

**Let's talk vaccination: The
AIMS approach to vaccine
conversation**

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NBC News

HEALTH

SEP 24 2017, 2:58 PM ET

Vaccine Skeptic Message Gets Bolder



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How do we talk *with* (not at) people who speak from hesitancy or denial?

“I do not need a reminder to participate in an optional program. The scare tactics are getting really old.”

“Not going to happen. Your "mandatory log" of the "14 required vaccines" will be blank on my end. It's my choice and legal right as a parent...so keep threatening. **The more threats the state and doctors give, the more I KNOW not vaxing is the right choice.**”

Posted public comments in response to a call for children to be vaccinated: WTHR, Indianapolis, IN, USA



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Debating evidence or debunking myths are not always pathways to vaccine acceptance

Providing our scientific evidence to counter their evidence will likely only fuel an argument, not vaccine acceptance



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Communication: More than a Message

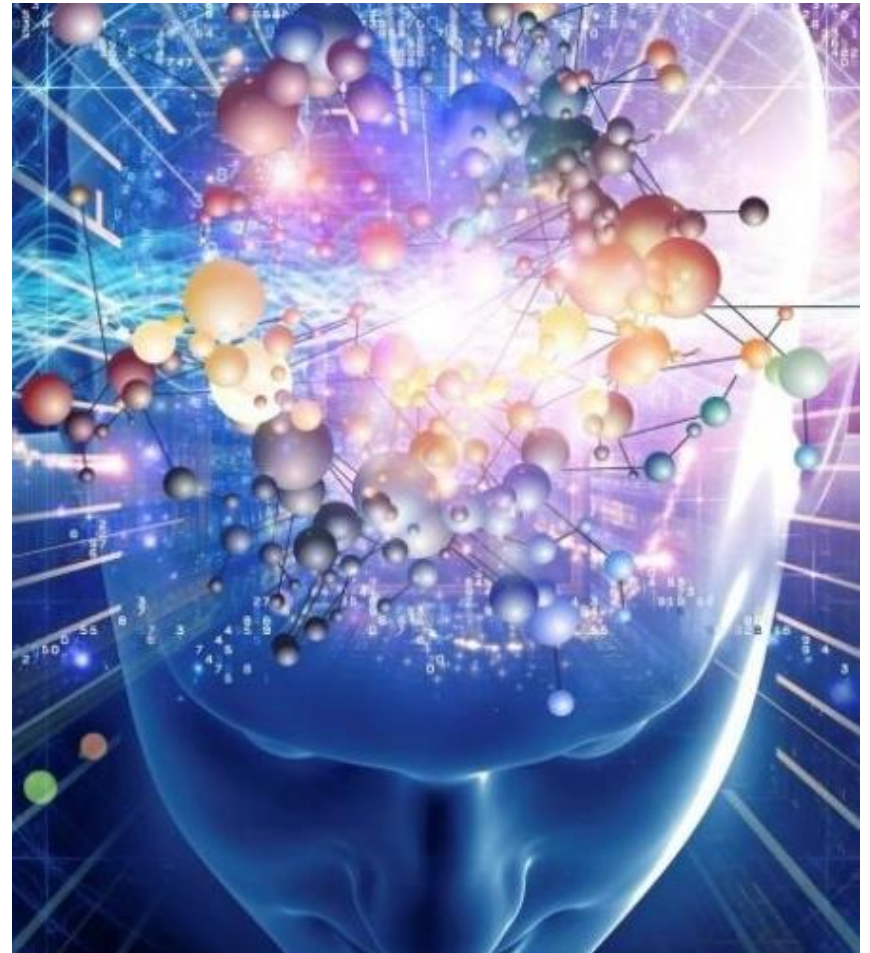


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Communication is Bioactive:

- Plays a role in shaping brain structure
- Impacts at the epigenetic level
- It can play a role under some conditions in DNA repair
- Can impact immune function
- The expression of positive emotions has been linked to CVD
- When HCPs establish empathic connections it can shorten illness duration
- Is not an exclusively conscious activity
- Is systemic both within and outside of the body



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How we communicate is more important than
the content of our messages



Do I want to be right, or
do I want to be effective?
(A focus on process &
feelings creates
receptivity, a more sure
pathway to trust)



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Creating receptivity in primary care clinics for refugees in Jordan



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The Process of Communication (Conversation)



