

Orange County

In~Home Supportive Services



Public Authority



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PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESSFUL PROVIDERS *Training*



COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Working hand in hand with the community to serve IHSS Consumers so they may remain safe and independent in their own home.

Overview



- **Objective**
- **What is Communication**
- **Forms of Communication**
 - Verbal
 - Non-Verbal,
 - Active Listening
- **Communication With Older Adults or Individuals Who Have a Disability**
 - Speech Impairments
 - Aphasia
 - Memory Loss
 - Hearing Loss
- **Skills to Help Improve Communication**
 - Emotional Awareness
 - Conflict Resolution

Objective



- To understand the different forms of communication
- To understand factors that impact communication with older adults or individuals who have disabilities
- To learn the importance of emotional awareness
- To learn skills that help improve communication and conflict resolution

What is Communication

Communication is an interaction or exchange of information between individuals.



Forms of Communication

Most common forms of communication include:

- **Verbal**
- **Non-Verbal**
 - Facial Expressions
 - Body Language
- **Active Listening**

Other Forms of Communication Include

- American Sign Language
- Social Media
- Music, Art, Written Work



The **bold** items will be addressed.

American Sign Language

Verbal Communication

The purpose of verbal communication is to convey a message to the individual(s) being addressed.

It is important to understand that how the message is relayed will affect how the message is received and interpreted.



IT'S NOT WHAT
YOU SAY...

IT'S HOW
YOU SAY IT

conqueror!

To achieve a positive experience consider the following when you speak:

- THINK carefully about the message you want to relay
 - “Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will **definitely** hurt me”
- Be aware of your tone and volume as you speak
- How fast you’re speaking and the volume of your voice
- Be aware of what you’re communicating non-verbally

Verbal Communication



Consider the following BEFORE you speak.

T
H
I
N
K

Is it true?

Is it helpful?

Is it inspiring?

Is it necessary?

Is it kind?

Verbal Communication – Consideration of Cultural Influence

Important to consider when communicating with an Individual of another culture



- Be respectful
- Consider personal space and non-verbal communication
- Speak clearly using a normal voice and regular speed
- Ask questions in a nonjudgmental manner
- In order to assure a true understanding of what's being communicated
 - Listen carefully and rephrase what you believe was said
 - Ask the individual if he/she understands what you have said
 - Use images to help relay the information
 - Seek help from an interpreter if communication becomes difficult
- Avoid the use of jargons, technical terms, or lengthy sentences
 - Do you need to go to the “potty”?
 - Ready for some “chow”?
 - Need your “meds”?
- Be patient and remember you are both trying to understand

Non-Verbal Communication

What we communicate non-verbally is just as important as what we say verbally.



Non-verbal Communication

We must be aware of what we are communicating without using words.

Non-verbal Communication includes the following:

- **Facial Expressions**
 - Happy, sad, bored, angry, surprised, fear, etc.
- **Eye Contact**
 - No eye contact can be interpreted as you are ignoring the speaker
 - It is important to consider cultural differences
- **Tone of Voice**
 - Speaking loudly, quickly
 - Sarcastic, angry, confident

Brief or no eye contact may be considered appropriate in the Asian culture



Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal Communication includes the following:

- **Body Movements and Posture**
 - Position when we are sitting or standing
 - How we use our hands and arms
- **Proximity to the Individual(s) We Are Addressing**
- **Finger, Hand and Arm Gestures**
 - Finger pointing
 - Hand waving
 - It is important to consider cultural differences
 - In Eastern European countries, the “OK” sign is offensive
 - Thumbs up is considered vulgar in Iran

