



TRAIN LIKE STORM

MY COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN ACTION

In Effective Communication with Coaches, Teammates & Officials, you learnt that quality communication isn't simply about talking more.

Effective communication involves listening, asking useful questions, considering what the other person needs, choosing the right time to communicate, and being aware of what your tone and body language are communicating.

Now it's time to put that into action.

The activities in this resource will help you think about how you communicate in different netball situations and develop strategies you can use in your own training and games. You don't need to have the perfect answer. Think about what would genuinely help you communicate more effectively.

WITH COACHES

Activity 1: What Information Do You Need?

Your coach gives you this feedback: *"You're getting caught too square. Open up earlier."*

You heard what your coach said, but you aren't completely sure what they want you to change.

What information are you missing?



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What could you ask your coach to help you understand what they want you to do differently?

Now compare: *"I don't get it."*

With: *"When you say I'm getting caught too square, can you show me what you want me to do differently?"*

Both athletes need more information, but the second question tells the coach what the athlete needs help understanding.

Why is the second question more likely to give the athlete useful information?

You don't always need to wait for your coach to give you feedback.

If you would like feedback about something you are working on, asking a specific question can help your coach understand what information would be useful to you.

Compare: *"How am I going?"*

With: *"What is one thing I could improve on my next attempt?"*



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Which question is more likely to give you feedback you can use straight away? Why?

Sometimes you may also want to check whether you have understood and applied feedback correctly.

For example: *"Is that closer to what you were looking for?"*

or: *"Did I make the change you were asking for?"*

The goal isn't to ask more questions. It is to recognise when you need information and what information would actually help you.

Remember that timing matters too. Look for an appropriate opportunity to ask rather than interrupting an instruction, activity or conversation.

Apply It To Your Netball

Now think about your own training.

Think of something a coach has asked you to do that you didn't completely understand, or an area of your game you would genuinely like more feedback about.

It could be something technical, tactical, or related to how you train.

If you can't think of a specific situation that has happened before, choose something you are currently working on and would like to understand or improve.



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My example is:

What do I actually want to understand or improve?

What specific question could I ask my coach to get the information I need?

If you then tried to apply your coach's feedback:

What could you ask afterwards to check whether you understood and applied it correctly?



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WITH TEAMMATES

Activity 3: What Does Your Teammate Need?

During a training activity, your teammate makes the same error several times. They are becoming frustrated. Before you communicate, think:

What might your teammate need from you right now?

Information / Encouragement / Help / Something Else

Circle what you believe to be correct.

What could you actually say or do?

Different situations may need different types of communication.

If your teammate needs information, you might say:

"You've got more space on your left."

If they need encouragement, it might simply be:

"Next one."



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If they need help, you could ask:

"Do you want me to put that pass a little higher?"

There isn't one response that will work for every teammate or every situation.

The important skill is learning to think about what your teammate needs from you in that moment.

Information is also most useful when your teammate has an opportunity to act on it. Think about when you communicate, not just what you say.

Activity 4: Your Body Language Communicates Too

Your teammate makes an error that affects your next play. You feel frustrated. You don't say anything, but you throw your arms out, shake your head or turn away.

Have you still communicated something?

Yes / No

Circle what you believe to be correct.

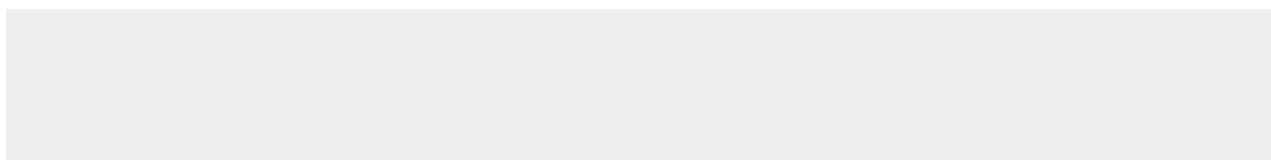
What might your teammate understand from your body language?



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Feeling disappointed or frustrated doesn't automatically mean you have communicated poorly. What could you do differently while still acknowledging how you feel?



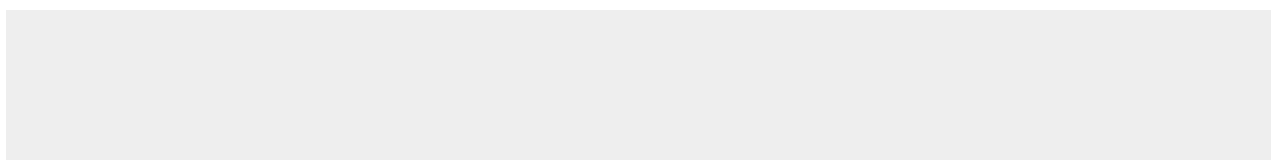
Activity 5: When You Make The Error

Communication also matters when you are the athlete who makes the mistake.

Imagine you release a pass expecting your teammate to drive, but they hold their position, and the ball goes out of court.

You might feel frustrated with yourself, your teammate or the situation.

What could you communicate that acknowledges what happened without blaming your teammate and helps you both reconnect for the next play?



Taking ownership doesn't need to become a big moment.

A quick acknowledgement can show your teammate that you recognise your part in what happened, while helping both of you move forward.



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For example: *“My bad, I released that too early. Next one.”*

Or: *“Sorry, I thought you were driving. I’ll wait for your movement next time.”*

You could even keep it as simple as: *“Sorry, that was on me. Next one.”*

Your response doesn't need to be long. The aim is to acknowledge what happened, communicate what is useful and reconnect for what happens next.