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Dentist story: I once had a patient who required a surgical extraction of a tooth, but he had an infection so I gave him an antibiotic and told him to come back in a week. After a week he came back, I told him he has to wait for another week until the infection cleared out. He was so upset to hear that, especially because he was in pain, and he started yelling at my face. From inside I felt aggravated, to say the least, and I wanted to defend myself because the patient was not respectful and rude, but then I remember the training about Trauma and how it affects patients' brains and **I made a decision to calm myself**. So I took a deep breath and sat down and asked the patient to set down. **After he started to calm down** I explained to him slowly why it is bad to do the surgery if the infection is still there and how the side effects can be worse. He eventually agreed to come back after another week. He came back and I did the surgery and he left the clinic. Two weeks after , the patient came to the clinic and when he saw me he grabbed my hand and bowed down to kiss it. I was shocked and told him why? He said you understood my pain and you were patient with me, you contained me and helped me even though I was rude. Thank you! If I had not calmed down and breathed that poor guy would have left our clinic upset and in pain and would not have had the means to pay for a private dentist to do the surgery. I saw a smile on the patient's face when he left and I had the same smile on my face; happy I helped and grateful for the training that taught me how to deal with such a situation.



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The connection of communication (Feeling felt)



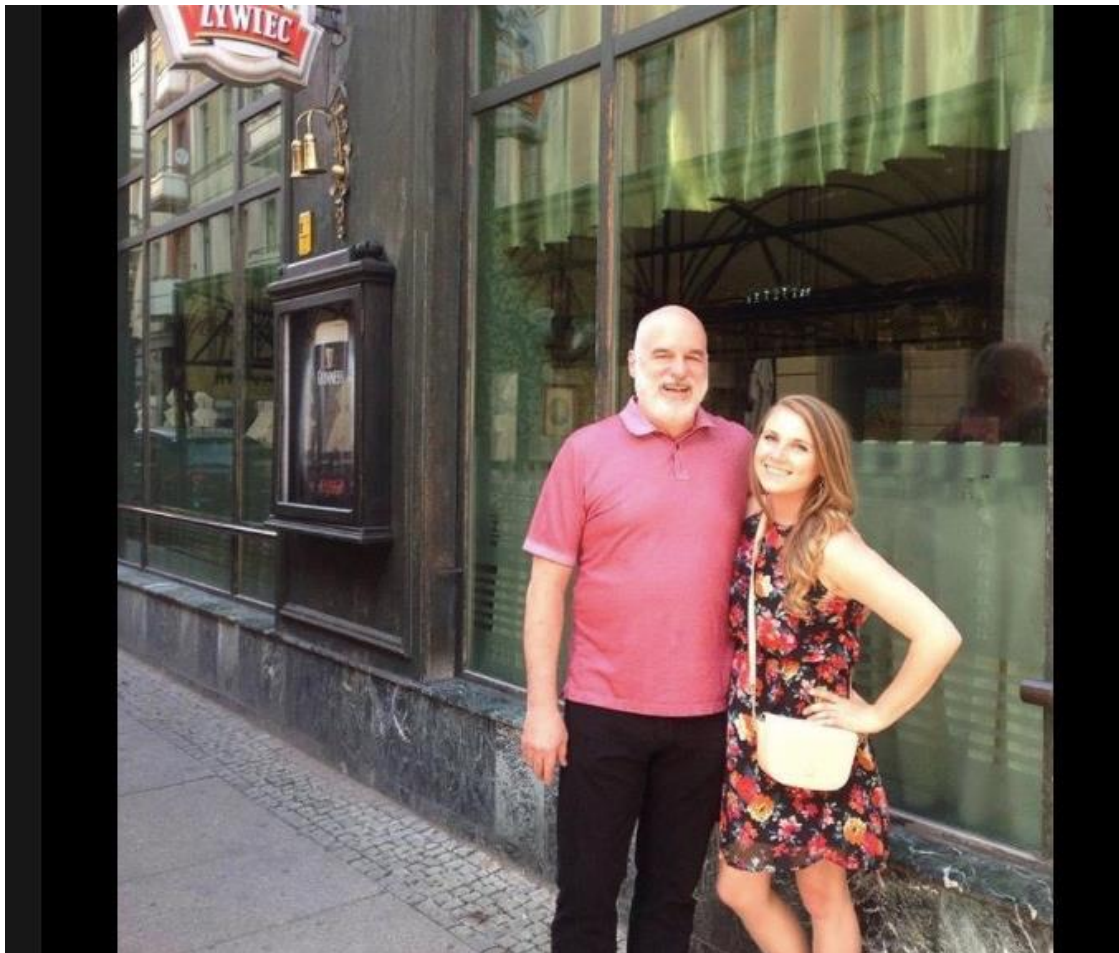
- **“I am a Syrian refugee”**
- **This gentleman asks if the GHCC would like to interview him. His story is one of pain & loss...and grace & hope.**
- **“Thank you for listening to my story.”**



