

Partners in Quality Care

October 2011

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN!

1. Reasons why effective communication is important
2. Skills needed for effective communication
3. Tips for practicing communication skills



Effective Communication Is Critical In Home Care for Many Reasons

- First of all, effective communication skills are needed in order for you to talk to your supervisor and communicate any needed changes in your schedule due to personal issues that may come up such as sickness, appointments, car trouble, and other issues.
- You also need to be able to communicate to your supervisor when you feel like you need more training and education on a task you are asked to do for a patient or if you are having problems effectively communicating with your client's who have Alzheimer's or other communication difficulties.
- You also need to have effective communication with your clients regarding how they like certain tasks done or how they are feeling or if their condition changes.
- Good listening is essential to clear, effective communication. Everyone has the capacity to listen effectively and can improve through practice.

Skills that can be developed in learning how to communicate:

Active Listening- this is when you listen to someone without interrupting them, asking questions to make sure you understand what they are saying, repeating back to the person what you thought you heard them say and what you think they mean, having eye contact and paying attention without distractions.

Self Management – This is when you “pull back” on emotional reactions you may have when something someone says bothers you. Self management is when you try to stick to the facts of the conversation and not on your emotions. Self management also means you really focus on the conversation and that you do not let your mind wander on other thoughts when someone is talking with you.

Self Awareness- Realizing that we all have different personalities and that this can affect how we deal with others and how they deal with us is part of self awareness. For example, if you are a “big-picture” personality type you are the opposite of a “detail” personality type. A big picture oriented personality may become bored with nitty-gritty details such as with the “detail” required in the aide notes and log that has to be completed to meet an agency's rules and regulations. Understanding that our personality type can make us have to “stretch” in our thinking to do our jobs correctly and in our understanding of ourselves and others.

How To Avoid Distractions With Listening

- 🌻 Take a deep breath
- 🌻 Make a conscious effort to listen
- 🌻 Repeat in your mind what you are hearing
- 🌻 Maintain eye contact

All of the communication skills require patience and practice, but they can ensure that your communication is effective communication!

Tips for Practicing These Skills

Try to listen to someone for five minutes without interrupting them, be sure to use your non-verbal skills such as eye contact, not being distracted, asking questions and ask the person to **repeat anything unclear** to make sure you have a clear understanding of what the other person is saying. You can practice this with someone at home, someone you work with, etc. and ask for their feedback on how you listened and, **did this person feel heard and understood! See page 3 Scenarios!**

Your Ability to Communicate Effectively Will:

- Add to your ability to form relationships
- Enhance your job satisfaction
- Help you get what you want
- Increase your client’s willingness to work with you



Oliver Wendell Holmes
It is the province of knowledge to speak And it is the privilege of wisdom to listen.

Henry David Thoreau
The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer.

Dr Joyce Brothers
Listening, not imitation, may be the sincerest form of flattery.

Edward H. Richards
*The wise old owl lived in an oak;
 The more he saw the less he spoke;
 The less he spoke the more he heard:
 Why can't we all be like that bird?*

Kathie Smith, RN: Director of Quality Initiatives and State Liaison; Editor in Chief
For more information on AHC’s endorsed risk management and insurance program visit: <http://www.homeandhospicecare.org/insurance/home.html>



Scenario One: What the Supervisor Said	Aide Reaction without Communication Skills	Aide Reaction with Communication Skills
We have a problem with the aide logs not matching the Plan of Care.	I am doing something wrong. This supervisor is getting on my last nerve. I can never please her.	<p>Active Listening:</p> <p>Are you saying that sometimes the aide note I complete and the patient assignment sheet do not match? Would you please give me an example?</p> <p>Self-Management:</p> <p>I am going to relax and listen calmly to the examples shared. I need to share that the RN seeing the patient does not always give me a copy of the updated assignment so I do not always know the latest changes. But I will share this matter of fact and not defensively.</p> <p>Self-Awareness: I like to have specific examples when my supervisor points out problems with my performance. That is because I am a very detailed person. My supervisor gives less detail and usually makes an overall statement that something needs to be corrected. Because I like detail, I like the detailed examples.</p>
Scenario Two: What the patient said	Aide Reaction without communication Skills	Aide Reaction with Communication Skills
I am tired of everybody telling me what to do.	I am just trying to do my job and follow the care plan.	<p>Active Listening:</p> <p>So you feel like everybody is trying to tell you what to do? Tell me more about what you mean?</p> <p>Self Management:</p> <p>I am going to take a deep breath before I react. I am not going to take this comment personally and I am going to be curious about what might be going on for this client (such as feeling sad at the loss of independence)</p> <p>Self Awareness:</p> <p>I know that I am more of an introverted type personality rather than an extroverted type personality and I like to think about things alone, but in this case, it sounds like I need to open up and listen to what this client has to say and stay open to asking questions and allow this client to ventilate their feelings. In doing so, I may learn more about this client and about giving this client as many choices as I can when providing care, such as what order that the care is given in (i.e. shave before bath, or how they like their food prepared, etc.)</p>

In-Home Aide newsletter- October 2011
POST-TEST on Communication

Name: _____

1. List 3 reasons why it is important as an In-home Aide to have good communication skills: (fill in the blanks)

_____, _____, _____

2. Which of the following are skills that can be developed in learning how to communicate more effectively? Circle all that apply.

- a. Self Awareness
- b. Active Listening
- c. Talking very loudly so people will hear you.
- d. Self Management

3. Everyone has good communication skills.

True False

4. Good communication skills require patience and practice.

True False

5. Active Listening involves which of the following activities? Circle all that apply.

- a. Listening to someone while interrupting them
- b. Ask questions to make sure you understand what someone is trying to tell you
- c. Repeating back to someone to clarify the information that you heard
- d. Having good eye contact and open body posture
- e. All of the above

6. Ways to avoid distractions with listening include (circle all that apply):

- a. Take a deep breath
- b. Make a conscious effort to listen
- c. Repeat in your mind what you are hearing
- d. Maintain eye contact
- e. All of the above

7. The ability to communicate effectively will add to your ability to form relationships?

True False

8. If you need more training on a task for an assignment, your supervisor should already be aware of what you need so it is not important for you to communicate what you need regarding training with your supervisor.

True False

9. Self management is when you react to the emotions you are feeling in a conversation instead of the facts of the conversation.

True False

10. We all have different personality types that affect how we deal with others, especially those whose personalities are different from our own.

True False