

How good
communication skill is
significant in
healthcare



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This study is all about how communication helps and how good communication skill is significant in health and social care environment. Effective communication is crucial for health and social care. What is communication? Communication is nothing but just the exchange of information and meaning by using symbols and signs between individuals. The sender, message, receiver and feedback are the four components used in the process of communication. And to have a continuous flow of communication it is necessary to comprehend to each component. Communication takes place in many forms like verbal, non-verbal, formal and informal, written, etc. Communication helps in comprehending human behaviour. Application of all these techniques of communication is required in health and social care. So for an effective social and health care it is essential to have good interpersonal and communication skill.

Use of Communication Skill in Health & Social Care Context

Communication skills are of great importance in any field. It is very much necessary to communicate with the target audience in the way they comprehend it and also it is of great significance to comprehend the intellectual and physical limitations of the targeted audience.

Let us simplify it by taking an example: Let us take a hypothetical situation, consider you are a doctor and practicing on a child and the child is having some heart problem. In this case you will not expect that child to comprehend the lengthy report on his heart functioning test. So definitely you would “water” it down.

Many such examples can be given to understand the importance of communication to health and social care.

Communication skill helps in organising a conversation, helps in probing the opposite person, it also helps in keeping the conversation going. Also communication skills are necessary in order to build up a good and health relation with the people using your services, also it helps in comprehending and meeting the needs of the person as well as can bond up with their friends and families. It helps in sending and receiving the information with the people taking up your services.

There are many different types of communication named one-to-one communication, group communication, formal communication and informal communication, written communication.

In health and social care generally a formal communication is used, which generally starts with the greeting. It is generally used to show respect towards the person and it is also a communication starter. A professional person generally in health and social care uses formal communication in order to speak to opposite person in regards to the services. It is exact, clear and avoids misunderstandings.

Another communication, which is generally used in health and social care, is written communication. In health and social care environment, written communication is central to the work of any person when keeping records or in writing any reports. Different styles of writing are needed for different types of communication but the basic of all is the requirement of literacy

skills. When recording any information about a patient a very formal style of writing is required.

Barriers to Communication in Health & Social Care

Many things contribute in stopping an effective communication. People working with health and social care should comprehend the barriers in order to overcome them. Effective communication is very much necessary in health and social care setting; if the communication is not effective or understandable than it would be difficult for a service user to involve in the discussion regarding the care or planning the future. Similarly, it would be difficult for a service provider to help the service user if he do not understand what the person is trying to ask.

Few of the barriers are language problems, jargons, acronyms, health issues, stress, emotional difficulties, environmental problems, misinterpretation, aggression, etc.

Let us briefly understand all the above-mentioned barriers:

Language Problem (Foreign Language): Using a language other than local or using sign language creates problem for both the service provider and user in comprehending each other. Even if someone tries and helps out in translating the message, it is again difficult to pass the message clearly.

Jargons: Technical words used by the service provider, may not be understandable by service user. For example, if a patient rushes to doctor and to diagnose the problem doctor asks the patient to do a MRI scan and blood test than that would certainly sound scary to that patient. Instead of

directly imposing what to do if the doctor explain what the MRI scan is and why it is required than the patient would be more relaxed.

Acronyms: Acronyms are the initials of the shortened words. In health and social care lots of acronyms are used and they are confusing too. Sometimes subconsciously the use of acronyms is made which makes the opposite person feels left out. For example, if a health care professional says that " you have to take these tablets TDS". What did you comprehend from this sentence? So we feels left out her. Here TDS means three times a day. It is also related to jargon.

Health issue: When a person is not feeling well or is not in the best of his health, it becomes difficult for him to communicate effectively as he is not well. This definitely affects the service user and colleagues too. So the people who are being taken care in the hospital due to some illness might not be able to communicate like normal. Also the patients who are being treated in the hospital for their long-term sickness like Parkinson's disease also affect their ability to communicate. So if you are working in health and social care than you should be aware about such scenarios and should be capable enough to handle it.