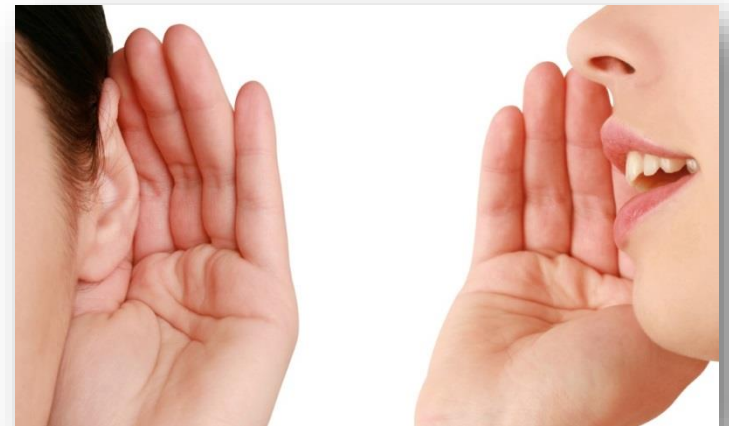
Hand gestures may be inappropriate in other cultures



Active Listening

Active listening is a form of communication that engages the “listener”.

- **An Active Listener Restates What He/She Understands the Message To Be**
 - Depending on what is said, the speaker will know if the message was understood or not
 - If not understood, the speaker has an opportunity to clarify further
- **The Benefit of Active Listening**
 - Misunderstandings are addressed at that moment, reducing the opportunity for conflict
 - Encourages everyone involved to participate in the dialogue



“The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them.”

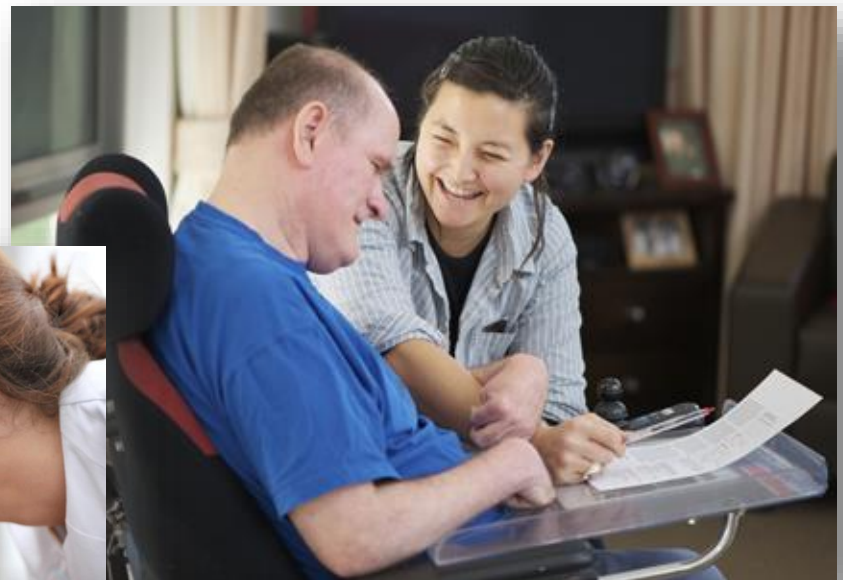
- Dr. Ralph Nichols

Communication with Older Adults or Individuals Who Have Disabilities

Communication with older adults and individuals with certain disabilities may be challenging.

Factors such as the following can contribute toward ineffective communication:

- Impaired speech
- Aphasia
- Memory Loss
- Hearing Loss



Communication with Older Adults or Individuals Who Have **Speech Impairments**

Different underlying causes can result in disabilities that impact communication.

When you're communicating with someone who has a speech/communication disability:

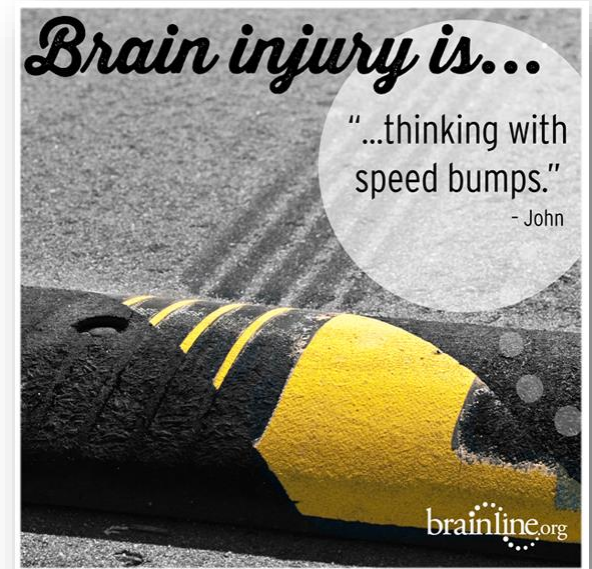
- Give the person your full attention and do not interrupt or finish their words or sentences
- Ask the person to repeat the word or statement if you are unable to understand
- If it is necessary, restate what you have heard to assure you understood correctly
- If you are still unable to understand correctly, ask the person to write what he/she is trying to say
- A quiet environment is suggested
- Be patient, respectful and creative if necessary to be able to convey and/or understand the message



