

Module 7: Communication

Objectives

- Identify ways in which you can communicate effectively with your Consumers.
- Discuss how you can be a good listener.
- Explain the importance of Confidentiality and how it can impact your communication with friends, family, coworkers, and Consumers.
- Demonstrate Active Listening.
- Demonstrate using silence to aid in communication.
- Discuss and explain five blocks to communication.

Key Terms

- Sender
- Receiver
- Feedback
- Active Listening
- Attending
- Reflecting
- Summarizing
- Initializing
- Validating
- Confirming

Content

!!! REMINDER !!!	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR FACILITY'S POLICIES AND PROCEDURES. • ALWAYS FOLLOW THE CONSUMER'S CARE PLAN. • NEVER WORK OUTSIDE YOUR JOB DESCRIPTION OR SCOPE OF TRAINING. • NEVER PERFORM MEDICAL/CLINICAL PROCEDURES OR INTERPRET MEDICAL CONDITIONS OR RESULTS. • REPORT OBSERVATIONS TO SUPERVISOR UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE. 	
REFERENCE TEXTBOOK: UNIT 1: CHAPTER 5 – COMMUNICATION SKILLS	
TEXTBOOK SECTION	NOTES
What is Communication?*	<p>Always keep in mind that all staff-to-Consumer communication is privileged and confidential. Health care and human service workers must respect the privacy of communications with Consumers, regardless of whether they are spoken or written.</p> <p>NOTE: While communication with the Consumer's family and friends is important, you cannot reveal personal and/or confidential information (even to family members) without the Consumer's written permission. Ask your supervisor for guidance if you are unsure about what you can discuss.</p>
Communicating Effectively*	PSSs cannot "teach".
Tactics that Enhance Communication*	There are some factors that can prepare the way for your interaction with another person. These can

	<p>increase the chances that your communication will go the way you would like. Here are some examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid using endearments like, “honey”, “dear”, “sweetie”, etc. • Always knock on the door to a Consumer's room or house before entering, even if the Consumer cannot verbally respond or is watching you approach. Knocking acknowledges that the room is their space and home. It also conveys a sense of respect for their privacy and dignity. • Choose an appropriate place for the type of conversation or visit you plan to have with the Consumer. If you are just greeting the Consumer, a day room or porch setting is appropriate if that is where they are sitting. If you need to discuss personal information, find a setting with privacy and few distractions. The setting in which communication occurs directly impacts the nature of the interaction.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When You Are the Receiver, Be a Good Listener* 	<p>Some Basic Active Listening Do’s and Don’ts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold your own biases and prejudices in check. • Concentrate on what is said. • Listen for what is not being said. • Minimize background noises. • Put yourself in the Consumer’s shoes – be empathetic. • Do not try to do other things, such as write memo’s, or checking your cell phone while listening. • Identify emotional content of message. • Do not jump to conclusions or give advice. • Do not try to talk and listen at the same time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When You Are the Sender, Make Sure Your Message Is Clear* 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn Techniques for Encouraging People to Talk* 	<p>Silence is an effective tool for encouraging communication, active listening, and providing comfort. Learning to be silent instead of instantly responding can be difficult but very useful.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and Seek Feedback* 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be Mindful of Your Body Language and Tone of Voice* 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blocks to Effective Communication* 	<p>Below are several more blocks to effective communication that can be very natural and easy to slip into without being aware of what you are doing. Some</p>

of these barriers represent ways we have of protecting ourselves or of controlling conversations. They are not appropriate in your role as a health care or human services worker.

Changing the Subject

- Even when a topic is uncomfortable for you it is not acceptable to change the subject.
- If a Consumer wants to talk about death and dying or about how much he misses his wife who has passed away, do not change the subject because you find the topic sad or depressing.
- Sometimes a Consumer may need to express her anger towards her daughter. Hearing this makes you uncomfortable because you know the daughter. Your role as a staff member is to listen and hear the Consumer's position. You are NOT in a position to defend the daughter.
- Whenever there is a time when you cannot maintain an objective perspective, discuss your concerns with your supervisor.

Offering False Hope and Reassurances

- When a Consumer says she hopes her doctor (son, daughter, etc.) comes soon, refrain from saying, "I'm sure he will." Be positive the statement you make is accurate before you speak.
- If a Consumer tells you, "I hope I get over this problem soon or I don't know what I will do!" It is improper to say something such as "I'm sure everything will work out fine."
- A PSS should also avoid statements such as "It is not good to think about things like that."

Selective Hearing

Be sure not to tune out problem statements.

- If a Consumer states "the other staff don't treat me very well, but I'm managing to take it one day at a time." It would be improper to respond, "Well, you know they have a big job to do and can't please everyone."
- If a Consumer tells you "I never get bathed and dressed in time for the morning craft class." It is improper to response "I'm sure the other staff

	<p>members work as fast as they can. This is a big facility and someone has to be at the end of the schedule.”</p> <p>Assuming the Role of “Neighborhood Friend”</p> <p>Always remember to remain professional when someone is revealing personal information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a Consumer describes her physical problems, do not say, "My grandmother had that and. . . ." • If a Consumer confides in you, your response should not be “I know what you're talking about,” and proceed to tell the person all about your situation. • Both of these responses do not reflect what is important to the Consumer, instead they shift the focus of the conversation to you and what is important to you. <p>Allowing the Other Staff to Monopolize Your Time</p> <p>Although cultivating a good working relationship with other staff members is very important, your job is to work with the Consumers. Your coworkers can, either consciously or unconsciously, take up much of your time. Be sure your conversations with your coworkers are purposeful, not just friendly chat sessions which can limit the amount of time you have with your Consumers.</p>
Conflict Resolution*	
What Did You Learn?*	Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 only