

Effective Communication

Caredemy

Online Training Academy



Course Name:

Effective Communication

Course Description:

This course will provide information on effective communication techniques for the social or health care setting.

Course Learning Objectives:

At the end of this course, the learner will be able to:

- Describe the use of non-verbal and verbal communication in the social or health care setting
- Learn how to adjust to an individual's communication preferences and needs
- Identify when another individual requires communication aids for assistance
- Identify barriers that exist to effective communication
- Understand the meaning of confidentiality in relation to your role at your organization

Course Requirements:

Participants must complete all learning modules and pass the multiple-choice course assessment.



What is Communication?

Communication is essential to our lives, especially in social or health care. Individuals need your support and assistance to properly understand their requirements and situation. Effective communication helps you and your colleagues deliver safe, coordinated care. Staff at health and social care organizations have an ethical and legal obligation to protect the information of individuals in their care. Effective communication skills are required in order to promote diversity, equality, and proper coordination with team members.

Communication is more than words – it is facial expressions, movements, clarity in your message, and the attention you give to others.

Communicating with Colleagues

The definition of communication is a message being sent and another receiving the message. The message will be heard and responded to appropriately if effective communication is used. Effective communication is important for creating and building relationships with colleagues and for providing quality patient or person-centered care. Providing clear information, as well as recording and reporting this information, helps health and social care workers work effectively. By having better communication, high quality decisions can be made. In order to coordinate efforts, colleagues must share information and work to achieve team objectives.

Benefits & Challenges of Teamwork

Successful teams are clear about what each role entails. Effective teams have high levels of social support, work to support each other in both work and emotionally during times of stress. Having pre-negotiated work roles enables good communication for most teams.

If teams are large, a great deal of coordination must exist between groups in order to have an effective team. If managers are inadequate, the team will suffer from a lack of proper communication and coordination. This can make work and effective communication more difficult.



Effective Team Members

Effective team members do the following: make verbal contributions to the team, listen, respond positively to the team leader, are honest, do not disrupt the main objective of the group, have a positive and constructive approach, and arrive on time and stay until the job is done.

Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

Communication includes both verbal and non-verbal elements. If you're not paying attention, you can miss important cues in communication. E-mails, notes and text messages are often misunderstood because typical cues used in communication are missing.

Verbal skills include:

- Use of words
- Tone of voice
- Volume
- Pace of speaking

Non-Verbal skills include:

- Body language
- Writing
- Communication aids/technology
- Body Language

Your body communicates non-verbally through body language. Messages are sent to people about what you feel or think, even if you are not aware of it through your body language. Body language can help you tell if others are uncomfortable, even if their words do not indicate such. Noticing these cues is important to providing person-centered care.

Body Language

There are several non-verbal cues to be aware of in order to have effective communication:

Proximity: Being physically close to someone can be reassuring and give a sense of acceptance. However, it may also make some uncomfortable. To create a trusting relationship, you can lean in slightly to show interest without invading



personal space. If you believe someone is angry, taking a step back and giving them space can make the person feel more comfortable.

Body Posture: By having a relaxed posture, you show that you are open to communication and indicate you want the other person to be there. If you are standing back with your arms crossed, standing with your hands on your hips, or covering your mouth you may be indicating you are not open to communication.

Eye Contact: In the U.S., having direct eye contact is viewed as assertive, but respectful. In some cultures, eye contact is rude. Staring off or flicking your eyes towards a clock shows disinterest. Frequently broken or short eye contact shows nervousness or mistrust.

Facial Expression: Smiling, yawning, or frowning all indicate different emotions. Try to remain neutral by relaxing your face or smiling to show encouragement.

Touch: Touching another indicates you are open to communication or can help show concern. Be sure to assess if contact is appropriate before initiating touch. Some touch can be inappropriate or misconstrued.

Writing

Accurate written records are vital in health and social care. Recording care helps make care and treatment handover safer for the person and staff on duty. A course of action may also be determined when information is accurately reported, allowing work to be justified. Records can also be used as evidence should a complaint arise.

Technical Aids

Disabled persons who have difficulty communicating frequently use technical aids. Several types of technical aids are available:

- Video
- Phones
- Mobile phones with special designs to eliminate background noise, use large font, or connect to a Braille keyboard
- Text phone programed to send text instead of voice messages to another textphone or computer
- Electronic speech-generating devices
- Adapted computers



- Hearing aids

Health and social care providers should ensure technical aids are working properly, clean, and in good repair. If you have concerns regarding technical aid, report the problem to a supervisor, caregiver, or a family member.

Communication Needs and Preferences

Showing sensitivity to the communication needs and preference of others allows you to have effective verbal and non-verbal communication.

Give Information: Be an advocate by providing information about communication services in advance. You can send this information through accessible formats such as DVDs, CDs, email, audio tapes, Braille, or notebooks. You may need to work to find out what methods, language, or media a person requires to effectively communicate. If English is not spoken, translation services may be required.

Get Information: Be sure to schedule time between shift handovers to communicate with your colleagues and hand over pertinent information.

Leave time for individuals to talk and voice their concerns as well. Be respectful of each individuals' contribution by responding or action on their suggestions or ideas.

Support Diversity and Equality

Do not make assumptions about anyone based upon their ability or culture. It is always better to ask or find properly trained individuals to communicate with those who have communication challenges. It is important to be aware of cultural needs and communication requirements of those in your care.

Communication Barriers

There are several things that can affect a person's ability to effectively communicate. Recognizing these barriers is an important skill to develop.

Emotional Barriers: If an individual is in distress, it may be difficult to communicate with them or their communication may be misunderstood.

Communication breakdown occurs when conflict exists as well. Factors that lead to conflict include negative body language, not listening, ignoring another's wishes, disrespecting others, or being affected by a condition.



Health Problems, Disability, or Impairment: An illness, injury, or disability can cause a person to have difficulty communicating both verbally and non-verbally. Visual or hearing impairments also act as barriers to communication. Other barriers might include being in pain, depression or anxiety, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, certain medications, medical conditions (i.e. stroke), or cognitive difficulties such as dementia.

Language and Environmental Challenges: Noisy, dark, or environments with a lack of privacy may discourage communication. Others may struggle to understand local dialects, acronyms, or slang. It is vital that you adapt your organization's terminology and use it with your colleagues.

The LEAPS Model

A communication model to help you navigate workplace conflict and begin to communicate more effectively is the LEAPS model. It is important to remember that communication goes two ways. Try to understand first and then be understood second.

L – Listen

Be an active listener by showing you are interested, giving encouragement, making eye contact, being alert, avoiding interrupting, and ignoring non-emergent distractions

E – Empathize

The ability to understand and identify another's feelings is called empathy. Show empathy by trying to understand the motions of those you are working with and making comments such as, "This must be such a challenge for you."

A – Ask Questions

If you need clarification, ask questions.

P – Paraphrase

To be sure you have understood the other person correctly, you can help clarify their message by saying, "So what you mean is...?"

S – Solution

To defend your position, politely state the nature of the problem, how it affects you, how you feel about the problem, and what you would like to happen. When



said calmly, your communication will be more effective and not as likely to offend.

Confidentiality

Those working in health and social care services are expected to be confidential about those under their care. Individuals must feel that they can express their concerns and discuss sensitive issues without fear of the information being disclosed.

Ethical and Legal Obligations: HIPAA outlines the right to confidentiality for health and social care staff. Information between teams should remain on an as needed and confidential basis. Consent of involved individuals should always be obtained when possible.

If there is a breach of ethical standards or confidentiality, disciplinary or legal consequences may follow. Confidentiality is extended to electronic, paper, photographic, and biological information as well.

