

ACTIVE LISTENING

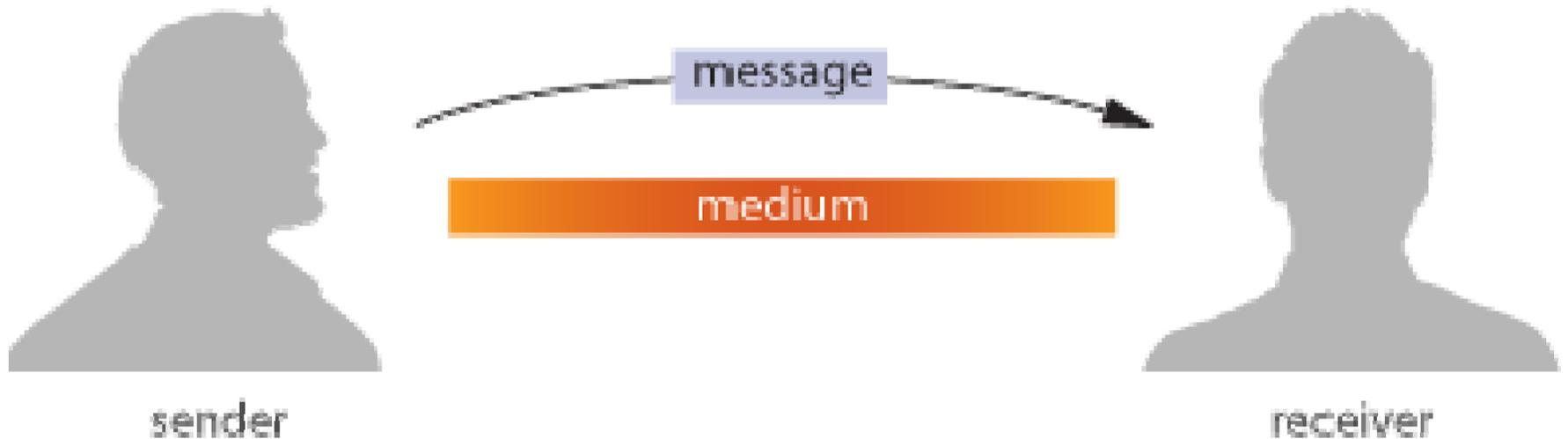
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PB&J experiment

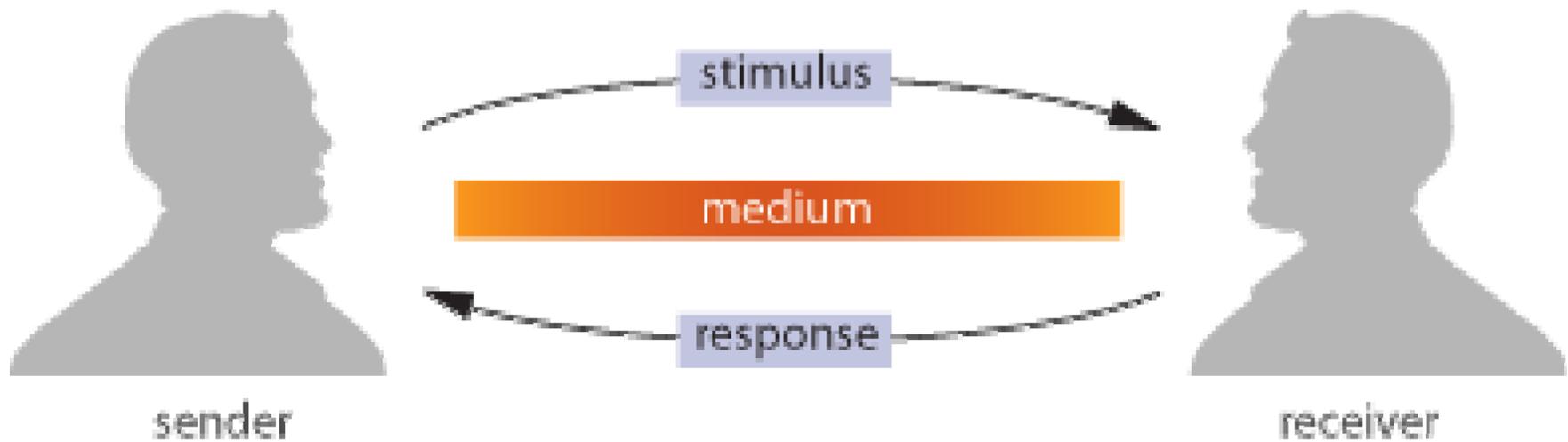


- What can we learn from this?
 - Role of the listener in communication
 - EXPECTATIONS
 - ASSUMPTIONS

Communication in Health Care



Communication in Health Care



Active Listening in Health Care



- Missed opportunities to **listen** to accurate information from patients (Berger et al., 2011).
- Humans remember 25 – 50% of what we hear (Conflict Research Consortium, 1998).
- Joint Commission has noticed a problem in health care communication...

