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II. COMMUNICATION FOR NURSES

A. OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course the nurse participant will be able to:

1. Define communication.
2. Identify three (3) factors which impact the effectiveness of gender communication.
3. List two (2) techniques to improve verbal communication skills.
4. List two (2) techniques to improve listening skills.
5. Describe three (3) basic communication behaviors – passive, aggressive, assertive.
6. List the steps for creating successful “I” messages.
7. Describe three (3) non verbal behaviors.

B. CURRICULUM OUTLINE

- I. Introduction
 - Definition of Communications
- II. Gender Speak
 - Men & Women learn to communicate literally
 - Communication – Women
 - Communication – Men
- III. Talking
- IV. Listening
 - Reflective listening
 - Physical listening
 - Ten (10) ideas to improve listening
- V. Three (3) Basic Communication Behaviors
 - Passiveness
 - Aggressiveness
 - Assertiveness
- VI. Non-Verbal Behavior
 - Eye contact
 - Body posture
 - Distance/Physical contact
 - Facial Expressions
 - Gestures
 - Vocal tone, inflection, volume
 - Fluency
 - Timing
 - Clothing
- VII. Rights, Wants, Needs
 - Needs
 - Wants
 - Rights
- VIII. Role play
 - Passive, aggressive, assertive communication styles

C. CURRICULUM

I INTRODUCTION

The Latin root of the word *communicate* is *communicare*, which means to make common or to share.

The purpose of communication is to express thoughts, ideas and feelings with others in a way they will understand.

By learning to recognize and correct the weak spots in our personal communication styles, we take an important step toward increased effectiveness. We take a large step toward making ourselves understood.

II GENDER SPEAK

Men and Women Learn to Communicate Differently:

By accepting and validating these male and female differences, we can begin to close the communication gap. The first step is to accept our differences. Different doesn't mean wrong. Men tend to define themselves through their achievements. They like to handle things on their own. Women define who they are through the connectedness of their relationships and through feelings.

The second step is to learn the rules of communication. For communication between men and women to be effective, we must recognize the differences between male and female communication styles. Men and women use communication methods designed to meet their primary communication needs.

Men's needs		Women's needs	
1.	To feel accepted.	1.	To feel validated.
2.	To feel admired.	2.	To feel respected.
3.	To feel appreciated.	3.	To feel understood.
4.	To feel approved of.	4.	To feel reassured.
5.	To feel trusted.	5.	To feel cared about.

Communicating with Women:

To have a good communication with women, you don't have to always agree with them. If you disagree, however, you'll be able to get your point across if you wait until they are finished talking. Men often try to talk over each other when they disagree. They raise their voices and interrupt each other. Women interpret these actions as power plays, and communication suffers. Don't pretend to understand when you don't and don't automatically start defending yourself. You communicate better with women if you admit when you don't understand. If you disagree and feel strongly about the issue, let women know that what they said is important to you. If you make a mistake, especially when you have slighted her feelings, apologize.

Nowhere is the pause more practically or usefully applied than in gender communication. This gives the listener the opportunity to consider the speaker's primary needs before responding.

Women also have a tendency to break the silence with comments like, "Oh, never mind." Women also have a tendency to ask tag questions, with a qualifier. This makes their statements less powerful and believable.

Communicating with Men:

Women need to empower their male counterparts. Don't ask him too many questions or he may feel you are prying, or trying to change him. He will either become defensive or agree with you for the moment to pacify you.

Men often talk over women, or speak louder to get their point across. This makes women feel unevenly matched. Worse, it can be interpreted by women, as means of control.

Key Points to Gender Speak:

- Men and women learn to communicate differently.
- Men define who they are through their achievements. They believe they are what they do.
- Women define themselves through their connection with others. They believe they are what they feel.
- When speaking with men, remember their need to feel accepted, admired, appreciated, approved of and trusted.

