

# Difficult Conversations

Unit Clerk PEP Days

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# Centre for Practitioner Renewal (CPR)

Health care is about curing and healing; art and science, mind and heart, skills and knowledge, technology and compassion

Health care is based on a business model of efficiency, the work we do is about relationship—relationship with self, other and Other

Relationship is too often sacrificed to action and efficiency

# Centre for Practitioner Renewal

- ◆ How do we sustain health care providers in the work place?
- ◆ What is the effect of being in the presence of suffering?
- ◆ What would be reparative, healing or restore resilience for health care providers?

*Efficiency through relationship*

# Effective Group/Team

**S**afety

**I**nclusion

**T**rust

# Guidelines

**C**onfidentiality

**E**qual airtime

**N**on-judgemental listening

**T**imeliness

**R**ight to pass

**E**ngaged

# Group Introductions

- ◆ First name
- ◆ Area you work in
- ◆ Energy level

# Communication

You cannot not communicate!

75% - 85% of communication is non-verbal!

“There are tones of voice that mean more than words.”

- Robert Frost

Communication is the cornerstone and foundation of every relationship.

# Self Knowledge and Connection

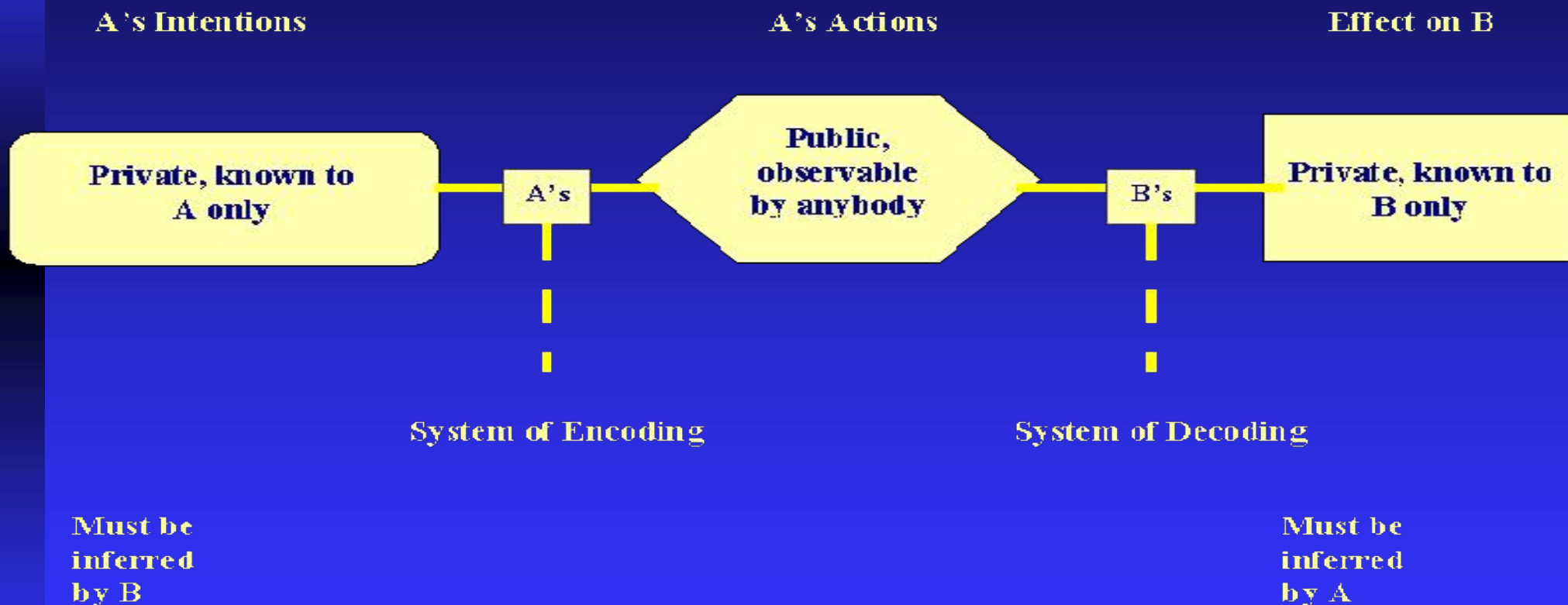
*To understand ourselves we have to be understood by another.*

