

Communicating effectively

How supervisors can support effective two-way communication between their staff.

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Supervisors should communicate effectively by:

- demonstrating open, honest two-way communication with their staff, using active listening skills and making use of technology where appropriate
- facilitating two-way communication between their staff and the rest of the organisation, helping them to understand organisational priorities and processes, and supporting them in expressing their views and ideas and influencing decisions

Evidence summary

There is moderate evidence highlighting the importance of effective two-way communication between supervisors and team members.

Evidence suggests that relationships built on good two-way communication between supervisors and their team members are associated with a range of positive outcomes, including job satisfaction, perceived autonomy at work, and increased trust in – and commitment to – the organisation. Clear, open and honest communication are also elements of certain leadership styles, such as supportive leadership and transformational leadership (see [Introduction](#)), which research evidence suggests are associated with a range of positive outcomes, including supporting diversity and inclusion.

Practitioner evidence identified remote and agile working and use of technology as both being a challenge to, and offering opportunities for, interaction and connection with staff. The Guideline Committee considered that supervisors should make use of technology to communicate with their staff when face-to-face meetings are not possible or practical.

There is some limited evidence relating to a manager's role in facilitating communication between their members of staff and the wider organisation. This role was considered important by Guideline Committee members.

Empirical evidence

Moderate

Practitioner evidence

Available

Effective communication includes:

- setting clear direction and expectations
- providing information, feedback and clear reasons for decisions
- adjusting communication style to the individual and the situation
- showing a genuine interest in staff by actively listening to their views and concerns
- putting yourself in the position of your staff by seeking to understand their views and how they might be feeling
- adopting a non-judgemental approach when responding to staff views and needs
- creating conditions where team members feel able to ask for feedback and support
- being aware of the impact of your own body language and other non-verbal communication

There is a growing emphasis on the importance of ongoing conversation and reflective practice in the workplace (see [**Supporting the delivery of good service**](#)). Practitioner evidence suggests that these conversations can be formal or informal, structured or unstructured, and of varying lengths. In all cases, there should be an emphasis on frequent, ongoing two-way engagement with staff.

Supervisors have an important role in acting as a bridge between their staff and the wider organisation, and should ensure that they effectively communicate wider organisational expectations, priorities and changes. Supervisors should also provide support in identifying the appropriate people and processes that staff can use to get their own views and opinions heard by the wider organisation.

The following guidelines give more information on communicating in specific circumstances.

- [**Building effective relationships**](#)
- [**Supporting wellbeing**](#)
- [**Supporting the delivery of good service**](#)
- [**Supporting professional discretion in decision making**](#)

Tags

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