

Communicate as an Ally

When the pressure is on and everyone is stressed to the max, it's easy for misunderstandings to occur. Use these tips to keep communication open and ensure your message is heard.



Create a **safe environment**

- Create a space where team members know they can let their guard down and express frustrations or concerns without feeling judged.
- Provide relief by listening and offering understanding. Don't be afraid to use humor to defuse the tension.



Communicate in a **sincere way** that shows respect

- Understand that you might not always agree, but as team members you should acknowledge feelings and treat one another with care.
- If you need to give feedback, stick to the situation instead of attacking the person. Share what you observed and why it concerns you.



Consider your words **BEFORE** you say them

- Think about the other person's reaction to what you plan to say. Aim to start a conversation, instead of an argument.
- Restructure statements that can seem accusatory, such as "You seem upset." Instead, refer to what you know, "I noticed you haven't said much lately."

Adapted from **NCHARGE® Supervisory Skills for Positive Outcomes**

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PURPOSE

Prolonged stress and tension in crisis situations can challenge any team. But when co-workers trust and respect one another, they can communicate openly without worry reducing stress, helping everyone cope better, and keeping the focus on patient care.

Use this guide to prompt discussion about how your team communicates and ensure everyone on the team feels supported.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

1. Share this tool individually or with your entire team. If used in a huddle, during rounding, or in a team meeting, allow a few minutes to review the infographic.
2. Ask the individual or team members to think of a recent conversation at work when they were under stress or needed to relay difficult information.
3. Use these questions to prompt discussion and reflection:
 - As you think back, consider the other person's reaction. How do you think your words were received?
 - How would a change in your words or tone affect the conversation?
 - What phrases, recommendations, or tips have you learned that would be helpful to use when speaking with team members during times of high stress?