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# UNIT 2 TECHNIQUES AND SKILLS IN COMMUNICATION

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## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- recapitulate the elements of communication process;
- enumerate the different media used in the communication process; and
- describe the barriers in way of effective communication.

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## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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In Unit 1 we have learnt that communication occupies a major portion of the administrators. Effective communication is essential not only from the patient's point of view of public dealing but is equally important for the purpose of efficient patient care. We will discuss how to overcome with the barrier of communication with the use of effective communication mode.

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## 2.2 COMMUNICATION MODES

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Let us now see what do we understand by Communication Modes. There are many different methods which can be used to convey messages between participants. These different methods are known as communication mode and they are of four basic categories as follows:

### 2.2.1 Non-verbal or Written (Hand-written, Typed and Printed)

The features of written messages are:

- a) They are a permanent form and can be retained for future reference
- b) They can be sent to remote locations, e.g. by post
- c) They can be produced in large quantities

- e) They need to be planned
- f) They are relatively slow methods of communication

### 2.2.2 Verbal or Oral

The features of this method (e.g. face to face conversation, telephone conversation or radio) of communication are:

- a) It is spontaneous: The time taken for the whole process of communication to be carried out is very short and need not be planned. A response can be immediate.
- b) A message can be transmitted either to one person only or broadcast to a large audience numbering any amount up to millions.
- c) No permanent record of the message is kept unless it is recorded electronically.
- d) It is a fast medium.
- e) The message can be transmitted to remote locations by using the telephone system or radio broadcasting techniques.
- f) The message can be followed by a second message, e.g. "do you understand?" question to see if the recipient has understood the original message.

i) **Visual (e.g. microfilms, photographs, charts and diagrams, video films and signals).**  
The features of visual messages are:

- a) Language is not problem, **provided** signs and signals used can be understood by the recipient.
- b) A permanent record may be kept for some of these methods; e.g. films and photographs.
- c) They can communicate movement and colour. This is particularly valuable in training.
- d) They can be transmitted over distances but may be subject to geographical constraints.
- e) They may be seen by other who are unintended parties and therefore, may breach confidentiality.

ii) **Audio-visual (e.g. Television, Video Cassette, Cable T.V.):** Audio-visual communication is expanding all over the world. It is for various communicative purposes, education, **information** and entertainment. In addition to the audio facility actual experts of subject matter, events, places, can be seen on the television screen. The reach of T.V. is also increasing day by day more and more, sophisticated technologies such as talk back facility, video phone system etc. are being put into practice in many parts of the world.

iii) **Video Text and Teletext:** These devices are advanced communication technologies. The home television can be connected. with a master computer and the desired information can be retrieved from the master computer.

Teletext is also used in the home television and gathers information as desired from the transmission of the master computer. In both cases master computer is required.

iv) **Electronic (e.g. Computers-Internet, E-mail, Laser Printing):** The features of media is that they work very fast, it is expensive but computer diskette can store large amount of information for dissemination messages sent by the users. This media is difficult to interpret except by people who have equipment and training. During 1980's, the computer and laser technology were added to printing and distributing print media. The computer electronics devices have made it possible to store in large quantities as the printed text material and use them as and when required.

Computer: Computer is very capable and useful tool. They can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of managerial functions. Computers are tools for problem solving and not a solution by themselves

*Computer as a means of communication in hospital:* A computerised management information system can provide the required information at each level of the management in the hospitals at the right time and in the right form so that the administration can take quick decision and also efficiently plan, organise and control operations of the sub-system of the hospitals. To facilitate this, all **functions** areas of the hospitals such as the medical laboratory, radiology department, pharmacy, clinical departments, medical records, and administrative functions can be linked so that the data entered into the system may be accessible and used by all the departments.

**Check Your Progress 1**

1) **Features of non-verbal communication are:**

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2) **Features of verbal communication are:**

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## 2.3 INTERNET

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Internet is collection of thousand of individual network and organisation co-operating with each other so that information can be exchanged and passed among them. Each network is run and paid for on its own. To get these networks and organisation making up the wired world for the internet is required.