Apply It To Your Netball

Now think about your own netball.

Think about a teammate or training partner you regularly work with and a situation where communication between you could be more effective.

It might be when one of you makes an error, when you need to give each other information, when something isn't working, or when one of you needs support.

If you can't think of a specific situation, choose one that could realistically happen in your training or games.

My example is:



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What do you think your teammate might need from you in that situation?

Information / Encouragement / Help / Something Else

Circle what you believe to be correct.

What could you say or do that might help?

What would you want your body language to communicate to your teammate?

WITH OFFICIALS

Activity 6: Reacting Or Seeking Information?

You are penalised for obstruction. You thought you were three feet away and don't understand the decision. Compare these responses:

RESPONSE A

Throw your arms up and immediately say: *"How was that obstruction?"*



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RESPONSE B

Listen to the decision and, if there is an appropriate opportunity, ask: *"Can you please clarify what caused the obstruction?"*

Both athletes may disagree with the decision, but they communicate that disagreement differently.

What is different about the way they communicate?

Which response is more likely to help the athlete understand the decision? Why?

Your words, tone and body language all contribute to how your communication may be received.

During play, you can't stop to question an umpire's decision or seek clarification.

Your job in that moment is to listen to the decision, manage your response and return your attention to what happens next.



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If there is something you genuinely don't understand, that doesn't mean you have to remain confused.

At a game break, you can speak with your captain and ask them to seek clarification from the umpires on behalf of the team.

There may also be an appropriate opportunity to respectfully speak with an umpire after the game.

The important thing is to use the appropriate opportunity and think about what you actually want to understand.

Activity 7: Ask To Learn, Not To Challenge

When you do have an appropriate opportunity to seek clarification, think about why you are asking and how you ask.

The aim is to understand and learn, rather than to challenge the decision or try to prove that you were right.

For example, instead of: *"Why did you keep calling me for obstruction?"*

You could ask: *"I was trying to adjust after being penalised. Could you explain what you were seeing so I know what I need to work on?"*

The second question tells the umpire what you are trying to understand and shows that you are looking for information you can use.



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Your tone and body language matter too.

Even a useful question can sound challenging if it is asked with a frustrated tone, an eye roll, crossed arms or other negative body language.

Asking from a place of curiosity also means being prepared to listen to the answer.

You may still see the situation differently after hearing the explanation.

Listening doesn't mean you have to agree. It means making sure you understand the information before deciding what you can learn from it.

Apply It To Your Netball

Now think about your own games. Choose one decision or infringement you are regularly called for, or something you have been called for that you didn't understand.

It could be something that happens regularly, or simply a decision you remember wanting to understand better.

If you can't think of a specific example, choose a decision or infringement you could realistically want clarification about in a game.

My example is:



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What would I actually like to understand about this decision?

Now think about when and how you could appropriately seek that information.

If it continued to happen during the game, what could I ask my captain to seek clarification about during a game break?

If I had an appropriate opportunity to speak with the umpire after the game, what could I ask from a place of curiosity and learning?

Now look back at the questions you wrote. Before you move on, check:

- Is my question clear?
- Am I asking for information I can actually use?
- Would my words, tone and body language show that I am trying to understand and learn rather than challenge the decision?
- Am I prepared to listen to the answer, even if it isn't what I expected?
- Is there anything I would change about my questions?



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You've now explored communication with coaches, teammates and officials and applied what you have learnt to situations from your own netball. As you communicate in training and games, think about:

WHAT YOU SAY

Is what you're communicating clear and useful? Think about the information you are giving or the question you are asking. Will it help the other person understand what you mean?

HOW YOU SAY IT

What are your tone and body language communicating? The same words can be received differently depending on how you say them, and what the rest of your communication is showing.

WHEN YOU SAY IT

Is this an appropriate and useful time to communicate? Good communication isn't only knowing what to say. Sometimes it means recognising when to speak, when to listen and when to wait for a better opportunity.

HOW YOU LISTEN

Are you taking in the information the other person is giving you? Listening doesn't mean you have to agree. It means making sure you understand before deciding how to respond.

WHAT YOU NEED

What information, feedback, clarification or support do you actually need? Knowing what you need can help you ask better questions, communicate more clearly and take greater responsibility for your development.



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Your Communication Challenge

Throughout these activities, you have developed different communication strategies you can use in your own netball. A communication strategy is simply something you can deliberately say or do to communicate more effectively.

For example, you might:

- Ask a specific question when you don't understand feedback.
- Seek feedback about something you are working on.
- Check whether you have understood and applied feedback.
- Give a teammate useful information they can act on.
- Encourage or help a teammate when they need it.
- Acknowledge your part in an error and reconnect with your teammate.
- Be aware of what your body language is communicating.
- Manage your response when you disagree with an umpire's decision.
- Appropriately seek clarification when you genuinely want to understand something.
- Listen to understand before responding.

You don't need to work on everything at once.

Look back through your answers and put a star next to one communication strategy you would like to practise at your next training session or game. Then take it onto the court.

Try it, and notice how the other person responds and think about what you could learn from it. As you complete your challenge, also pay attention to what happens to your communication when you feel nervous, frustrated, disappointed, tired, or under pressure.

The goal isn't to communicate perfectly. It is to try something deliberately, notice what happens and learn from it.