st</sup> slide- Title , Name

#### Introduction

What is teamwork?

Teamwork is the joint effort of a group of individuals working together to achieve a common goal or to complete a set task in the most effective and efficient way. (West, 2012)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Slide - Benefits of team working

1. **Goals achieved faster:** When you work as a team the goals and objectives of the task is achieved faster because you are working collaboratively with others (Drotter, 2011).

2. **Diverse perspectives shared:**

When you work as a team, you have individuals from different backgrounds with different experiences, therefore, there are many opinions and perspectives that will be shared. This is a great way to allow yourself to view different ideas from different points of view and there is more creativity (Rampton, 2019).

3. **Workload is shared:**

When working as team the workload is shared amongst the team and this helps in increasing the morale and motivation of the team. The burden is not left to one individual, the workload is balanced and there is also a sense of belonging. The team members also feel less stressed (Butterfield, 2010).

4. **Increased knowledge (shared contribution/ different perspectives stimulate thinking):** When working with people from diverse backgrounds you find that everyone has different knowledge and expertise. This is great, it allows the team to share different information, gain new knowledge and leads to an increase in problem solving (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004). Knowledge sharing involves members of the team interacting with each other, which is a crucial aspect of teamwork. Members of the team can share their expertise and suggestions (Ketvirtis, 2011).

5. **Patience and tolerance are learned:**

When you work in a team you learn to be patient because everyone works at a different pace and everyone's character and personality is different, therefore, you learn how to accept and deal with individuals who are different from you ( this can be in ways such as, culture, age, sex, physical and mental ability etc...) . You learn to be aware of other Individual's reactions and you may begin to gain knowledge on of why they behave the way they do (West, 2012).

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Slide Leadership theory - Hersey and Blanchard (1969 ) Model**

(Situational Leadership theory)

- Adoptive, flexible style
- This model suggests that there is no singular leadership style which is better than another and encourages the team to reach the delegating level.
- The model proposes that leaders should adjust their leadership styles to the team according to their abilities. The model suggests that successful leadership is a mixture of task relevant and relationship relevant (Kenton, 2020)
- Suggests that no leader is better than the other. The goal is to develop followers to delegating level as seen on the chart. (Kenton, 2020).

(Steindl, 2017)



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