Active Listening



- Active listening is a specific way of hearing what a person says and feels and reflecting that information back to the speaker.
- **Goal:** listen to the whole person and provide them with empathic understanding.

Why Active Listening?



- Shows patient that you care.
- Establishes trust in a health care professional-patient relationship.
- Lessens your chance erroneous treatment/decision-making, based on your own assumptions.
- Increases the chance that you'll procure pertinent information.

Setting the stage for Active Listening

□ **Undivided Attention**

- Refrain from interruptions. Ignore distractions (I'm looking at you, EMR). Focus on the person to show he has your undivided attention.

□ **Body Language**

- Face the patient. Maintain eye contact. Nod at appropriate times. Avoid crossing your arms and keep an open posture to show you are open to communication.

□ **Acknowledgement**

- Paraphrase comments to verify your understanding of the situation. Clarify important details by asking if you have a thorough understanding of what he is saying and feeling. Ask open-ended questions to elaborate on key aspects.

□ **Nonjudgmental Attitude**

- Withhold judgment. Avoid interrupting with counterarguments. Avoid “pre-mature diving”.

□ **Response**

- Avoid condescending responses. Show empathy by respecting the patient.

S.O.L.E.R.



- Five steps to attentive listening:
 - **S**quarely face the person
 - **O**pen your posture
 - **L**ean towards the sender
 - **E**ye contact maintained
 - **R**elax while attending

How to...

Paraphrase: Restating a message, but usually with fewer words. Where possible try and get more to the point.

- When listening, consider asking yourself:
 - ▣ What is the speaker's basic thinking message
 - ▣ What is the person's basic feeling message

- Patient: I just don't understand, one minute she tells me to do this, and the next minute to do that.
 - ▣ Active listening response: "She really confuses you."

How to...



Clarify: Process of bringing vague material into sharper focus.

- Examples: “I’m confused. Were trying to say that...” or “Okay. Let me see if I’ve got it all...”

Check Perceptions: Request for verification of your perceptions.

- Example: “Let me see if I’ve got it straight. You said that you love your children and that they are very important to you. At the same time, you can’t stand being with them. Is that what you are saying?”

How to...

Summarize: Pulling together, organizing, and integrating the major aspects of your dialogue. Pay attention to various themes and emotional overtones. Put key ideas and feelings into broad statements. DO NOT add new ideas.

□ Examples:

- “I heard you say that the most important topics for us to cover today are your weight gain and a painful hangnail.”
- “In summary, to address the weight gain, you committed to walk around the neighborhood 3 times a week and cut back on sweet tea. And I committed to discuss your medications with the pharmacist, to determine whether your antidepressant might be contributing to your weight gain.”

How to...

Express Empathy: Reflection of content and feelings

- Basic Formula:
- You feel (state feeling) because (state content)

- Examples
 - ▣ Patient: I just don't know how you expect me to exercise and eat right, when I'm working two jobs AND taking care of 2 special needs children."
 - ▣ HCP: "You are feeling overwhelmed, and maybe a little bit like your life and your health are spinning out of your control."

Active Listening



- Direct or non-direct expression of concern
 - ▣ Active listening: “You’re worried about your weight gain. What has you concerned?”
- Ideas or description of symptoms or ideas expressed repeatedly or with vivid intensity
 - ▣ Active listening: “Tell me what it means to you when...”
- Nonverbal expression of concern (grimace, eye roll, reduced eye contact)
 - ▣ Active listening: “I noticed that you cringed a bit when you started talking about your diabetes. Can you tell me what kind of feelings this brings up for you?”

Active Listening...



- Loaded questions or statements
 - ▣ Active listening: “Before I explain about diabetes and hypoglycemia, I wonder if you have any experiences or concerns about hypoglycemia.”
- Presence of other people during the visit
 - ▣ Active listening: Engage the accompanying person(s) in a discussion of their input into the visit.
- Seeking 2nd opinion or return visit
 - ▣ I notice that you were recently seen by another one of our providers. Do you have additional concerns, or would you like to further address the issue from yesterday?

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