### 2.3.1 Meaning of Internet

- a) Send and receive messages, pictures, letters, anywhere in the world within few minutes.
- b) Conducts business, book airline tickets or hotel rooms, hold conferences and meetings with partners across the **globe**, even shop online.
- c) Provides information on any topic, allows you to download pictures and text for school and college projects, helps you share ideas with the like minded?
- d) Offers you the resources to conduct your own research and study without the constraints of time and space.

Who controls the internet? The Inter Society, a private non-profit group. The World Wide Web Consortium

For connecting to the Internet you need:

- A computer
- A modem to hook your computer to the phone line.
- An account with an ISP Internet Service provider.
- **Software** to access the internet.

### 2.3.2 E-mail

E-mail or Electronic mail is a great way to send message to anyone anywhere in the world. **No stamps to paste, no envelopes to post.** You can send message to anyone who has an e-mail address. E-mail messages are sent in the same way as most Internet Data.

One of the most interesting ways to communicate with other view and Internet is to participate in a live chat. Chat doesn't refer to talking and hearing each other's voice. Instead, it means that you communicate via your keyboard.

- a) They are very fast and work at electronic speed.
- b) They are not 'human' sensible and therefore a translation process will be needed.
- c) Special equipment is needed, which can be expensive.
- d) Message sent using this medium are difficult to interpret except by people who have compatible equipments.
- e) They are fast developing. Students should keep up-to date with new developments in this field, particularly with the fibre optics, by reading relevant articles in current journals and newspapers.

**Check Your Progress 2**

1) What is internet?

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2) How is internet useful in Nursing administration?

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3) What are the functions of the internet?

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## 2.4 COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

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In this sub-section you will come to know barriers of communication. As a nurse you should identify barriers of communication and identify those and remove to achieve effective communication.

The subject of communication cannot be studied in isolation because it is **fundamental** to all hospital activity. The more complex organisation, the greater is the need for effective communication. There are many bamers to communication that must be overcome if communication is to be made effective. Broadly **speaking**, communication is impeded by different types of **barriers** — physical, personal and semantic. Let us discuss the different categories of barriers.

- i) **Physical Barrier:** Physical barriers are environmental factors which prevent to reduce the sending and receiving of communication. They include physical distance, distracting noise and similar interference.

**Noise:** May be external message are subject to factors in the environment which may interfere with the message being sent. If the participants who receive the message are not careful then the environmental factors may result in the misunderstood message. However, to be effective one should be aware of the effects of noise and take steps to minimize them. In speech transmission the process of hearing comes into play and the hearer faces difficulty in proper