Stress: Stress also causes difficulty in communication. A person if stressed out might not listen properly and so he might misunderstand or misinterpret the conversation. Stress also cause difficulty in speaking or might be tearful as well.

Emotional difficulties: At times everyone faces emotional difficulties and get upset. For example, a fight between husband and wife, a split up between
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boyfriend and a girl friend or a bad new; all these contributes towards emotional difficulties. Here as the person is already preoccupied he might not hear to what is being said and so this might lead to misunderstanding.

Environmental Problems: It is the communication affected by environment. For example, if someone is having reading problem (due to weak eyesight) than the person will surely struggle in reading the written information in low light. A person on a wheelchair may face problem in talking to a receptionist if the desk is too high.

Aggression: Unpleasant and frightening behaviour is aggression. It can be mental, verbal or physical and can cause emotional harm or pain. For example, a person working in health and social care irritated or annoyed due to some reasons than the person to whom he is providing service might feel threatened or dominated and so might not be able to respond. This results in the offering of the bad services.

Ways to deal with inappropriate Interpersonal Communication

Selection of wrong words or use of passive vocabulary, body language misinterpretation or cultural insensitivity leads to inappropriate interpersonal communication. In such case what can be done to avoid such problem is:

Always rephrase in simpler and different words to whatever has been said in order to avoid unnecessary confusion and misunderstand.

One of the way to deal with inappropriate communication in focusing, it also helps in preventing communication barriers.

Attentive listening without interrupting is also one of the ways to deal with it.

Respectful respond should be given to person's opinion and listener's view should not be imposed.

One of the communication strategies for providing comfort is empathy; an empathic approach helps in comprehending.

Factors influencing Communication Process in Health & Social Care

Communication process is influenced in several ways. According to Watson, the action of caring includes communication, support, positive regards or physical interventions by the nurse (1985 cited in Kozier et al, 2004, p. 419).

A sense of care is felt through communication, although a lot depends on interpersonal attitude as well. A sense of importance and worth is felt when respect is given and opinions and ideas are accepted and not judged. Also a terrible feel during an interaction is also a factor of communication barrier. Judgemental action, probing, agreeing/disagreeing, stereotyping, rejecting are the non-therapeutic responses (Kozier et al, 2004, p. 432).

Cultural Factors Influencing Communication Process

What is Culture? Culture refers to beliefs, shared and learned values and behaviour, which is common to a particular group of people (Orbe & Bruess, 2005). Music, food, dress, customs and celebration are also included in culture. Communication and culture are the two inseparable. Culture is a significant part of our perspective through which we see the world. Culture is shaped by communication and is also learned through communication.

Communicating with people from same culture is different and

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communicating with people from different culture is a different experience. Although culture is powerful, they are frequently influencing conflicts and unconscious. Always remember two things about culture; one is that culture are always changing and the other is they communicate to symbolic dimension of life.

According to Stella Ting there are three ways where communication process is affected by culture. First is “ Cognitive Constraint” which is the reference frame that provides surrounding that all new information is compared to or inserted into. Second is “ Behaviour Constraint”; it is about culture having their own rules of behaviour regarding verbal and nonverbal communications. For example, how much distance should be maintained when talking to the other person, whether to look in the other person eye or not, etc? The final one is “ Emotional Constraint”; every culture has their own way of showing emotions. For example, there are many cultures that get emotional when debating on an issue; they yell, cry, etc. While many cultures tend to remain calm and keep their emotions hidden. All these cultural difference leads to communication problems. This is more likely to happen when dealing with cross cultures. To overcome these problem only awareness regarding the cultures is needed.

