

Having meaningful conversations about cancer

Module 8

Today's Session Covers

- ▶ Why it's important to have more conversations about cancer
- ▶ Skills for having good conversations (part 1)
 - ▶ Empathy and Compassion
 - ▶ Active Listening
- ▶ Barriers to talking about cancer - and how to overcome them
- ▶ Skills for having good conversations (part 2)
 - ▶ Asking Good Questions
 - ▶ Conversations with People who Have Cancer
 - ▶ Creating Conditions for Good Conversations

Facts about Cancer

- ▶ **Cancer is not rare** - There are around 375,000 new cancer cases in the UK every year, that's around 1,000 every day (CRUK)
- ▶ **Up to half of cancers are preventable** - According to the World Health Organisation, between 30-50% of cancers are preventable.
- ▶ **Cancer survival rates are significantly higher if cancers are caught early** - Screening and early detection saves lives e.g. 9/10 people survive bowel cancer if caught at stage 1, compared to stage 4.

Let's Talk Cancer Campaign: East Lancashire CCG



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Why talking is important

1. Helps us sort through our feelings
2. Releases tension
3. Puts things in perspective
4. Gives control
5. Creates action

East Lancashire CCG: Let's Talk Cancer Campaign

Empathy and Compassion

Active Listening

Asking questions

Creating an environment for
good conversations

Getting Ready to Talk

Empathy and Compassion



The Four Attributes of Empathy

1. To be able to see the world as others see it
2. To be non-judgmental
3. To understand another person's feelings
4. To communicate understanding of that person's feelings

Theresa Wiseman

Listening and Communication Skills

Components of Communication

1. **Verbal** - the words we use.
2. **Our tone of voice** - the way we say something, including tone, speed, emotions, volume.
3. **Body language** - non-verbal elements, including facial expressions, gestures with hands, body posture.

“You cannot not communicate” - Paul Watzlawick

What is Active Listening?

“Requires that we get **inside the speaker**, that we grasp, from **their point of view**, just what it is they are communicating to us.

More than that, **we must convey** to the speaker that **we are seeing things from their point of view.**”

Carl Rogers and Richard Farson, 1957

Elements of Active Listening



1. Pay Attention
2. Show that you are listening
3. Provide feedback
4. Defer judgment: allow the speaker to finish
5. Respond appropriately



Tips for Listening Actively

- ▶ Remove distractions
- ▶ Concentrate mindfully on the other person
- ▶ Use eye contact - about 60-70% of the time
- ▶ Allow silences/pauses
- ▶ Don't plan your response before the other person finishes speaking



How do we
know if
someone is
listening?



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Signs of Listening

- ▶ Nodding their head
- ▶ Mirroring your body language (if you are sitting straight on and so are they)
- ▶ Making agreement noises
- ▶ Repeating the key points
- ▶ Asking relevant questions
- ▶ Smiling
- ▶ Making eye contact
- ▶ Using the same words (if you say 'partner' so do they)
- ▶ Remembering things from earlier or before





How do we
know if they
are NOT
listening?



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Signs of Not Listening

- ▶ Checking their phone
- ▶ Interrupting
- ▶ Constantly looking at their watch or a clock
- ▶ Fidgeting
- ▶ Not asking follow-up questions
- ▶ Laughing at something that has been said
- ▶ Looking away
- ▶ Implying a thought or idea is 'stupid'
- ▶ Disagreeing about whether something is important to someone
- ▶ Leaning away



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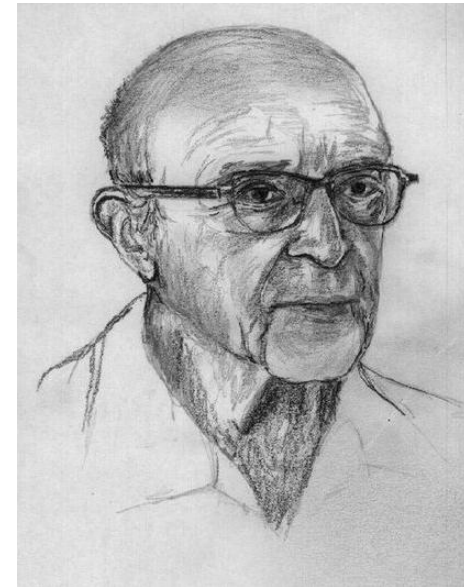




Impact of Active Listening

This kind of sensitive, active listening is exceedingly rare in our lives. We **think** we listen, but rarely do we listen with real **understanding**, true **empathy**. Yet listening, of this very special kind, is one of the most potent forces of **change** that I know.”

Carl Rogers - 1902 - 1987



How the conversation started - Heads Together Campaign



#oktosay



If you're worried about something...



Not talking
about it
is like trying
to hold a
beach ball
under water

Context:

What conversations about cancer might we have?

- ▶ NHS Cancer Screening Programmes raising awareness about signs and symptoms
- ▶ ‘Positive’ result from cancer screening
- ▶ Behaviour change to reduce risk of cancer

Some people we speak to may have, or may have had cancer

Some people we speak to may have lost a loved one, or they have a loved one who has cancer now

Asking Questions and Creating Conditions for Conversations



What is the
difference
between open
and closed
questions?



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Open questions open
up a conversation,

Closed questions
close it down



Open Questions Begin...

- ▶ What
- ▶ When
- ▶ Where
- ▶ Who
- ▶ Why
- ▶ How

Be careful with 'why?' questions



What questions
might you ask?



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CRUK: How to Talk to Someone with Cancer



How to talk to
someone with cancer



CRUK: How to Talk to Someone with Cancer

“This must be a tough time for you”

“I can’t imagine how you feel”

“I’m sorry you’re going through something like this”

“I don’t know what to say”

“I’m here for you if you need to talk”

“How are you really”

“I can talk about me if you like”

Starting a conversation about cancer

- ▶ Allow enough time to have the conversation
- ▶ Choose a private and quiet space where the person feels comfortable and equal
- ▶ Demonstrate empathy, listen actively, ask questions
- ▶ Offer support as appropriate

Remember: avoiding conversations perpetuates stigma



Things to Avoid

- ▶ Saying:
 - “Don’t worry I’m sure you’ll be fine....”
 - “Maybe just try and stop focusing on the negative things....”
- ▶ Diagnosing:
- ▶ Being judgmental/making assumptions
- ▶ Making it about you - by taking over and telling them about your own experiences
- ▶ Telling someone what to do/jumping in with advice

Recap

What have we covered:

- Why it's good to talk about cancer
- Overcoming barriers to difficult conversations
- How to have a good conversation about something uncomfortable
 - Empathy
 - Active Listening
 - Using questions
 - Setting up a good conversation

Further Information

- ▶ Macmillan
- ▶ Cancer Research UK
- ▶ Coppafeel.org
- ▶ Breastcancer.org
- ▶ Prostate Cancer UK
- ▶ NHS.uk
- ▶ Leeds cancer.com
- ▶ Check us out on Leeds Cancer Awareness Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.