



EFFECTIVE  
COMMUNICATION  
FOR HEALTHCARE

# **Communication Challenges for Health and Care Professionals**

# Communication Challenges

Effective communication improves:

- All aspects of patient care
- AND the well being of health professionals

# Communicating effectively = 'multi-tasking'

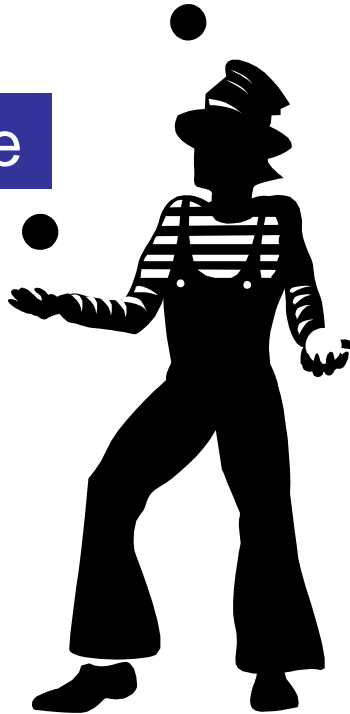
GOALS

TASKS

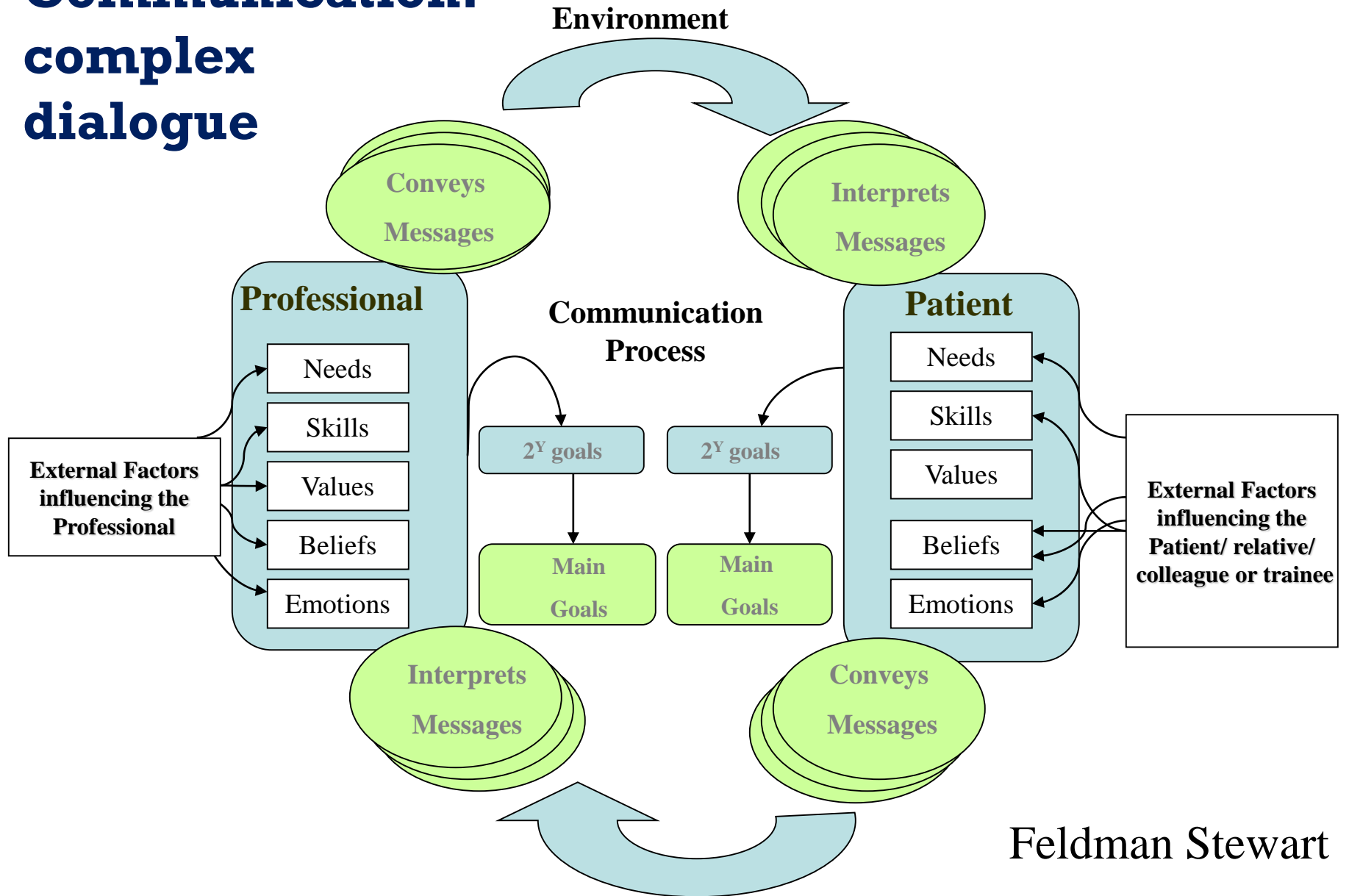
- Gathering information
- Breaking bad news
- Shared decision-making
- Negotiating
- Handling complaints
- Appraisal/ PPD...

