
UNIT 3 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- explain principles of effective communication;
- examine and describe the factors affecting communication;
- illustrate the steps of planning for effective communication;
- review the model of communication;
- describe the keys to effective communication; and
- identify the functions and role of nurse administrator in effective communication.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 1 of this block, you have studied the process and information systems. In Unit 2 of this block you have studied barriers to communication in details.

In this unit you will learn about an effective communication that it is a process which demands professional be highly motivated to process specific knowledge and judgment to reach creative solutions, and implement decision to attain a high quality of services for patient/client. Communication is a process of transmitting ideas or thoughts of one person to another for purpose of creating an understanding in the thinking of person receiving communication, so communication is not complete or effective unless that understanding is created in receiver's mind.

An effective communication is a vital component of nursing practice, as it helps to generate trust between the nurse and patient, it promotes patient's well being, it helps promotion of managerial efficiency, it is foundation of the relationship among members of health team and it provides means of co-ordination. Effective communication is extremely important for nurse leader and nurse administrator for two reasons. First effective communication is the necessary process by which the management function of planning, organizing, directing and controlling are accomplished and second effective communication is the activity to which nurse administrator devote an over whelming proportion of their time.

So we are going to discuss the principles of effective communication factors influencing

3.2 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

When a person communicates a message to another person, the message usually contains two elements--content and feeling. Both elements are important because both give the message a meaning, we often do not understand other people's messages are misunderstood by others because we forget that meanings are in people, not in words.

What does communication involve? Communication implies that there is a message to be transmitted and that is received and understood. Hopefully, the message is accepted and, where action is indicated, the desired action is taken at the right time by the right people.

Let us, therefore, first see the principles of communication.

3.2.1 Principles of Communication

The principles of communication may be considered to be the steps of improving effective communication, so that one must follow the following principles.

Ideas should be clarified before speaking:

- 1) One must gather the information needed and seek consultation from others.
- 2) . Considering the goals and attitudes of the receivers.
- 3) One must also determine the modes of communication—written, oral, or through gestures face-to-face contact, non-verbal behaviour.
- 4) Feed back through mutual exchange that decreases the change for misunderstanding.
- 5) One must consider the setting in which he/she communicates and time her message for, maximum impact.
- 6) **Communication** should be well organized and expressed in simple words, a clear style, and the shortest sentence possible.
- 7) Repetition of the message is especially important when the information is important and the directions are complicated.
- 8) Effective listening, an active process that requires conscious attention, is critical to good communication.
- 9) Establish the trust, the speaker must be convinced that disclosure will be kept confidential, feeling will be respected not judged.
- 10) Once trust is established, empathetic listening is needed. We think faster than we talk. One can think a head of the speaker, try to guess the points that will be made next, consider what the conclusion will be, listen between the lines, try to understand the speaker's point of reference, review, and summarize the point made.
- 11) Active listening involves refraining from talking while trying to understand the speaker's attitude and feelings.
- 12) Avoid leading questions, arguing, or giving advice.
- 13) Silent pauses encourage the speaker to continue by comment such as "yes", "of hau", "go on" restatement (repeating what was said), paraphrasing (saying what was said in different words), clarifying (asking the speaker what was meant) responding and summarizing the major point.
- 14) Written communication save time and money and can be retained as legal records and reference source.

Check Your Progress 1

Fill in the blanks:

- 1) One must consider the and of the receivers.
- 2) Written communication is very effective because it saves and

You may well appreciate that to communicate effectively these principles will be useful.

Let us now see what factors influence the effective communication.

3.2.2 Factors Affecting Communication

We hope you remember the four stages of communication:

- i) Attention
- ii) Comprehension and understanding
- iii) Acceptance of the information as true
- iv) Retention and action

An effective communication can get affected at any or all four stages of communication as follows:

i) **Attention**

Attention of an audience or a receiver is diverted depending on amount and direction of communication attention is also distorted if communication network is not up to the mark. In presence of noise and disturbing sound system, the communication does not remain effective. Warm and comfortable environment facilities provide a good communication.

Second the characteristic and content of message also diverts or draws attention of receiver whether the message is novelty or good old, stereotype issue draws or distract the attention. The message should have some points of personal importance. Intensity with which the points are conveyed decides the effectiveness of communication.

ii) **Comprehension and Understanding**

An effective communication should contain simple and clear language, symbols and signs. It should not have abbreviations and symbols, which are new to the receiver. An unclear language with jargon of words makes communication ineffective. Certain unintended association of symbols and non-verbal cues sometimes send wrong message to audience.