- **Physical Distance:** The term is self explanatory e.g. in a hospital, which functions round the clock in three shifts, the senior officers may not see their subordinates for several days at a time. Especially in large organisations there is problem of physical distance between people. Because of this managers are not able to determine whether workers receive, understand and react appropriately to messages. To overcome such difficulties, modern gadgets, including the telephone and the inter-communication systems should be utilized.
- ii) **Personal Barrier:** Personal barriers arise from judgment, emotions and the social values of people. They cause a psychological distance between people. Psychological distance may entirely prevent communication, filter part of it or cause misinterpretation.
- **Communication Gap:** The communication gap exists because mutual understanding is often presumed. Merely because one has spoken, be presumed the other has heard. The gap can be reduced by removing the fear and distrust being specific whilst communicative. Besides, there are the semantic blocks with words possessing different meanings for different persons.
  - **Mistrust Between Participants:** If the participant to a message mistrust each other this is like to affect the interpretation of content by the recipient.
  - **Faulty Listening:** Finally, communication is complete only when it has entered the mind of the recipient. Speaking is a waste of time unless someone is listening.
  - **Laziness:** Sometimes a message which should be sent is not sent at all because the person who should be sending it either cannot be bothered or assumes or the other persons knows what is to be communicated doesn't need the information.
  - **Work Over Load:** When the participants in a communication process are under the stress and strain of heavy pressure of work the effectiveness of communication is effected. The stress inherent in the nature of job also has a direct bearing on the effectiveness of communication.
- Lengthy Communication Chains:** One feature of communication channels is that greater the number of people a message has to be past along, the more a message will become distorted. Each person in the chain is likely to change the content of the message in some way until it loses its original identity and become a completely different message at the end of the chain. Therefore, long communication chains should be avoided in organisational communication system.
- **An Individual's Perception:** Every human being has a character that is formed by knowledge, experience, culture and background. This in turn affects how a person understands a message that is communicated to him or her. An effective communicator should take into consideration the knowledge and ability of the recipient and avoid using words and phrases that are beyond the recipient's understanding
  - **Negative Attitude of the Receiver:** If receiver is impatient, not attentive and willing only to hear or see in the communication what suits his expectations, then the communication gets distorted.
  - **Status Blocks:** To the position in the management hierarchy, a certain status is automatically attached. This can no doubt be enhanced by the personality of the occupant of that position. Subordinates become strongly conscious of the existence of this status in their relationships with their superiors which can harm the communication process in the upward direction. They are thus reluctant to report their own shortcomings and mistakes being afraid of the effects which may be produced by their frankness on their own positions. This fear is increased by the knowledge that the boss wields considerable influence on the subordinates' future. Thus, status can harm the communication. Of course, status can also help at times provided the superior has earned the respect of his subordinates without destroying their confidence.

information dilutes the theme of the message and affects adversely its effectiveness.

iii) **Semantic Barrier:** Semantic barrier arises from the limitations of language. Language may take any of three forms, words, pictures and actions. Words have several meanings and they become meaningless unless they are put in the proper context. The problems which arise give to language **barriers** are as follows:

- **Use of an Inappropriate Medium:** If unsuitable method is used to send a message, the message may be delayed, not received or misunderstood e.g. microfilm sent to department that has no facilities for viewing it or taking printed copies from it.
- **Use of Unfamiliar Language:** This is particularly important in an international communication. Delay will occur while an interpreter is used.
- **Use of Ambiguous Words and Phrases:** Many words and phrases of common use have a different meaning. Their use will increase the risk of a message being misunderstood by the recipient, therefore, their use should be avoided.
- **Information Overloaded:** Human being is limited to the amount of message he or she can send or receive at any given time. If too many messages are passed through communication system to an individual and from a single person at the same time they may get confused with one another e.g. number of attendance approaching the nurse with their queries at the same time may be confusing to the nurse incharge.
- **Faulty Expression and Translation:** The information so receive might have been misinterpreted before communication took place. Besides communication is often vague and badly expressed through the use of inadequate words and poor organisation of ideas, resulting in lack of clarity and precision.
- **Encoding of Messages:** People communicate with others through codes and their messages are signals that are coded in various pre-arranged ways. Encoding as explained earlier refers to the technical process through which the message is put into the proper code of words, gesture or other media so that it takes a mutually understandable term. Failure on the part of the sender to keep the receiver, his knowledge and abilities in view while encoding the message can prove to be the bigger barrier to effective communication.

Distortions in communication can arise from limitations connected with each of the element of communication system.

### Check Your Progress 3

1) List the personal barriers of communication.

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2) Have you faced communication problems at your work place? If yes, list them.

