

# Communication Strategies in an Evolving Health Environment

FLEX Program Reverse Site Visit

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*A Consortium of*



Center for  
Rural Health

The University of North Dakota  
School of Medicine & Health Sciences

The Walsh Center  
for Rural Health Analysis

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# Overview

- **Why** is communication important?
- **Who** should be included?
  - Messenger
  - Audience
- **What** information should be shared?
- **How** should the message be communicated?
- **When** should messages be shared?

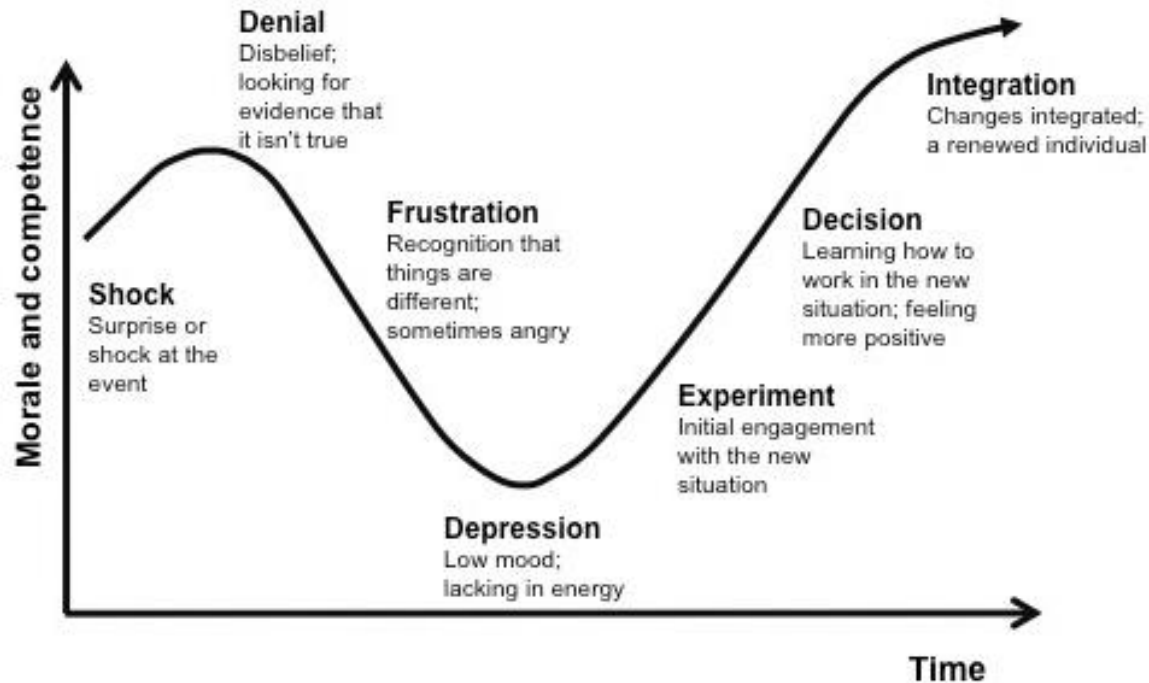
## Why is communication important?

I would just reiterate: Communicate, communicate, communicate. It's about the people and it's about relationships. We cannot forget that.

*Joel Allison, CEO of Baylor Scott & White Health in Dallas*

# Communicating change

## The Kübler-Ross change curve



## How have hospitals changed?

- Patient segregation
- Length of stay
- New types of practitioners
- Smoking
- Patient engagement and empowerment
- Payment models

Source: Leonard, K., Hospital of Yesterday: The Biggest Changes in Health Care, <http://health.usnews.com/health-news/hospital-of-tomorrow/articles/2014/07/15/hospital-of-yesterday-the-biggest-changes-in-health-care>

# Who should be included?

- Identify the audience
  - FLEX constituencies
  - CAH constituencies
    - Internal
      - Board, medical staff, partners
    - External
      - Community stakeholders
- Determine the messenger for the audience



## Messenger - Determinants of Trust and Credibility

- Knowledge and Expertise
- Openness and Honesty
- Concern and Care
  - Empathy
  - Commitment

# What information should be shared?



## Questions to address:

- From what to what?
- What does this change mean for what I do and how I work on a daily basis?
- Will this make a difference?
- How will success be measured?
- What is the support level for this change?