Communication with Older Adults or Individuals Who Have Aphasia

Aphasia is a condition that results from brain injury due to a head trauma, brain tumors or, most commonly, from a stroke.

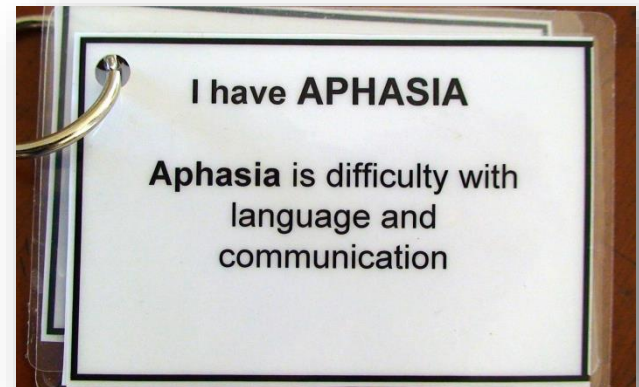
- **Aphasia is an impairment that affects an individual's ability to communicate:**
 - Put words together to accurately form a statement, express ideas and converse socially
 - Retrieve the names of objects, read or write
 - Comprehend speech
- **Communication with this condition can range from very mild to almost impossible.**
 - The form of aphasia depends greatly on the type and location of the injury.
 - Speech output is severely reduced - may be limited to uttering a maximum of four words
 - Speech may require great effort, can be hesitant and clumsy
 - Reading and writing may be limited to an elementary level
 - Sentences may not make sense
 - For example, they may say "book, book, two table" when they're trying to say, "There are two books on the table".
 - They may use irrelevant words, or may make up words



Understanding and Communicating with Individuals Who Have **Aphasia**

Techniques and tools to help communicate:

- Use gestures when you're speaking
 - Point to the coffee pot if you're asking if he/she wants coffee
- Write key words or phrases, on note cards, to help clarify meaning
- Use pictures to help communicate
- Use short and uncomplicated sentences
- Avoid complicated options
 - Ask yes or no questions
 - "Do you want coffee or tea", "turkey or tuna sandwich", etc.



Understanding and Communicating with Individuals Who Have **Aphasia**

Your Responsibility:

- Give the person your full attention
- Allow the individual plenty of time
- Do not interrupt them
- Do not correct them
- Resist the urge to guess the words for them
- Encourage any form of communication
 - speech, gesture, pointing, or drawing
- Include the individual in social activities that encourage the use of communication skills

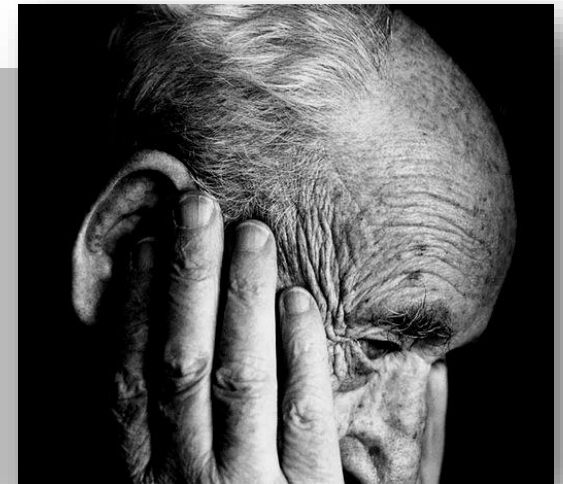


Remember that you are not the only person experiencing frustration - the individual with Aphasia is also struggling to express him/herself.