Structure

Relationship



# Communication: complex dialogue



Feldman Stewart

# Top Tips

**Set the agenda  
at the start**

**Do it as you say it**

**Chunks with Checks (or a  
Pause)**

**Tennis is better than darts...**

***Distress isn't a disaster***  
**Listen**  
**Accept feelings**  
**Ask what would help?**  
**Use a key concerns list..**  
**De-role afterwards**

**Reflecting back;  
*listen before you talk.***

**Educated  
guesses;  
*Go with that  
hunch..***

***Pauses – silence is golden...***

# 10 Key communication skills

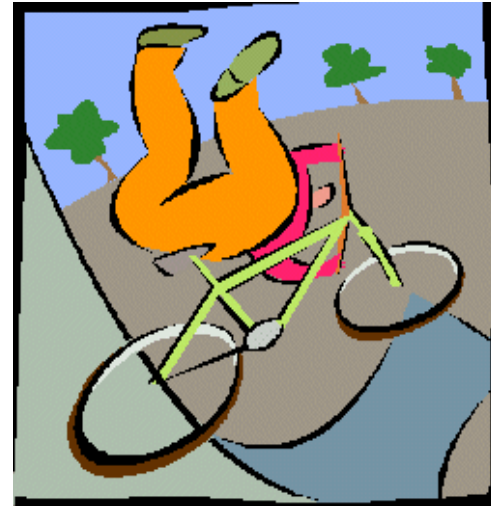
- Set/ agree the agenda at the start
- Active listening to the person's account
- Reflecting back – *check don't assume...*
- Integrating physical & psychological focus
- Giving information - *chunk & check or pause...*  
- *ask, tell, ask...*
- Silence is golden – *let pauses work..*
- Summarising and negotiating – *as you go along and at the end*
- Goals – *identify their goals and adapt your own...*
- Empathy: consistent verbal & non-verbal
- Educated guesses – *use your intuition*

## **Effective communicators can adapt...**

**Flexible**

**Insightful**

**Skilled**



# **Core communication strategies**

- Based on extensive evidence
- Help all professionals handle interviews more effectively
- Details are in the: **Communication Challenges in the EC4H book**
- Here are some examples...



# Managing time & distress

- Summarising & negotiating are essential
- Educated guesses help get to the key problems
  - *Acknowledge distress; respond with kindness*
  - *Explore the reasons for distress*
  - *Screen for other concerns*
  - *Once impact of problems clear/ understood, summarise and negotiate moving on to possible actions; see if person has their own solutions*
- Important to avoid HP “empathy fatigue”

# Handling anger

- Assess risk; keep calm, listen well
- Acknowledge the anger & explore reasons  
*“Please tell me what has made you so angry?”*
- Allow and absorb verbal expression of anger
- Avoid being defensive or confrontational
- Apologise for any errors & the distress caused
- Look out for a transition to other emotions or concerns as the anger subsides

# Addressing complaints

- ✓ Acknowledge the distress caused.
- ✓ Find out what they think happened by asking for their account of events.
- ✓ Summarise their account and check all the issues have been raised.
- ✓ REGRET: now say you're sorry 'x' has happened
- ✓ RESPONSIBILITY: say what should have been done
- ✓ REASON: clarify any misunderstandings
- ✓ REMEDY: explain what will happen next, who will be responsible and the timescale.
- ✓ Agree a treatment or action plan & any follow-up.
- ✓ Record the discussion in writing