- When speaking with women, remember their need to feel validated, respected, understood, reassured and cared about.
- The number-one way a man can improve his relationship with a woman is to listen to her feelings.
- The number-one way a woman can improve her relationship with a man is to empower him.

III TALKING

1. Pause before responding. Take a deep breath.
2. Use short sentences. Keep your message clear and direct. Many people talk to excess when nervous.
3. State what you want or how you feel. “I feel” or “I want to” – then wait for a response.
4. Control your body language. Remember the components chart – eye contact, calm voice, etc.
5. Move toward thinking of constructive solutions. Leave unfriendly debates behind. Focus on the future not the past.

IV LISTENING

Listening requires mental and physical activity. We spend 80% of each day listening. Listening is our most frequently used communication skill, yet we often feel that it requires no effort on our part.

Reflective Listening:

Reflective listening only allows you to focus on the central points of the issue, and keeps the speaker focused. It encourages the other person to disclose his feelings, thereby helping him understand his emotions and move toward a solution to the problem. Reflective listening provides a mechanism that draws the other person out. You can do this in several ways:

1. Indicate your interest in the person and what he is saying. This invites him to talk.
2. Don't interrupt, offer an opinion or otherwise prevent the speaker from continuing.
3. Involve your whole body. Maintain good eye contact. Nod when the person makes a point.

4. Make the listening sounds like, “Hmmm,” “Really,” “That’s interesting,” “What do you think about that?” This lets the speaker know you are paying attention.

When practicing reflective listening, an appropriate response restates the speaker’s feelings and content in a way that demonstrates acceptance, and understanding – that reflects what you heard the speaker say. A useful formula for reflecting is this: “You feel (insert the word or feeling) because (insert the event or other content that is associated with the feeling).”

Physical Listening:

Listening involves giving physical attention to the speaker. Listening with your whole body shows your interest in what is being said. Incline your body toward the speaker to communicate more energy and interest.

Your eye contact communicates interest and a desire to listen. Keep your arms and legs uncrossed. Tightly crossed arms or legs communicate defensiveness and closed mindedness. About three (3) feet is comfortable distance for conversation.

Avoid making distracting motions and gestures, but don’t sit too rigidly either.

Most listeners talk too much.

- Focus attention on: facial expressions, posture, gestures and actions.
- Read non-verbals in context of conversation.
- Note discrepancies between what people say and how they act.

When the listener appropriately reflects his understanding of the other person’s body language, communication improves significantly.

Ten Ideas to Improve Listening:

1. Create a listening atmosphere: **STOP TALKING** (you can’t listen when you are talking).
2. Look for common interests.
3. Focus on the main ideas.

4. Identify the non-verbal message. (What components of behavior are being exhibited?)
5. Know your hot buttons. Hold your tongue.
6. Avoid argument or criticism.
7. Put yourself in their place. (empathy)
8. Be patient.
9. Practice, practice, practice!
10. Remember – a request for listening is not always a request for advice.

V THREE BASIC COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

When faced with uncomfortable communication situations we tend to respond with fear or anger. It is difficult to respond to authority, colleagues or patients when our emotions take over. Often we respond by being too strong or we give up and don't express ourselves enough. Both actions are self-defeating. A more rational response is to respond assertively.

Human communication and behavior fall into three basic categories:

1. Passiveness
2. Aggressiveness
3. Assertiveness

Passiveness: A reluctance or inability to confidently express what you think and feel.

Aggressive communication and behavior: Results in a put-down of the other person, causing hurt, defensiveness, and humiliation. Aggressive behavior does not take the other person's goal or feelings into account. Only the aggressor's goals are met. This often generates bitterness and frustration that later returns as resistance and dissension.

Assertiveness: An alternative to the extremes of passiveness and aggressiveness. "Confidently expressing what you think, feel and believe – standing up for your rights while respecting the rights of others."

People tend to cooperate when they are approached or advised in a way that respects the needs of both parties. Assertive communication frequently allows both persons to get what they want.

