

Tips for medical students to master subtle art of communication

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Effective communication is a soft skill—in that it is less about facts and more about know-how, yet it is a key part of medical training. From early in their training, medical students learn the importance of keeping open lines of dialogue with members of the care team and patients. Deft communication—especially as the provision of care becomes more of a “team sport”—can create a more collaborative and effective care environment.

But how can one master the art of communication? A module in the AMA Medical Student Leadership Learning Series aims to answer that question.

“For medical students, being great at your coursework and understanding the science and “technical” aspects of health care delivery are the table stakes” said Ann Manikas, the AMA’s director of organizational development and learning. “The differentiator needed “to win” is having great leadership skills.”

One of five modules to help develop tomorrow’s leaders in health care, the series covers topics such as conflict resolution and collaboration. These 20-minute, interactive modules offer advice, realistic scenarios and printable resources.

Communication types

The module aims to offer students a baseline for effective speaking and active listening.

One key aspect to thriving as a communicator covered in the module is that there are many different styles of communication, and the module breaks them into four different groups.

Medical students taking the module will also be able to:

- Recognize the importance of strong communication skills.
- Identify key principles to communicate effectively.
- Define various communication styles and in which situations each style works best.
- List components of effective feedback.

Learning to lead

The aforementioned medical student leadership modules are among the many benefits available exclusively to AMA members. The AMA is with its members every step of the way. For medical students, that means the AMA provides resources to thrive—academically and in charting your career—throughout your four years of undergraduate medical education.