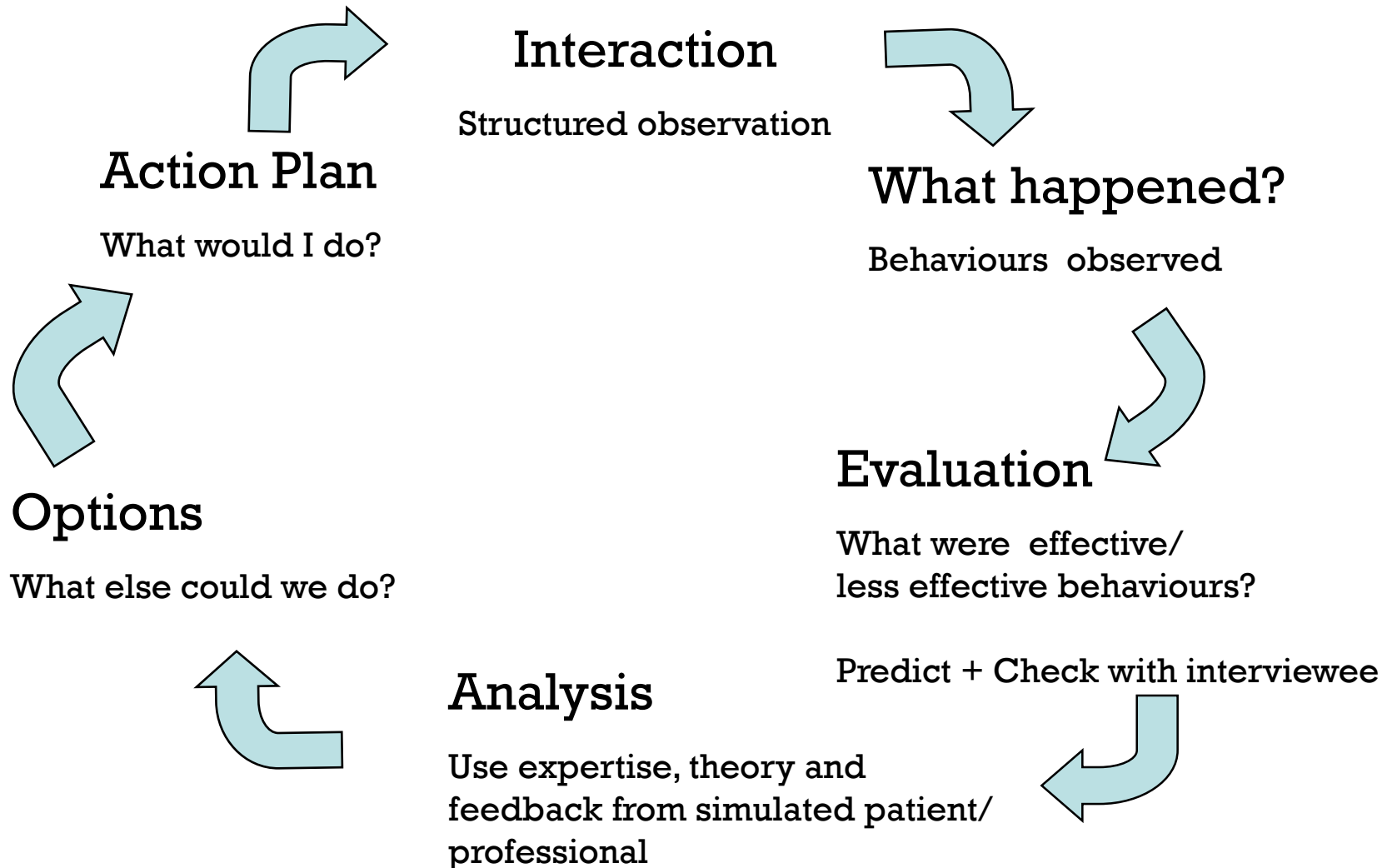
# Shared decision-making

- Outline the decision and clarify people's roles/responsibilities in agreeing a plan.
- Ask the person what they know, expect and would like to know.
- Share information tailored to this person and their situation; use decision aids if helpful.
- Find out what is important to this person.
- Discuss the available options (benefits and harms) including no action or deciding later.
- Reach a decision; check understanding of the impact/outcomes of choice made; document plan
- Follow-up/ review decision(s) as appropriate

# Anticipatory Care Planning

RED - MAP		
Ready	Can we talk about your health and care?	When would be a good time to talk? Who should join us?
Expect	What do you know? What do you want to ask? What are you expecting...?	How have you been doing recently? What has changed? How do you see things going now....? Some people think about what might happen if...? Do you have questions or worries you'd like us to talk about?
Diagnosis	We know... We don't know... Any questions?	What is happening with your ( <i>health problem</i> ) is... We hope that..., but we are worried about... It is possible that you might not get better because... We don't know exactly when..., can we talk about that?
Matters	What matters to you now?	What's important to you that we should know about? Are there things you'd like or wouldn't want for you?
Actions	What can help... This will not work...	Some things we can do are.... This will help you... This treatment will not work/ not help you because...
Plan	Let's plan ahead for when/ if....	Can we make some plans so everyone knows what to do? Talking and planning ahead 'just in case' helps people get better care.

# Reflective learning from simulated participant scenarios



# Behavioural feedback

## Pendleton

- What went well/was effective & why?
- What could have been done differently & why?

## SETGO

- What communication strategies did we See?
- What Else was going on (non-verbal behaviours)?
- Think about impact of approach used – check
- What are the Goals – patient and doctor?
- Options to help achieve them