Communication Styles

Communication Styles Mapping

Team Chemistry Workshops

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Part 1 · About this workshop

Understanding communication styles transforms team dynamics. When you know your own style and recognize others' styles, you can adapt your approach to reduce conflict, improve clarity, and build stronger connections. This is especially critical in SUD treatment teams where miscommunication can impact patient care.

The Goal

Not to change who you are, but to develop communication flexibility—the ability to recognize others' styles and adapt your approach for maximum effectiveness and minimum friction.

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Part 2 · Discover Your Primary Communication Style

When facing a team conflict, I typically:

- ○ Address it head-on and quickly
- ○ Analyze the situation and gather facts
- ○ Focus on how people are feeling
- ○ Try to find a solution everyone can accept

In team meetings, I tend to:

- ○ Keep discussion focused and moving forward
- ○ Ask questions and want more data
- ○ Share stories and connect emotionally
- ○ Make sure everyone's voice is heard

When giving feedback, I prioritize:

- ○ Being clear and straightforward
- ○ Being accurate and specific
- ○ Maintaining the relationship
- ○ Being gentle and encouraging

My communication is most valued for:

- ○ Getting things done efficiently
- ○ Thoroughness and accuracy
- ○ Inspiration and motivation
- ○ Creating safe, collaborative environment

Scoring guide

In each question the four choices match, in order, the Direct, Analytical, Expressive and Supportive styles. Your primary style is the one you chose most often.

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Part 3 · The Four Communication Styles

The Direct Communicator

Values efficiency, clarity, and getting to the point

Key Strengths

- Clear and concise messaging
- Efficient use of time
- Decisive and action-oriented
- No beating around the bush
- Good in crisis situations

Potential Blind Spots

- May come across as blunt or insensitive
- Can miss emotional nuances
- Might rush past important details
- May intimidate indirect communicators

Working With Other Styles

- Direct Communicator: Excellent - mutual respect for efficiency
- Analytical Communicator: Good - if Direct allows time for data
- Expressive Communicator: Challenging - balance speed with emotional processing
- Supportive Communicator: Moderate - Direct must soften approach

Collaboration Tips

When working with Direct communicators: Get to the point quickly, be clear about what you need, don't take their brevity personally, appreciate their efficiency.

The Analytical Communicator

Values data, logic, and thorough analysis before decisions

Key Strengths

- Thorough and detail-oriented
- Makes well-researched decisions
- Catches errors others miss
- Provides evidence-based reasoning
- Excellent problem-solver

Potential Blind Spots

- Can get lost in details
- May delay decisions waiting for perfect data
- Might dismiss emotional factors

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- Can overwhelm others with information

Working With Other Styles

- Direct Communicator: Moderate - Direct may find them too slow
- Analytical Communicator: Excellent - shared love of data
- Expressive Communicator: Challenging - different decision-making processes
- Supportive Communicator: Good - if Analytical acknowledges feelings

Collaboration Tips

When working with Analytical communicators: Provide data and evidence, give time to process, respect their need for thoroughness, don't rush their analysis.

The Expressive Communicator

Values emotional connection, storytelling, and relationship

Key Strengths

- Builds strong relationships
- Excels at motivating and inspiring
- Reads emotional climate well
- Creates buy-in through connection
- Great at team morale

Potential Blind Spots

- May be seen as overly emotional
- Can take feedback personally
- Might avoid direct confrontation
- May prioritize feelings over facts

Working With Other Styles

- Direct Communicator: Challenging - Expressive needs more processing time
- Analytical Communicator: Moderate - if both respect different approaches
- Expressive Communicator: Excellent - natural rapport and understanding
- Supportive Communicator: Excellent - shared value of relationships

Collaboration Tips

When working with Expressive communicators: Acknowledge emotions, build relationship before jumping to business, share stories, give time for processing feelings.

The Supportive Communicator

Values harmony, consensus, and team well-being

Key Strengths

- Excellent listener

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- Creates psychological safety
- Seeks win-win solutions
- Builds team cohesion
- Patient and steady

Potential Blind Spots

- May avoid necessary conflict
- Can be indecisive
- Might say yes when they mean no
- May prioritize harmony over needed change

Working With Other Styles

- Direct Communicator: Challenging - needs gentler approach from Direct
- Analytical Communicator: Good - if Analytical respects their process
- Expressive Communicator: Excellent - mutual understanding
- Supportive Communicator: Excellent - shared values, but may avoid tough decisions

Collaboration Tips

When working with Supportive communicators: Be gentle in delivery, allow time for consensus-building, acknowledge their feelings, reassure them during conflict.