The level of audience or receiver is very important for creating an understanding and comprehension between the communication receiver. Knowledge of handling different level persons is essential for communication. Secondly personal view of the event also varies from person to person, as each person senses, interprets and understands the events differently. certain emotions, experiences and expectations also play a role in effective communication. The way a person relates or communicates with others is influenced by emotions.

Socio-cultural background and values are standards that influence behaviour, values are that a person considers important in life and thus it influences his/her thoughts and ideas. Language, gestures, values, attitudes reflect cultural origin. The influence of culture sets limits for the way people act and communicate.

iii) **Acceptance of the Information as True**

This stage is affected by characteristics of communication. An expert communicator is the one who has knowledge of handling all levels of receiver, who is attractive and pleasant to hear wins the race of effective communication. Some studies have shown certain speaker and listeners behaviours support sexlinked difference and dominance pattern. A communicator can win or loose trust of receiver depending on his/her past behaviour and status of formal power. Communication is more effective when the participants remain aware of their roles in a relationship.

Acceptance also increases in the way a particular message is passed personally threatening messages and dissonant messages has very low acceptance of the information as true. A message should confirm to the receiver's belief and should be

The final goal of communication is retention and action on the part of receiver can be achieved depending on the presentation of message. Whether the message was presented in form of oral or written communication, single presentation or repeated often over a time period whether it was one sided or it involve the receiver, whether it was clearly and fully expressed or it was implied etc. are important to make a communication effective.

Thus to make an effective communication a communicator should pay attention to all four stages of communication and handle the show accordingly.

Check Your Progress 2

List the factors affecting effective communication.

3.2.3 Planning for the Effective Communication

Effective communication is the responsibility of all persons in the hospital or institute who work towards a common goal. The following guidelines can help for the planning of effective communication:

- 1) Senders of messages must clarify in their minds what they want to communicate, this means that one of the first step in communicating is to clarify the purpose of the message and make a plan to achieve the intended end.
- 2) The planning of the communication should not be done in a vacuum. Instead others should be consulted and encouraged to participate: to collect the facts, analyze the message, and select the appropriate media, for example, you may ask a colleague to read an important memo before you distribute it throughout the organization. The level of knowledge of the recipients of the message and the organization climate.
- 3) Consider the needs of the receivers of the information. Whenever appropriate communication is done something that is of value of them, in the short run as well as in the more distance future, at times unpopular actions that affect employee's long run.
- 4) There is a saying that the tone makes the music similarly, in communication the tone of voice, the choice of language, and the congruency between what is said and how it is said influence the reaction of the receiver of the message. An autocratic manager ordering subordinate supervisors to practice participative management will create a credibility gap that will be difficult to over come.
- 5) More often information is transmitted without communicating since communication is complete only when the message is understood by the receiver. And one never knows whether communication is understood unless the sender gets the feedback. This is accomplished by asking question, requesting a reply to a letter, and encouraging receivers to give their reactions to the message.
- 6) The function of communication is more than transmitting information. It also deals with emotions that are very important in interpersonal relationship between superiors, subordinates and colleagues in an organization. Further more, communication is vital for creating an environment in which people are motivated to work to ward the goals of the institution while at the same time, they achieve their personal aims. Another function of communication is control. As we have seen in the discussion of management by objectives (MBO), control dose not necessarily mean top-down control. Instead, the MBO philosophy emphasis self control, which demands clear communication with an understanding of the criteria against which performance is measured.

7) Effective communicating is the responsibility not only of the sender but also of the receiver of the information. Thus listening is one of the most important, most difficult and the most disregarded behaviour in communication. The skill in listening demands that we concentrate on the implicit meanings, unspoken words and undertones that may be far more significant in demands, in other words, that we learn to listen with the inner ear if we are to know the inner man. In order to practice effective listening the following points need to be considered:

- Stop talking, if you want to listen to others.
- Be and look interested in what the other person is saying.
- Encourage others to talk by making them comfortable in ones company.
- Be patient.
- Concentrate on what the other person is saying.
- Avoid arguments.
- Ask questions which will encourage the speaker to talk.
- Make efforts to understand other person's point of view.
- Avoid interrupting others in their talk or speech. Gain control over one's anger.
- Paraphrase.