Source: Randy Pennington, [\*Make Change Work: Staying Nimble, Relevant, and Engaged in a World of Constant Change.\*](#)



## How to communicate complex information...

- Be concise
- Improvise
- Tell a story
- Use visual metaphors
- Continue asking “so what?”
- Listen
- Address cultural competency



# Communicating to Different Generations

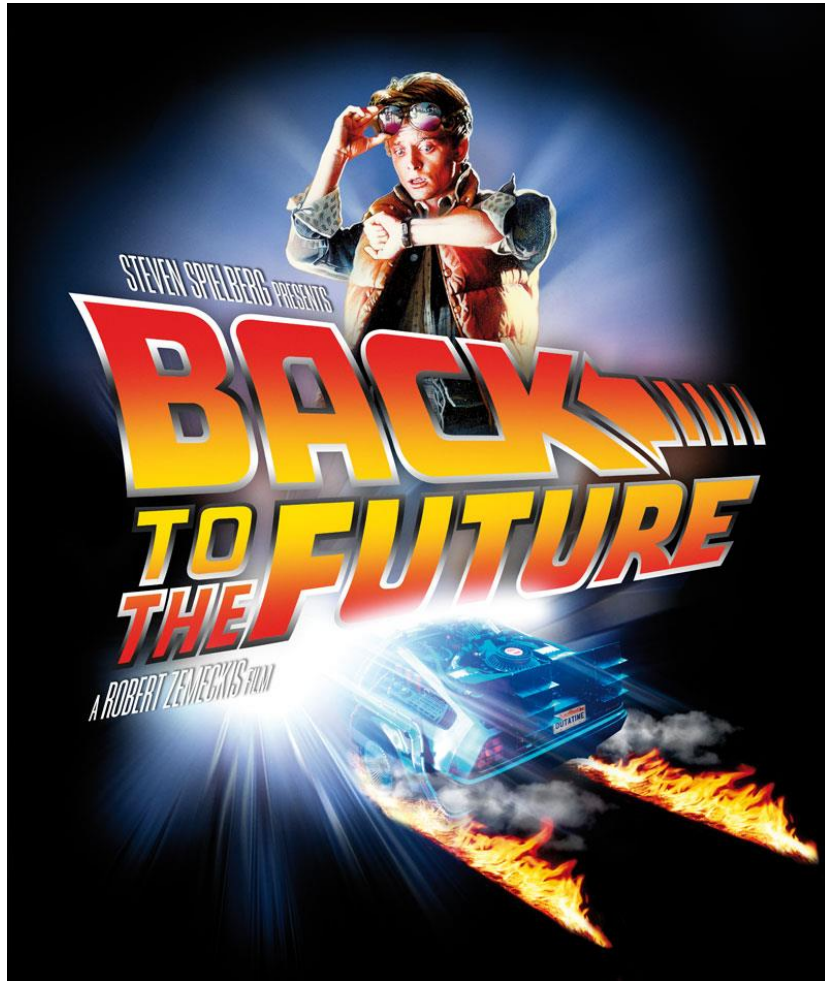
- Traditionalists
  - Formal communication, written preferred
- Baby Boomers
  - In-person communication, one-on-one
- Generation X
  - Timely and frequently, value direction
- Millennials
  - Electronic preferred, wonder what is next

## When should information be shared?

- Timing is important
- Consistently share information
- Repeat the message at least three times
- Provide regular updates on progress and changes
- Clarify messages quickly based on what you hear
- Respond ASAP

# Top FLEX Communication Strategy





- Health disparities
- Efficient and effective health care delivery
  - Payment policy
- Multidisciplinary health teams
  - Health care, behavioral health, public health, oral health, long term care, and human services
- Patient and family engagement and empowerment

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