Communication with Older Adults or Individuals Who Have **Memory Loss**

Communication between an individual and their family/caregivers is greatly challenged due to affects of the Alzheimer's or other type of dementia.

- Word finding difficulties
- Make up words: “hand clock” instead of watch
- Can't speak in complete sentences
- Forgets English, if it is a second language
- May not understand what you are saying
- Inability to speak (but may understand)
- Problems reading and writing
- May not speak but can sing, recite prayers or favorite poetry



Practice **Compassionate Communication**

Facilitate a Connection

- Establish eye contact
- Use touch and gestures to help convey a message
- Use a calm, gentle, relaxed tone of voice
- Speak simply, slowly and clearly

Be a Good Listener

- Express interest
- Don't interrupt
- Focus on feelings - do they look happy or sad?
- Be patient, cheerful and reassuring

Although communication may be challenged and there is difficulty in understanding the message, maintaining a connection shows that you care.

Communication with Older Adults or Individuals Who Have **Memory Loss**

Practice **Compassionate Communication**

Check the Environment

- Try to always be in plain view
- Avoid settings that are too bright or too dark
- Identify a quiet place where you can communicate without distractions



Important to consider when you speak with the individual

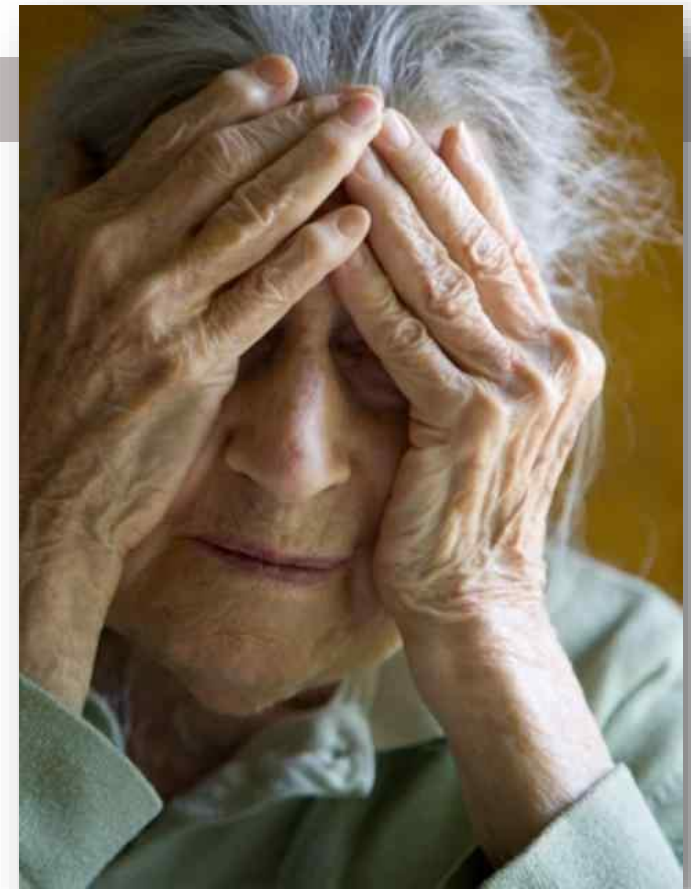
- Think ahead and simplify what you want to say
- Give simple instructions with as few steps as possible
- Ask one question at a time and avoid open-ended questions
- Be mindful of facial expressions and body language
 - Use a “positive” physical approach - move slowly
 - Make eye contact
 - Offer your hand, palm up
 - **Introduce yourself EVERY TIME!**

Practice **Compassionate Communication**

Do not take the individual's behavior personally!!