*To understand another we have to understand ourselves.*

- Watzlawick, Bevan & Jackson



# The Interpersonal Gap



*J. Waller (1972)*

# THE PERSONAL ICEBERG METAPHOR OF THE SATIR MODEL



**BEHAVIOUR** (action, storyline)

**COPING** (stances)

**FEELINGS** (joy, excitement, anger hurt, fear, sadness)

**FEELINGS ABOUT FEELINGS**  
(decisions about feelings)

**PERCEPTIONS** (beliefs, assumptions, mind-set, subjective reality)

**EXPECTATIONS** (of self, of others, from others)

**YEARNINGS** (loved, lovable, accepted, validated, purposeful, meaning, freedom)

**SELF: I AM** (life force, spirit, soul, essence)

# The perils of not addressing difficult conversations/misunderstandings

Unresolved hurt

Resentment

Smiling rage

The silent treatment

Gossip

Clique formation

Impaired teamwork

Lowered job satisfaction

Sub-optimal patient care

# Self Awareness Exercise

Think back to a difficult or challenging conversation or interpersonal interaction (one that you are comfortable sharing)

The sensitizing questions we have provided are simply to help you reflect on this event. Do not feel you have to be limited by them

# ABCD Communication Model

## *A*ttend

- ◆ Self: What am I experiencing? What am I aware of within myself?
- ◆ Other: What is my colleague experiencing?

## *B*ridge

- ◆ Introduce Topic

# Communication

## *Comment*

- ◆ Deliver message
- ◆ Check for understanding

## *Develop Contract/Relationship*

- ◆ Acknowledge impact on colleague
- ◆ Establish time-line/follow-up if appropriate
- ◆ Immediate Plans

# Communication (Attend)

YOU:

- ◆ Be aware of your own emotion
  - ◆ What am I experiencing?
  - ◆ What am I aware of within myself?
- ◆ Make certain there won't be any interruptions
  - ◆ Find a quiet and private space
  - ◆ Let people know not to interrupt you for a period of time
  - ◆ Remove distractions
- ◆ Be at eye level if possible

# Communication (Attend)

## COLLEAGUE:

- ◆ What is my colleague experiencing?
- ◆ What do you know about your colleague?
- ◆ What information does this person already have regarding the conversation you are about to have?
- ◆ Make certain your colleague is as comfortable as possible.



# Communication (Bridge)

Let the person know that they are about to hear some important information

- ◆ I have some information to give you that might be difficult to hear
- ◆ I have something to say to you that is uncomfortable for me to share
- ◆ I value our relationship as colleagues and want to clarify what I think is a misunderstanding between us

# Communication (Bridge)

Ask whether they want to hear the information at this time

- ◆ I would like to talk about what happened at our last team meeting.
- ◆ I'm wondering whether we could have that conversation now, or would you prefer to find another time?

# Communication (Comment)

## Present the information

- ◆ Say/describe what you experienced
  - ◆ Descriptive not evaluative
  - ◆ Short, simple, specific
  
- ◆ Describe how the event made you feel

# Communication(Comment)

Remember the EAR principle:

Empathic  
Assertive  
Respectful

Invite a response\*

- ◆ Does what I've told you make sense to you?
- ◆ Do you have any questions?

\*Listen non-defensively to their response

# Communication (Comment)

Ask what you want or hope for\*

- ◆ If I do something in the future that hurts your feelings I hope you will let me know directly
- ◆ I'd prefer that you don't shout instructions at me down the hallway unless it is an emergency

\*Acknowledge to yourself that you can only invite (not force) another person to change their behaviour

# Communication

## (Develop Contract/Relationship)

Acknowledge the impact on your colleague

- ◆ How do you feel about my request?
- ◆ Do you think this can work for both of us?
- ◆ Thanks for listening to me. Is there anything you'd like to add?

Establish time-line/follow up if appropriate

# Guidelines for Pairs Exercise

Each of you will take turns describing your earlier reflections on the challenging conversation/interaction

The speaker: Share what you are comfortable sharing

The listener: Use active listening skills: put your own story to one side; don't problem solve or give advice; when the speaker has finished, paraphrase what you heard and check if there is anything they wish to add or clarify

# Experience of the Pairs Exercise

Take turns to describe to your partner what it was like to be listened to

Were there new insights that resulted from sharing your stories?

Would the ABCD model have helped you in the situation you described?



*We are strong when we stand with another soul.*

*When we are with others, we cannot be broken.*

Clarissa Pinkola Estés

Women Who Run With the Wolves