

SBAR

The SBAR (Situation-Background-Assessment-Recommendation) technique can be used to facilitate communication among team members, relate important and relevant information in a structured manner, and enable decision-making.

It allows for an easy and focused way to set expectations for what will be communicated and how between members of the team, which is essential for developing teamwork and fostering a culture of safety.

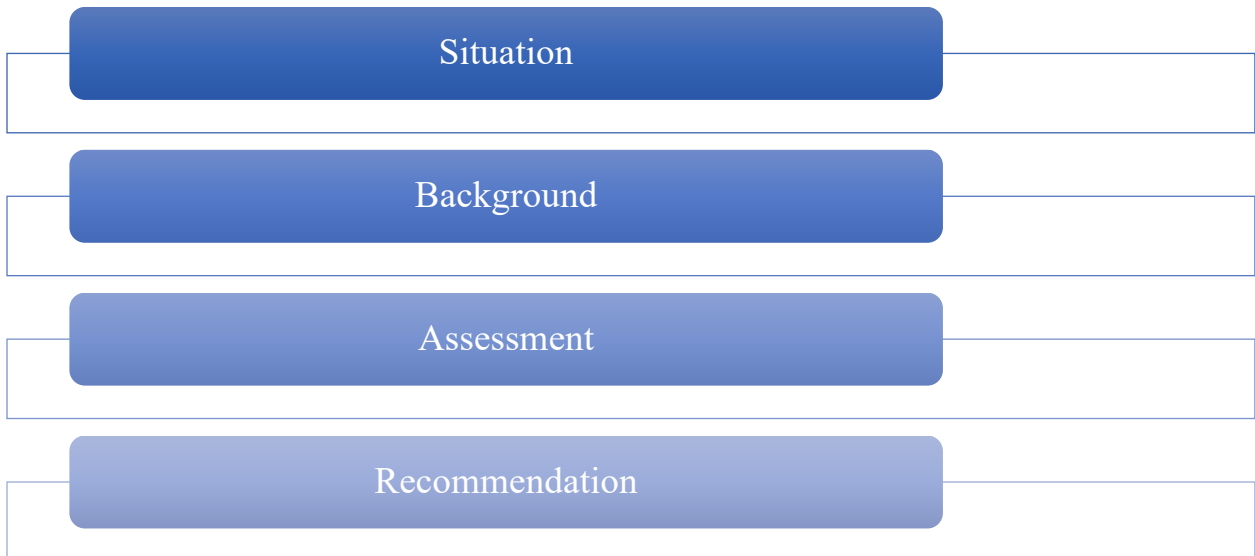
Communication is an essential mechanism in collaboration and a key element in the success of organizations. It is present in practically all the processes carried out in an organization and is an increasingly valued competence.

Key Objectives

Improve communication between team members.

Standardize and facilitate the handoff process across teams and disciplines.

Escalate concerns.



What is it?

Situation

Identify the problem and concern and provide a brief description of it. Articulate a brief problem statement without implying a solution, placing blame, or inserting any assumptions. State the facts of the problem.

Background

Pertinent background information related to the situation could include the following:

- The history of problem or issue
- Describe current and related situations
- Most recent occurrences
- Policy and regulatory related issues associated with the stated problem

Assessment

What is your assessment of the situation?

- Describe who the stakeholders are and how they are affected by the problem.
- Describe the root causes of the problem.
- Identify the restraining and driving forces that affect the problem.
- Identify environmental factors that may contribute to the problem.

Recommendation

What are your recommendations and next steps to solve the problem?

When to use it?

Communication can be defined as a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange information but also create and share meaning. SBAR helps to provide a structure for an interaction that helps both the giver of the information and the receiver of it. It helps the giver by ensuring they have formulated their thinking before trying to communicate it to someone else.

The receiver knows what to expect and it helps to ensure the giver of information is not interrupted by the receiver with questions that will be answered later in the conversation. SBAR can be used in any setting but can be particularly effective in reducing the barrier to effective communication across different disciplines and between different levels of staff.

The use of SBAR provides clarity to communication and prevents the unreliable process of hinting and hoping' that the other person understands.

Once you have started using SBAR as a communication tool, you need to monitor the progress – how well it is being used and whether communication is improved. If it is proving successful, the next step is to embed the tool into people's everyday habits, so that it becomes the way things are done around here. Ideas for helping the more widespread use of SBAR include:

- Use prompts and visual cues – stickers on the telephone, letter templates, and notes
 - Ensuring team members feel it is alright to prompt each other using your agreed framework
 - Make time for team discussion, reflection, and refinement of the tool
 - Disseminate your good practice to other teams by modelling the desired communication behaviour
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