It is important to consider that:

- The *disease, not the Consumer*, slowly changes the individual
- Frustration is experienced by **EVERYONE**; you, the family, and the Consumer
- The individual's behavior is a form of communication **NOT** a form of rebellion
- Be patient and respond in a calm, supportive, and empathetic manner
- Remember that the Consumer will respond to your non-verbal communication



Communication with Older Adults or Individuals Who Have **Hearing Loss**

Hearing loss varies and can range from partial to total loss of hearing.

Depending on the individual's hearing loss, the most common methods of communication are:

- Combination of speech, lip reading and use of residual hearing
- Sign language
- Written communication

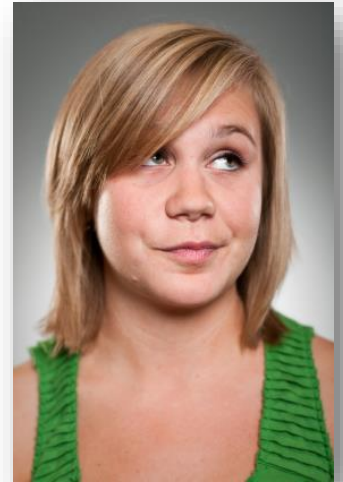
How to communicate

- Speak directly to the person and not their caregiver, interpreter or sign language interpreter
- At the beginning, be flexible and patient when finding the most efficient way of communicating
- Always face the person and give them an unobstructed view of your mouth and face
- Speak in a normal tone of voice, speak clearly, speak at a normal pace (not slower or faster)
- If you need to get the attention of the person it is ok to tap them softly on their shoulder



Skills to Help Improve Communication

- Listen !!
- Avoid interrupting
- Demonstrate interest
 - Be an active listener
 - nod, smile, use verbal acknowledgment (“uh huh”, “ya”)
- Be aware of your body language
 - Are you're arms crossed
 - Are you rolling your eyes
 - Are you making eye contact
 - How close are you



Skills to Help Improve Communication

Conflict is part of every normal relationship and conflict resolution is crucial to the development and maintenance of positive personal and professional relationships.

Mismanaged or unresolved conflict can cause great harm to any relationship.

- Be willing to accept the reality of conflict, the need to be open and the importance of addressing the issue.
- Appreciate that **everyone** needs to feel understood, nurtured, and supported
 - It's important to recognize and acknowledge what matters to the individual(s)
- Encourage an environment that inspires openness, compassion and a desire to address and resolve the matter **objectively**
 - Be respectful of differences
- Address the other individual(s) with respect
- Use a positive approach: verbally and non-verbally




don't let your emotions
CONTROL you

It is important to develop emotional awareness

- **Become aware of your emotions**
 - Learn how to manage your emotions in the “heat of the moment”
- **Give yourself a “timeout” if you are feeling stressed**
 - Take time to calm down before you resume the discussion
 - Out of control (unmanaged) emotions can complicate matters
 - Take a few deep breaths, tighten and relax your muscles, etc. – ***FIND THE TECHNIQUE THAT BEST RELIEVES YOUR STRESS***
- **Be willing to compromise**
- **Agree that you both disagree**
- **If appropriate, find a way to use humor to relieve the stress**

Skills to Help Improve Communication



CREATE
YOUR
OWN
CALM

- Be mindful of your emotions and behavior
 - Know when to implement the technique(s) you have identified that best relieve *your* stress
 - *Deep breathing*
 - *visual imagery*
 - *a walk/run, music ...*

Consideration of Language Barriers

Note to Providers

There are Consumers who will work with Providers who don't speak English perfectly. If English is your second language, don't automatically deny a potentially wonderful working experience without having given the Consumer an opportunity.

We encourage all Providers to consider the following:

- Do not limit your opportunity for employment to only Consumers who speak your language
- Consider interviewing with and possibly working for a Consumer who does not speak your language
- Practice positive non-verbal skills and be an active listener
- Try your best to express yourself and understand what the Consumer is trying to say
- A smile always makes things better



- ***Do not take an interpreter with you to an interview or to work – be confident in yourself.***

Resources



National Aphasia Association

<http://www.aphasia.org>

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov>

Helpguide.org, A Trusted Non-Profit Resource

<http://www.helpguide.org>



Thank you for attending

Any Questions ?