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Part 4 · Map Your Team's Communication Styles

Understanding your team's communication style distribution helps you anticipate potential friction points and leverage complementary strengths. Use this exercise during team development sessions.

Team Mapping Exercise

1. Individual Assessment: Each team member completes the style assessment above or takes extended version

2. Share Results: Each person shares their primary and secondary communication style with the team

3. Create Visual Map: Plot team members on a chart or create a visual representation of style distribution

4. Discuss Implications: Where might we have natural friction? Where are we strong? What's missing?

5. Create Action Plan: How will we adapt communication to honor different styles?

Team Discussion Prompts

- What is our team's dominant communication style? How does this serve us? How might it limit us?
- Are there styles underrepresented on our team? What perspectives might we be missing?
- Where have we had recent miscommunications? Can we trace them to style differences?
- How can we leverage our style diversity as a strength rather than viewing it as a challenge?
- What specific adjustments will each of us commit to based on our style differences?

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Part 5 · Real-World Application Scenarios

Team Meeting Facilitation

Direct Approach: Keep agenda tight, move quickly through items

Analytical Approach: Provide data ahead of time, allow thorough discussion

Expressive Approach: Build in check-ins, allow for storytelling

Supportive Approach: Ensure all voices heard, seek consensus

Best Practice: Rotate facilitation styles or intentionally design meetings that honor all styles—data before meeting, efficient discussion, emotional check-ins, consensus when appropriate

Giving Critical Feedback

Direct Approach: State the issue clearly and immediately

Analytical Approach: Provide specific examples with documentation

Expressive Approach: Start with relationship, end with encouragement

Supportive Approach: Frame as helping them succeed, ask how to support

Best Practice: Adapt to receiver's style: Direct wants bullet points, Analytical wants data, Expressive needs emotional safety, Supportive needs reassurance of relationship

Crisis Response

Direct Approach: Immediate action, clear directives

Analytical Approach: Assess situation, gather information

Expressive Approach: Check emotional impact on team and patient

Supportive Approach: Ensure everyone feels supported

Best Practice: In crisis: Lead with Direct (action), support with Analytical (assessment), follow up with Expressive/Supportive (processing and support)

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Part 6 · Creating Team Communication Agreements

Once your team understands individual communication styles, create explicit agreements that honor style diversity while maintaining effectiveness.

Sample Team Communication Agreements:

Meeting Communications

We will send agendas 24 hours in advance (honors Analytical), keep discussions focused (honors Direct), allow brief check-ins (honors Expressive), and ensure all voices heard before decisions (honors Supportive)

Feedback Protocol

We will adapt feedback delivery to receiver's style, always include specific examples (Analytical), get to the point respectfully (Direct), acknowledge relationship (Expressive), and reassure support (Supportive)

Conflict Resolution

We will address conflicts within 48 hours (Direct), prepare facts/examples (Analytical), acknowledge emotions (Expressive), and seek win-win solutions (Supportive)

Decision Making

For urgent decisions, one person decides and informs others (Direct). For major decisions, gather input from all styles, provide data (Analytical), discuss implications (Expressive), build consensus (Supportive)

Daily Communication

We recognize that Direct wants brief updates, Analytical wants context, Expressive wants connection, Supportive wants reassurance—and we adapt our messages accordingly

Key Principle: The goal isn't for everyone to communicate the same way—it's to develop style flexibility so we can meet each person where they are. This is the same skill we use with patients, applied to our teammates.

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Part 7 · Personal Action Plan

My primary communication style is:

Direct, Analytical, Expressive, or Supportive

The style I find most challenging to work with is:

Which style challenges you most?

One specific adjustment I will make this week to communicate better with different styles:

Be specific: What will you do differently? With whom?

One teammate I want to understand better (and their style):

Name and their communication style

Remember

Communication styles aren't fixed personality types—they're preferences and tendencies. Most people use different styles in different contexts. The goal is awareness and flexibility, not rigid categorization. When team members understand and adapt to each other's communication preferences, you create a culture where everyone can be heard, understood, and valued for their unique contributions.

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