Check Your Progress 3

Mention the points to be considered while practicing effective listening.

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3.2.4 Modes of Communication

Let us now see modes of communication. We have discussed in detail about communication media and modes in Block 3, Units 1 and 2. Let us review the modes of communication and:

- i) **Written Communication:** Written communication is necessary for any organization. In order to reach all the individuals, most organizations have developed certain methods of formal communication. Written message includes reports, policies, rules, statistical data, news letters, memo, procedures, handbook, bulletin boards and house newspaper etc.
- ii) **Face to Face Communication:** Nurse managers communicate verbally upward and downward, both formally and informally. They also communicate verbally in formal meetings, with individuals in peer groups.
- iii) **Non-verbal Communication:** Non-verbal communication includes facial expression, body movements, gestures or cues touch is commonly referred to as body language. So nurse administrator should recognize the non-verbal communication and take decision in time.
- iv) **Verbal Communication:** (Telephone) Verbal communication involves spoken or written words. To make a message clear nurses use effective verbal communication technique such as clarity and brevity, vocabulary, denotative and connotative meaning, pacing, timing and relevance and humor.
- v) **Electronic:** Nowadays adopting various electronic devices can improve communication. Electronic equipment includes mainframe computers, mini computers, personal computers, electronic 'mail system and electronic typewriters and the cellular telephone, etc.

It should be understood that above modes used for effective communication while giving health teaching or and spreading message, so need to use individual media. For that effect people remembered too long time medias like, Film show, Posters, Wall paintings / Hoardings, mime show, interpersonal communication, tabloids, Press advertisement, comic books (children), influential booklets, teachers booklet, and calendars etc.

3.2.5 Key to Effective Communication

In a nutshell now we may examine the certian guidelines for effective communication.

- i) **Get the facts:** If you wish to inform, to convince and to persuade the nursing staff and others, mastery of facts is essential.
- ii) **Organize the facts:** The facts should be arranged, so that they form a logical sequence, one leading to the other. Too many facts presented in jumble form produce confusion.
- iii) **Eliminate necessary details:** Avoid facts that people cannot see or use, while you must know as much detail as possible. Too many details in your presentation can produce difficulties in understanding.
- iv) **Makes one point:** Every executive message should have only one main point, that point must be made quickly.
- v) **Put yourself in the position of the recipient:** Think how you would like to be told. Also consider his level of comprehension. Consider how the message will sound to the recipient.
- vi) **Do not assume that what is known to you is known to everyone else:** Most often, it is not so.
- vii) **Use precise, simple, ordinary, language:** The language must be such as is easily understood. When you write, use short words (not more than 150 syllables to 100 words), short sentences (not more than 15 words) and paragraphs (not more than 5 sentences).
- viii) **Maintain eye contact:** If you are speaking to a person or a group of persons, maintain eye contact. There will be greater attention paid as also more confidence in you.
- ix) **Be enthusiastic:** Enthusiasm is contagious. Those who are to implement the plans, policies and programmes must catch it.

Communication is easier when there is mutual trust. That trust has to be earned over a long period of time. People must come to realize that the Administrator is one who keeps to his word, that he/she is a person of integrity.

Check Your Progress 4

Enumerate the keys to effective communication.

3.3 EFFECTIVE VERSUS INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

As we have discussed the key to effective communication, now let us see the purpose of effective communication. Communication is a two way process: (i) It is used for exchanging information, (ii) passing on instructions, (iii) expression of feelings, (iv) motivating self and others, (v) solving problem, (vi) decision-making, and (vii) understanding attitudes.

If we achieve the above purposes by communication then communication becomes effective, but if we fail to do the above activities then the communication is not effective.

Effective communication consists of transmitting an accurate message to the proper recipient at the appropriate time in a manner that conserves the senders and receivers energy.

There are many **blocks/barriers** to communication:

- Information does not get to the person who is to receive it
- There can be destruction from the sender, the transmitter or the recipient.
- There can be misinterpretation.

Above blocks make communication ineffective. It is said that if total communication is 100% then:

- Communication through the verbal channel is 10%
- Communication through the non-verbal channel is 60%
- Communication through the tone is 30%.

Verbal communication enables to **provide** or understand information whereas non-verbal communication enables in expression and understanding of feelings.

