



JUNE 2023: EBP Tip of the Month

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

Brought to you by

ICIS Interagency Council on
Intermediate Sanctions



What is Communication Breakdown?

- Defined as: “A failure to exchange information, resulting in a lack of communication”.
- Communication requires a Speaker and a Listener. It takes both parties to participate in an effective communication and both also can contribute to a failure to communicate.



Communication Breakdown

What the speaker means to say

①



②

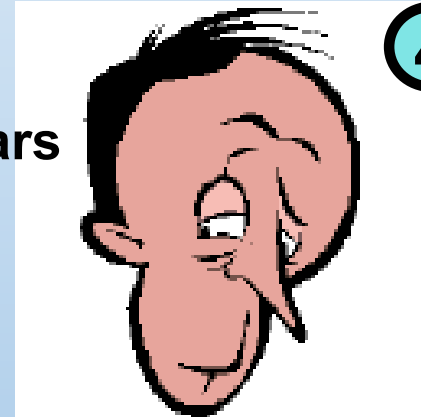
What the speaker says

SPEAKER

What the listener thinks the speaker means

What the listener hears

③



④

LISTENER

Communication breaks down in 3 ways:
expression, transmission, and interpretation.

NOTE: Environment can be cause of Communication Breakdown.

Communication Breakdown can occur at any of the four areas. Two areas are with the SPEAKER and the other two are with the Listener

BREAKDOWN Area 1: “What the Speaker Means to Say”

This area of breakdown occurs when the SPEAKER uses a different language or words that only the speaker knows – Jargon or slang. Or, The SPEAKER is thinking of something that is specific to her/him but the LISTENER does not know exactly what the SPEAKER means.

BREAKDOWN Area 2: “What the Speaker Says”

SPEAKER uses wrong words to describe what they mean. This area of breakdown occurs when the SPEAKER mistakenly or unknowingly uses a wrong word and the LISTENER hears the word as it is said.

BREAKDOWN Area 3: “What the Listener Hears”

This area of breakdown occurs when the LISTENER hear the words incorrectly, sometimes it's due to noise or not audible.

BREAKDOWN Area 4: “What the Listener Thinks the Speaker Means”

This area of breakdown occurs when the LISTENER hear the words correctly but interprets it differently or has a different meaning to the words than the SPEAKER.

SOLUTION FOR COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN IS REFLECTION

- Reflecting back what the SPEAKER said is a great way to obtain clarity.
- Reflecting also demonstrates that the Listener is Active in the communication.
- The Speaker may also check in with the Listener to ensure clarity

DISCUSSION:

- Think about a situation where you experienced a communication breakdown.
- Can you identify at which step did the breakdown occur?
- How could you have prevented it?