When you express your feelings honestly, you usually achieve your goal. When you choose to behave in an assertive manner, even if your goals are not achieved, you generally feel good about yourself.

The ultimate goal is to be on good terms with people. Be true to your own thoughts, feelings and beliefs. Avoid direct or implied criticism of the other person's thoughts, feelings or beliefs, and are likely to retain the goodwill of those around you.

“I” messages: An I-message is honest, authentic, and congruent. It expresses your feelings and experiences.

Successful use of I-messages requires that you:

- Know what you want and need.
- Take personal responsibility for meeting your preferences.
- Express yourself in an assertive way to the person whose cooperation you need.
- Be willing to listen if the other person becomes defensive.

All effective assertive communication is characterized by a basic four-part message:

1. Nonjudgmental description of the behavior to be changed.
2. Disclosure of the assertor's feelings.
3. Clarification of the concrete and tangible effect of the other person's behavior on the assertor.
4. Description of behavior that would be more satisfactory.

You'll send more assertive messages when you use this formula: “When you (state the other person's behavior non-judgmentally), I feel (disclose your feelings) because (explain the impact on your life). I prefer (describe what you want).”

This four-part assertive communication style requires conscientious practice. People seldom describe behavior accurately enough for listeners to understand how their actions frustrate the speaker. These guidelines will help you develop effective behavior description skills:

- Describe the behavior in specific rather than general terms.
 - Limit yourself to behavioral descriptions. Do not draw inferences about the other person's motive, attitudes, character, etc.
 - Be objective, not judgmental.
 - Be as brief as possible.
 - Communicate the real issues.
 - Communicate to the right person.
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- Many will respect your assertive communication style. But be prepared for those who may respond aggressively toward you, using verbal attacks, demands or putdowns.

Effective Assertive Communication:

1. Do not apologize if you don't need to... "I am sorry but" ... Start your statement after the "but".
2. Do not add excuses or reasons unnecessarily. You don't owe the person the excuse.
3. When struggling to be assertive, ask yourself "What is the worst possible thing that can happen?" Then, "Can I live with that?"

VI COMPONENTS OF BEHAVIOR

	Passive	Aggressive	Assertive
Eye Contact	Limited or none Downcast Fluttering eye lashes	Glaring Rolling eyes Piercing Uncomfortable	Maintain eye Contact Comfortable Direct
Facial Expression	Bland Reserved can't tell what they are thinking	Frown Knitted brow Red faced Set Jaw Clenched teeth	Appropriate for the situation Confident Genuine Interested
Body posture	Shriveling Take up little space Pull into self	Firm Takes up space Feet spread apart Hands on hips	Good posture Relaxed Comfortable
Body distance	Clinging to one person or a lot of distance from Authority	Up close & in your face Very invasive of others space	1' – 3' Comfortable is aware of others comfort or discomfort
Gestures	Wringing of hands Fidgets with things Talking with hand over mouth	Pointing finger Shaking fist Slamming things Palm down movement	Open palm or palms up Appropriate gestures
Voice, volume, Inflection, tone Tone = 80% of message	Soft, mild Tone = Whiney, sing-song	Loud, harsh, Authoritative Tone = Sarcastic, Condescending, Overbearing	Calm, reassuring, Tone = even Perhaps soothing at times.
Verbal messages	“Well uh” Stammering, hinging without saying directly	“You should” messages Blaming	“I” messages “I need – “ “I feel – “ “I want – “ Open, honest, direct

Real Life – Look at <u>several</u> components from one behavior. Think of a person who often fits this behavior	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
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VII NON-VERBAL BEHAVIOR

How you say something is often more powerful than what you say? Your tone of voice and facial expression tell people more than your words. Tone, inflection and facial expressions account for 93% of your message. The actual words only account for 7%.

The key components of non-verbal communication are:

Eye contact: The eyes are an important part of non-verbal communication.