Listening is a skill hence it is said that one has to learn "how to listen so that others will talk". Listening is a whole range of other aspects of communication. The other aspects denote the volume speech, tone, body language, which express feelings. Hence it is said that an effective communicator listens with his/her ears, eyes and heart.

Now, let us see the functions and role of nurse administrator in effective communication.

3.4 FUNCTIONS AND ROLE OF NURSE ADMINISTRATOR

Now you will learn functions and role of Nurse administrator. It is very important for you to know your functions so that you can put into practical field.

A major part of your time as nurse administrator/manager will be spent in receiving and sending information. Success of all administrative and managerial functions depends on effective communication. The administrator must know what is happening in the hospital and able to convey information to all those involved with the hospital, the employees, the patient and the public skills as a communicator helps in the building up of morale in the hospital and confidence in the nursing staff and public too.

So the nurse administrator/managers have to play following functions and roles.

Functions

- Understands and appropriately uses the formal communication network.
- Determine the appropriate mode or combination of modes for optimal distribution of information in the **Organisational** hierarchy.
- Prepares written communication that is clear and uses language that is appropriate for the message and the receiver.
- Consult other departments or disciplines in coordinating overlapping roles and group efforts.
- Differentiate between information and communication and approximately assess the need for subordinates to have both.
- He/she is proficient in telephone communication skills.

Roles

- Understands and appropriately uses the informal communication network in the Organisation (informal communication is the "grapevine").

- Be sensitive to the internal and external climate of the sender or receiver and uses that awareness in interpreting messages.
- Appropriately observes and interprets the verbal and non-verbal communication of followers.
- Role models should be an assertive communicator and active listener.
- Recognizes status, power and authority as barriers to **managers/subordinates**. Uses communication, strategies to overcome barriers.
- Demonstrates congruency in verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Give attention to the staff, and call him or her by name while talking.
- Repeat the feeling of the subordinates.

We have discussed functions and roles of nurse administrator.

Check Your Progress 5

Enlist the role of the nurse administrator in effective communication.

3.5 LET US SUM UP

Emphasis was placed earlier on communication in a management system. However there is an increasing emphasis on communication and more and more nurse administrators are realizing the effect of effective communication. In the process of communication, there are many obstacles and the **nurse administrator/manager** has to overcome these obstacles to make the communication effective. Sending feeling messages and listening actively are skill that can be applied to work, family and personal relationships. Nurse administrator has to function and plan the role effectively to achieve goal of institution.

3.6 KEY WORDS

Effectiveness	: The achievement of objectives; the achievement of desired effects. .
Feedback	: An informational input in a system, transmitting message of system operation to indicate whether the system is operating as planned; information concerning any type of planned operation relayed to the responsible person for evaluation.
Role	: Defined as the part a person plays in the organisation or the way a person in a certain position behaves in different situation.

3.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) goals, attitudes
- 2) time, money
- 3) content, feelings

Check Your Progress 2

- i) Attention
- ii) Comprehension and understanding
- iii) Acceptance of the information as true
- iv) Retention and action

Check Your Progress 3

- i) Stop talking
- ii) Look interested
- iii) Encourage others to talk
- iv) Be patient
- v) Concentrate on what the other person is saying
- vi) Avoid arguments
- vii) Encourage the speaker to talk
- viii) Understand others
- ix) Avoid interruption
- x) Control the anger
- xi) Paraphrase

Check Your Progress 4

- i) Get the facts
- ii) Organise the facts
- iii) Eliminate unnecessary details
- iv) Make one point
- v) Put yourself in the recipient's position
- vi) Do not assume that what is known to you is known to everyone else
- vii) Use precise, simple, ordinary language
- viii) Maintain eye contact
- ix) Be enthusiastic

Check Your Progress 5

- i) Understand and use informal communication
- ii) Communicate clearly, precisely in language others will understand
- iii) Be sensitive in **interpreting** messages of others.
- iv) Observe and interpret verbal and non-verbal communication of followers.
- v) Active listener
- vi) Demonstrate congruency in verbal and non-verbal communication.
- vii) Use communication strategies to overcome barriers.

3.8 FURTHER READINGS

Alexander, E.L., *Nursing Administration in the Hospital Health Care System*, The C.V. Mosby Company, 1978.

Koonta, H. and Weihrich, H., *Management*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1988.