

TEAM TALK

Good Work Design:

Effective communication



Australian Government

Comcare



This team talk is part of a series created to help you discuss good work design with your team. Read the team talk to your team and use the questions to start a discussion.

Introduction

Effective communication involves open conversations where people feel safe and confident to share information freely, feel listened to and have their views respected. Open communication contributes to building trust and morale, engagement, psychological safety, a positive team atmosphere and job satisfaction.

Comcare's [Effective communication](#) video and [better practice guidance](#) outlines how great managers communicate effectively. Let's watch the video – which is designed for managers but has messages that are relevant for all of us.

Tips for effective communication

Communicate often: Have frequent, ongoing and open conversations with your team-mates. Speak up when you feel unsure, want more information or have information, ideas or opinions to offer.

Be accessible and flexible: Maintain a friendly, positive attitude so people feel they can approach you. Ask others how they would like you to communicate with them. Choose communication methods that suit the circumstances and understand that different channels work better for different types of work.

Be genuine and get to know people: Take time to get to know your team-mates and use intentional communication to build relationships. For example, 'How are you? How was your weekend?' Be authentic and bring your 'whole person' to work so people can get to know you. Be open and honest and admit mistakes.

Listen with empathy: Acknowledge people by giving them your undivided attention and refrain from interrupting. Ask clarifying questions and acknowledge feelings, for example, 'You look like you're upset...?' Listen patiently and calmly and make neutral responses that help people feel heard and understood, for example, 'That sounds really challenging.'

Choose the right communication channel:

- Where possible, use screen-based communication primarily for transactional work.
- Face to face communication is important for initial meetings to establish trust and is more effective for non-transactional work.
- Using a phone instead of a screen can help you focus on the person's voice and read their emotions.
- Keep email for simple tasks only: for example, coordinating activities, confirming agreements, requesting or sharing information.

Ensure your communication is inclusive and culturally appropriate:

- Be curious and develop some knowledge of other people's cultural backgrounds.
- Keep an open mind and accept cultural and other differences.
- Use active listening to ensure you understand and are understood.
- Be aware of differences in non-verbal communications.
- Use clear language and avoid jargon and slang.



Discussion

- What aspects of communication does your team do well?
- What could be strengthened or done differently?
- What's one thing that you want to strengthen yourself?

Notes

This section can be used to record agreed actions arising from your discussion and/or attendance.