Legislation, Code of Practice and Policies in Health & Social Care

Legislation- Legislation are the laws made by parliaments, these laws shows the right of an individual, group or an organisation. All the health & social care settings should comprehend the significance of sticking to legal guidance as this can defend against the poor practice. For example, the data <https://assignbuster.com/how-good-communication-skill-is-significant-in-healthcare/>

protection acts, freedom of information act, care standards act, race relation act, etc.

Policies- In order to promote equal opportunities and strengthen the code of practice of particular professional bodies it is must for an organisation to have policies and procedures. Policies includes confidentiality, harassment and bullying, health and safety, equal opportunities, risk assessment, etc.

Code of Practice- Since 2000, it has become vital for all health and social care settings to have a professional code of practice. In order to inform the practitioner about their rights and responsibilities and to guide the code of practice is kept. It is mandatory for all health and social care worker to carry out an induction period where the proper training leading to appropriate qualification is given. Same code of practice is followed by Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and England.

Health & Social Care Services with specific Communication needs

People having cognitive impairment, language and sensory deficit, structural deficits and paralysis need specific communication (Kozier et al. 2004, p. 438). In general, the care worker uses the SOLER technique by Egan (1986), it helps in effective communication with the clients, and makes them feel safe and trust the caregiver.

SOLER stands for:

S- Sit squarely in relation to the patient

O- Open position

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L- Lean slightly towards the patient

E- Eye contact

R- Relax

This technique helps in good interaction and can be used for both; people with or without any special needs. Depending on the type of communication impairment different strategies and techniques can be used.

For people with hearing problem or who are deaf, BSL (British Sign Language) was introduced which was eventually accepted by UK government officially in 2003 and now this sign language has become universal. But it is different in each place of origin. Not only people with hearing impairment learn this language but also the people who interact with these people learn this language. For example, friends and families. Also Lip-speaking is a technique used for deaf. In lip-speaking interaction through facial expression, gesture and mouth is done without making any sound.

There is one more technique, which is used for people with learning difficulties such as structural deficit and paralysis and cognitive impairment. It is known as Makaton. Makaton uses common vocabulary and is much simple. It uses symbol, action as well as speech, unlike BSL. This is a very helpful technique for people with limited ability to communicate.

For Blind people reading and writing method through Braille is used. It is useful for every individual who is completely dependent on sense.

Finally, Human Aids, Human aids are the people helping communicate with each other. Translator, interpreter, etc are the examples of human aids.

Information & Communication Technology (ICT) in Health & Social Care

ICT provides great support for care professional and other staff in order to provide effective, fast and convenient care. Visible and workable ICT is required in order to deliver high standards. In order to get the quality outcome data and to give the best possible care to people it is needed to exploit ICT.

Individual's quality care depends on easy access to care plans and electronic records. It must be capable enough to distribute information across health and social care. ICT helps in delivering more effective and better healthcare services. ICT helps doctors, hospitals and pharmacist for taking better care of our health. ICT helps in saving lives, improving patients care, helps in reducing cost in health care.

For example, a patient with heart problem will be carrying a monitor, which will alarm the doctor if any changes in patient condition and will let them do their task.

ICT use is central to social work, which is concerned with sharing assessments and exchanging information with other professionals and practitioners. Quickly and securely medical data can be exchanged. ICT has made the operation simpler than before.

The basic ICT at health & social care includes:

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Quality care (efficient and effective care service)

Empowerment (patients involving in their own care activities)

Availability (waiting time, access and better utilization of resources)

Care continuity (information sharing and coordinating with care provider)

Patient safety (risk is reduced in regards to patient harm)

Some of the technologies used at health care are CDMS (Chronic Disease Management System), CPOE (Computerised Practitioner Order Entry), CDS (Clinical Decision Support), ETP (Electronic Transfer of Prescription), Electronic Appointment Booking, PHR (Personal Health Record), Telemedicine's, RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) & Bar-coding, etc.

ICT is used everyday at health care. ICT is used in administrative department to keep a check on in and out of the patients, to keep the records of the patients & staff as well.