To communicate more confidence and polish, keep your head up and vary the direction of your gaze. Eye contact emphasizes a point and establishes trust.

In conversation, glance at the other person for a second and then glance away to show you are listening and not just staring. Be aware of your eyes as you talk with others and gradually attempt to optimize your eye contact in conversation. Be aware of your eyes as you talk with others and gradually attempt to optimize your eye contact in conversation.

Body posture: How you carry yourself sends a double non-verbal message. It reveals what you think about yourself and what you think about your listener. Slouching conveys an attitude of indifference to the world. If you're rigid and uptight, you communicate anxiety and insecurity. Self-awareness is the secret. When you are aware of how you look, and obtain the look you want to send to the listener.

The most effective stance for both men and women is a straight, almost military spine, head erect, with feet straight and slightly spread apart and arms at the side with fingers lightly cupped.

Relative "power" in an encounter may be emphasized by standing or sitting. An erect posture lends additional assertiveness to your message. A slumped, passive stance gives the other person an immediate advantage, as does any tendency on your part to lean or move away.

Distance/physical contact: The distance you maintain from other people has a direct impact upon communication.

Facial expressions: Effective communication requires facial expressions that agree with what is being said.

Let your face say the same thing as your words. If you say something amusing with a smile, your listener will nearly always smile along with you. Even in a serious conversation, the smile is essential.

Gestures: Your gestures are as important as your facial expressions. A relaxed use of gestures adds depth and power to your messages. Uninhibited movement suggests openness, self-confidence and spontaneity on the speaker's part.

Vocal tone, inflection, and volume: Your voice is one of your most vital body tools in communication. A level, well-modulated conversation tone is persuasive without being intimidating.

1. **Tone:** A lower pitched voice generally is more effective.
2. **Inflection:** Swings in emotion can be shown with variations in pitch.
3. **Volume:** Your voice is a powerful tool in self-expression. Control and use it effectively.

Fluency: A smooth flow of speech helps get your point across in any type of conversation. Clear and slow comments are more easily understood and powerful than rapid speech that is erratic.

Timing: In general, spontaneity of expression is the goal. Hesitation diminishes the effectiveness of your message.

Clothing: What you wear and how you wear it send powerful signals. The first rule about clothes, accessories and hairstyle is that there are no rules. It's up to you. Avoid extremes unless you're in the business of attracting attention to yourself. Wear styles and colors that make you look your best. Please yourself first.

D. BIBLIOGRAPHY

These are principles and practices of communication that we use in the United States, many of them are applicable to all, but some might be culturally sensitive. These should be used only as examples to open and explore techniques of communication specific to each individual culture.

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3. Warner, David, *Helping Health Care Workers Learn*, Hesperian Foundation, 1996

E. PRE TEST EVALUATION

Communication

1. Define Communication

2. Identify three (3) factors which impact the effectiveness of gender communication.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. List two (2) techniques to improve verbal communication skills.

1. _____

2. _____

4. List two (2) techniques to improve listening skills.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

5. Describe three (3) basic communication behaviors

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

6. List the steps for creating successful “I” messages.

7. Describe three (3) non verbal behaviors

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

F. POST TEST EVALUATION

Communication

1. Define Communication

2. Identify three (3) factors which impact the effectiveness of gender communication.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. List two (2) techniques to improve verbal communication skills.

1. _____

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4. List two (2) techniques to improve listening skills.

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5. Describe three (3) basic communication behaviors

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6. List the steps for creating successful “I” messages.

7. Describe three (3) non-verbal behaviors

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

G. INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION

Instructor Evaluation: Using a scale of One (lowest) to Five (highest), please rate the following:

The instructor met the stated objectives. 1 2 3 4 5

The content was informative. 1 2 3 4 5

The information was presented in an
interesting and logical format. 1 2 3 4 5

The most useful information in this lecture was