



**COMMUNICATION WITH  
CHILDREN**

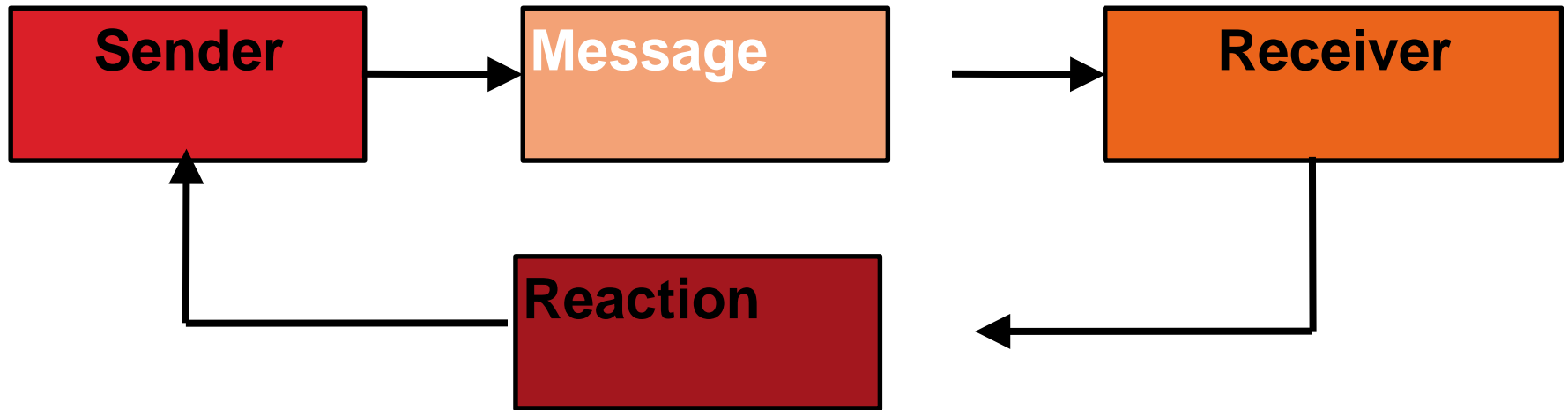
# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Explain the communication process
- List the reasons why verbal communication can be difficult with children
- Describe effective ways to communicate with children

# COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Messages can be sent in different ways: verbal and non-verbal communication





# VERBAL COMMUNICATION W/CHILDREN

Why is verbal communication with children sometimes difficult?

- **Culture and traditions**

Some cultures do not have the habit to talk a lot with children, children cannot disagree with adults, children feel threatened by direct communication

# VERBAL COMMUNICATION W/CHILDREN

- **Embarrassment and shame**

HIV/AIDS is related to a taboo issue of sex

- **Age**

Children may be too young to express themselves, expression by words is something you learn

- **Fear to hurt those they love**

Protection of their parents to admit they know their status for example, or talk about their true feelings



# SKILLS & TECHNIQUES FOR COUNSELING CHILDREN

1. Establish a relationship
2. Ask open ended questions
3. Listen
4. Clarify and summarize
5. Show empathy
6. Provide opportunities for child to express themselves

# WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH CHILDREN


Besides asking questions, there are a lot of other ways to communicate with children

## Drawings:

- powerful to open hidden cupboards in a child's life
- ask the child to draw something about a theme you want to explore (draw a picture of your family / about what makes you angry / about how you take your pills)
- gently follow by asking what is happening in the drawing
- open ended questions to further explore what they have drawn (how do the people in the drawing feel about what is happening?)

# WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH CHILDREN

## Storytelling

- listening to a story about someone in a similar position can be comforting, normalizing a situation
  - it can also serve as a tool to show how to solve problems around their situation
  - tell a familiar story, perhaps using animals or other to represent humans
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# WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH CHILDREN

## Storytelling (cont'd)

- after the story, discuss with the child what happened, the message and the meaning of the story
- you can also ask children to make their own story around a certain theme (once upon a time there was a girl that felt very sad)

# WAY TO COMMUNICATE WITH CHILDREN

## Drama

- give the children a topic to perform that is related to what you want to explore (ex a day in my life)
  - after the performance, discuss what happened in the drama
  - ask further questions or ask to replay the version with the happy ending etc.
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# WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH CHILDREN

## Play

- much activity of children in playing is imitation or acting out, so it can help to understand the feelings of the child
  - give a variety of playing material
  - ask to play certain part of their life (what you like to do with your family)
  - follow and observe, do not take over the play!
  - Make comments to check if you understood
  - If the child gets stuck, ask questions about what happens next
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