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The connection of communication (Feeling felt)



[View on Instagram](#)

I cannot thank this man enough for everything he has done for me. I would have never thought I could take on the world but he has shown me just how capable I am. You're the best, John. You are the reason this trip has been so truly life changing. 😊🇵🇱
— with Teresa Byczko Fischer and John Parrish-Sprowl.

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

👍❤️ 109



Mamou Mbaye John is a man of purpose.a true positive visionary.

Like · Reply · 👍 1 · May 30 at 3:05pm



Mary Elizabeth Googasian John excels at getting people to believe in themselves! He did the same for me! 😊

Like · Reply · 👍 1 · May 30 at 6:19pm



Mimi Cameron Kordsmeier You are very fortunate to have cross his path. I had that amazing chance meeting while looking for something. He made sure I found what I was seeking. It was with in me all along. Thanks for reminding today of this most wonderful person who change. My life as well as others in my family. Mimi Kordsmeier,69 and still learning everyday.

Like · Reply · 👍 1 · May 30 at 8:30pm



Edy Purwanto John Parrish-Sprowl he is the man

The connection of communication (Feeling felt)



Allowed on Timeline

Studying abroad has been such an amazing experience and it wouldn't have been possible without this man. I have learned more in the past two weeks here in Wroclaw than I would have learned in one semester on campus through everything he made possible. I can't express how in awe I am of his knowledge. After each conversation, I find myself thirsting for knowledge. I am looking forward to conversations regarding CMM and my future. Thank you John! — with John Parrish-Sprowl.

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The Process of Communication (How do we get from here to there?)



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Community Engagement in Sierra Leone

WHO Pilot program
designed to train frontline
staff to create receptive
rather than reactive
engagement during the
EVD outbreak



**Enhanced Capacity Building
Training for Frontline Staff
on Building Trust and
Communication**

**Facilitator's Guide
July 2015**



WHO/EVD/GCR/CE/15.1



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Change From a 1 Day Training

Initial interactions

- High tension and mistrust b/w communities and frontline staff (“us versus them”)
- Communities Unfavorable and unwelcoming of frontline staff
- Communities viewed frontline staff as benefiting financially from the Ebola outbreak

Interactions before training

- Frontline staff frustrated with community resentment and mistrust
- Frontline staff not well prepared to help resolve conflicts and arguments
- Communities not always feeling that frontline staff had their best interest in mind

Interactions after training

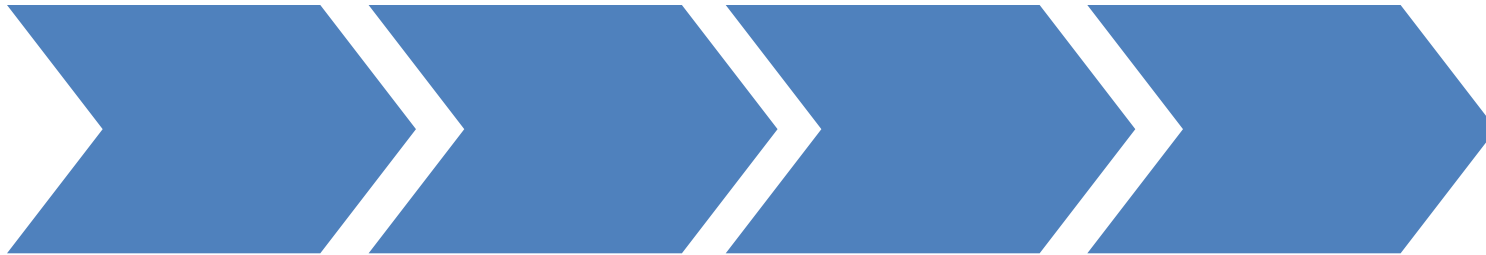
- Frontline staff better able to turn frustration into opportunities for dialogue
- Frontline staff improved conflict resolutions skills and able to de-escalate tense situations
- Frontline staff went beyond their “normal job functions” to address the living conditions of quarantined families – and nurtured greater trust



