INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION & PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

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OHCA ANNUAL CONVENTION & TRADE SHOW, SEPTEMBER 2013

OBJECTIVES

- To learn
  - Different aspects to successful and productive communication, and
  - Key steps involved in problem solving

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION INCLUDES…

- Clear, nonjudgmental language to communicate a thought or idea.
- Active listening: nonverbal listening skills to show attention, empathy, understanding, and concern.
- The ability to pull back when a conversation becomes emotionally charged.
- Paraphrasing, or repeating back in our own words what the speaker has said, in order to clarify or confirm understanding.
- Asking open-ended, clarifying questions to gain further information & insight.

BACK-TO-BACK ACTIVITY

- With a partner, sit back-to-back.
  - Determine who will draw and who will describe the design.
  - The person who draws will have a blank sheet of paper and pencil.
  - The person who is describing will have the picture in front of her/him.
  - Partners cannot look at each other and must remain back to back, until the person drawing completes the picture being described.
  - Do not look at each other's drawings/pictures.
  - No exceptions!

ACTIVE LISTENING

Means listening with our full attention to the person speaking.
Active listening involves:

- Nonverbal communication – body language & facial expressions.
- Paraphrasing, or repeating back in our own words what the speaker has said.
- Asking open-ended questions to clarify or gather more information.

ACTIVE LISTENING IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE…

- When we listen with our full attention, we remember & understand better what is being communicated
- When we listen with our full attention, it feels caring and helpful to the person who is speaking.
ACTIVE LISTENING ROLE PLAY

1. Volunteer needed to tell about something important that recently happened to her/him. (Must be willing to share with the whole group.) or
2. Volunteer needed to tell about a problem she/he has recently resolved. (Must be willing to share with the whole group.)

REAL LISTENING IS...

Based on the intention to:
- Understand another person
- Enjoy another person
- Learn something
- Give help or solace (empathy/sympathy)

PARAPHRASING

Paraphrasing is stating in your own words what you think someone just said.

PARAPHRASING

Paraphrasing improves communication because:
- People appreciate feeling heard;
- It can slow anger and cool down a crisis – helps to de-escalate emotionally charged communications;
- It prevents miscommunication and helps the listener remember what was said; and
- It helps focus the listener’s attention on understanding clearly what the other person is saying.

PARAPHRASING PRACTICE

“...I really don’t get along with all the people I take care of- maybe this isn’t the job for me.”

LEAD-INS FOR PARAPHRASING

- Did I hear you say...
- Did you say...
- So, I think you said...
- Okay, so what I heard you say is...
- So what you’re saying is...
- You’re telling me that...is that correct?
- So let me summarize what you just said...
- I want to be on the same page as you, so let me go over what you just said...
- Am I hearing you correctly that...
- Are you saying that...
- Am I hearing you clearly that...
- So what I hear you saying is...
- I believe that you are saying...
- So, you’re saying...
- Okay, let me see if I got what you said...
OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

✓ Allow for more complete understanding
✓ Help establish a positive relationship
✓ Set the stage for more appropriate and effective problem solving.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS ROLE PLAY

A volunteer is needed to answer questions.

OVERCOMING BLOCKS TO LISTENING

Blocks to Listening
✓ Rehearsing
✓ Filtering
✓ Comparing
✓ Mind reading
✓ Judging

Blocks to Listening
✓ Dreaming
✓ Identifying
✓ Advising
✓ Placating

STRATEGIES FOR GETTING BACK TO REAL LISTENING OR GETTING BEYOND THE BLOCKS

- Mentally check in with yourself while listening
- Practice with a partner who knows you well
- Pause to find the cause: If you notice that listening to someone is becoming more difficult, ask the person to pause for a moment. Ask yourself what blocks seem to be present.
- Be aware of yourself and your blocks

STEPS TO TAKE WHEN EMOTIONS RUN HIGH

- Use active listening skills.
- Encourage the other to talk
- Paraphrase and ask clarifying questions
- Pay attention to body language (yours and the speakers)
- Pause & think before you speak. Be aware of your blocks & emotions
- Respond constructively and state your position.
- Propose a negotiation.

PULLING BACK

Requires gaining control of yourself in an emotionally stressful situation. The steps of pulling back are to:

Means:
- Being able to pause.
- Getting one’s emotions under control, and then
- Clearly observing and assessing the situation, before responding.
Steps for pulling back:

- Notice your internal reaction and judgments.
- Freeze your reaction and put it aside.
- Consciously relax your body to calm yourself down and breath.
- Put your attention back on the other person.

Effective response:

- Avoids jumping to conclusions
- Is not defensive
- Does not blame others
- Looks for common ground
- Uses “I” statements vs. “you” statements – focuses on the problem and not the person

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Feedback: Providing useful information about someone’s approach, skills or actions, in order to encourage professional development.

Constructive Feedback: Talking about both what the individual is doing correctly and what the individual needs to improve.

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Conduct Feedback on:

- What you can see
- What you can hear
- What you observe happening as a result of another’s actions

Key is to focus on observations & respond with facts rather than opinions.

You must not have had much sleep last night.
I don’t think you learned much in that training.
You must be trying to make your resident sicker.
Your eyes are very red this morning.
The sheets are not tucked in correctly.
I noticed you put extra salt on the food, but he’s on a low-sodium diet.

Opinion/Assumption
Observation/Fact

Review of Effective Communication Skills

Effective communication involves:

- Active listening
- Clear, nonjudgmental language to communicate a thought or idea
- The ability to pull-back when a conversation becomes emotionally charged
- Paraphrasing what the speaker said
- Asking open-ended questions to gain further information and understanding
PROBLEM-SOLVING

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, “problem-solving” is the act of finding ways of dealing with problems.


PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGIES

“The best strategy for solving a problem depends largely on the unique situation. In some cases, people are better off learning everything they can about the issue and then using factual knowledge to come up with a solution. In other instances, creativity and insight are the best options.”


PROBLEM-SOLVING STEPS GENERALLY

- Identify and define the problem (root cause)
- Generate possible solutions
- Evaluate and select a possible solution
- Implement and evaluate the solution’s effectiveness
- If the “solution” is not working: determine if it needs to be tweaked or if it needs to be set aside and a new alternative solution be tried

OPTIONS APPROACH TO PROBLEM-SOLVING

- Clearly state the problem from the point of view of the resident, the caregiver/CNA, and the facility
- From each point of view, identify the important factors related to the problem
- Brainstorm options for addressing the problem, and
- Select the option, or combination of options, that best addresses the important factors, & thus, all points of view

THINK ABOUT A PROBLEM AT WORK THAT YOU RECENTLY SOLVED.

- How did you solve the problem?
- How did you choose which solution to try?
- Was there more than one possible solution?
- Did the problem get resolved immediately? Or did you have to try a second option?

QUESTIONS?

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Thank You!

END NOTES

AANP Facilitator Instructional Module: Adult Abuse and Neglect Prevention. Constructive Conflict Resolution: Tips to Deal with Difficult Workplace Situations. Produced by BEAM in cooperation with Michigan State University and the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging through the Michigan Department of Community Health Grant No. 11-093042/5 awarded by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.


Peer Mentoring: A Workshop Series for Direct Care Workers in Home and Residential Care, National Clearinghouse on the Direct Care Workforce, Bronx, NY, 2006.