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The AIMS method for healthy conversations



Announce

Announce vaccination will happen, assume people are ready to vaccinate

Inquire

Seek to understand the person by asking them about their concerns

Mirror

Make sure they know you understand them by repeating (but not parroting) what they said and asking if that is what they mean

Secure

Consolidate every conversation by securing trust

ANNOUNCE: Assume that vaccination will occur



- Begin by announcing that the person is due for a vaccine and that you will vaccinate today
- A presumptive 'announcement', which assumes that someone is ready to vaccinate may increase acceptance¹⁻³
- Avoid being paternalistic, but maintain a firm approach
- Start with a statement, not a question
- Repeat your recommendation with hesitant people
- This may cover most people and the conversation is quick and simple. *If they hesitate or refuse then...INQUIRE*

"It's time for Jo's shots."

"I see Jo has just turned 2. She is due for her MMR vaccine. We will give her that at the end of the visit today."

"The influenza season is just beginning. We will give you your flu shot at the end of today's visit"

In one study, starting the conversation with an announcement led to 74% of patients accepting the recommendation vs. 26% with a participatory discussion approach¹

INQUIRE: Understanding a concern, gauging the level of hesitancy¹



- Your goals are to understand:
 - What drives their concern
 - The strength of their concern (level of hesitancy)
- Active listening:
 - Take the time to listen to their concern
 - Don't interrupt – let the person finish
- Use open-ended questions, which:
 - Facilitate dialogue
 - Elicit information in a neutral way
 - Cannot be answered with a single word
 - Help you understand their point of view & feelings
- Use questions of *how* or *what* (better than questions of *why*)
- Watch your body language – make them feel heard

"Tell me what concerns you about this vaccine."

"You seem undecided. What are your thoughts about this vaccine?"

"You seem to have mixed feelings about vaccines. Would you tell me how you're thinking about them now?"

"How can I be most helpful to you in making a decision about vaccination?"

Understand what is behind their concern

In one study, doctors interrupted patients within 23 seconds!¹

MIRROR: Make the person feel heard



- Reflect back to the person what you have understood
- But first ask their permission to do so
 - This increases their receptivity
- The aim is to show them that you understand their *concerns* and how they *feel* about them
- Repeat this process until the person is convinced that they were heard and understood
- Then you may respond to their concern

"Let me see if I have this right, you're saying that your friend read an article that said that children get too many vaccines too soon. Is this it?"

"If I understand correctly you have some friends who tell you that you should know more and make sure you know the dangers when you vaccinate. Have I caught your concern?"

"Are you saying that the show you watched had people who believed their children had developed multiple sclerosis because they were vaccinated?"

You do not have to acknowledge the validity of the concern, but you should acknowledge the person's right to have a question¹

SECURE: Consolidate each conversation by securing trust



- If there is hesitancy the conversation may go in one of three directions:
 1. You have ameliorated their concerns and gained more trust so you move back to ANNOUNCE. This may result in vaccination at that point.
 2. If the person continues to be hesitant, demonstrate respect and understanding, provide access to information and suggest revisiting the topic in the future (securing trust and opportunity to succeed at a later date).
 3. If the person declines vaccination, move to secure a trusting relationship even though you disagree by demonstrating respect for their opinion and emphasizing your mutual concern for their own or their child's health.
- If possible, repeat that you think they should vaccinate

"I understand this may seem like a lot of shots for such a little person. This schedule is recommended based on the best science and clinical experience. I always have both yours and their best interests at heart, and in my professional judgement, I say we go ahead and get these shots out of the way in this visit."

"I see you still have some concerns, here is some more information that you might find of interest, let's talk more about this on your next visit"

"Well, in my professional judgment, vaccination is the best option, but I respect your right to decline. Let's move forward and work together to do what we can to keep you and/or your child healthy."

Repeating an ANNOUNCEMENT with hesitant parents led to acceptance of 47% in one study¹

Communication for Whole Health (Let's get people vaccinated!)



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Thank You!!

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