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## 2.5 IMPORTANT STEPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Removal of the barriers to the effective communication goes a long way in improving it. Communicating a message effectively to another person, there are several factors which are beneficial. Things like articulation, correct pronunciation, dialect, accent, pleasant voice etc., usually facilitate the sending of the message. Let us see the principles of

Follow the ten commandments of good communication:

- 1) **Clarify** your ideas before communicating. Think through your message. Consider who will be receiving and/or affected by it. Properly planning the communicate can overcome many basic communication pitfalls.
- 2) **Examine** the true purpose of the communication. What do you really want to accomplish with the message? Identify your communication objective.
- 3) **Take** the entire environment, physical and human, into consideration. Consider what is to be said, to whom, and when. The **physical setting**, the social climate, and past communication practices should all be examined in adapting the message to the environment.
- 4) **Obtain** advice from others in planning when valuable. By consulting with others you can gain additional insights regarding how to formulate and present your message.
- 5) **Be aware** of both the overtones and the basic content of the message. The person receiving the message is going to be affected not only by what is being communicated. Voice tone, facial expression, and choice of language all influence the listener's reaction to the communicate.
- 6) **Convey** useful information when possible. People remember things that are beneficial to them. So, in communicating, phrase your ideas in terms of how they can be of value or interest to the needs of the receiver as well as the organisation.
- 7) **Follow up** on the communication. Solicit feedback to see if the receiver(s) understood the communicate is (are) willing to comply with it, and/or take(s) the appropriate action.
- 8) **Communicate** with the future, as well as the present, in mind. Think of both the short-run and long-run consequences of your decision. Will your communicate result in a short-run increase in efficiency but a morale problem in the long run? Look down the road and see if your message will create any problems and, if so, try to minimise them.
- 9) **Support** your words with deeds. Do not send out orders or changes in policy for others to follow while you, yourself, disregard them. Your communication credibility is based partially on how well the receivers feel you believe your own message.
- 10) **Be a good listener.** When communicating verbally, learn to listen as well as to speak. Also, concentrate on the **speaker's explicit** and **implicit** meanings in order to obtain a fuller understanding of what really is being said.

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## 2.6 LET US SUM UP

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It is necessary that organizational communication must be regularly assessed. It is required to evaluate proper line of communication, conflicts or disagreements. Check how did this affect communication. It is necessary for the manager to use effective mode of communication with precautions of communication barriers.

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## 2.7 KEY WORDS

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|---------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Channel and Medium</b> | : | The message must now be physically sent through the environment using formal or informal channel by using a suitable medium e.g., by post, courier, sound waves, electronic impulses or laser beams. |
| <b>Decoding</b>           | : | Once received the message must then be decoded into a formal one which the recipient will understand.  |
| <b>Encoding</b>           | : | Once the decision has been made to communicate, the message to be sent must be transformed into a form suitable for sending. This transformation activity is known as encoding.                      |
| <b>Meaning</b>            | : | To be of use to the recipient, the message must be   |

recipient places upon the message(s). The interpretation of a message may take time and this should be allowed for in the communication process, particularly when a response to the message is required.

<b>Message</b>	:	The thought, the idea, the information to be transferred to another <b>person/group</b> .
<b>Receiver</b>	:	The message is then received by a device suitable for accepting messages in the medium told <b>e.g.</b> the post room in an office, telephone receiver or telex terminal. This element is there when the message may not be transmitted to the intended receiver directly.
<b>Recipient</b>	:	The message should not be in a format that may be accepted by the intended recipient. The recipient is the person to whom the message is directed.
<b>Source</b>	:	This is where the message originates <b>e.g.</b> the mind of the sender.
<b>Transmission</b>	:	The message once encoded can then be dispatched via a suitable communication channel. This stage is <b>the</b> actual sending of the message <b>e.g.</b> broadcasting from a radio transmitter.

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## 2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1)
  - Permanent, retainable for future
  - Can be sent to remote areas
  - Produce in large quantities
  - Can be sent to large number of people
  - Slow method
- 2)
  - Spontaneous
  - Broadcast in a large number
  - Not necessary to record

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) It is collection of thousand of individual's network and organisational information through electronic network
- 2)
  - Help in planning
  - Help in communicating information in large segment of group
  - Help in getting new information and research detail in nursing discipline
- 3)
  - Send and receive **message** from any part of the world in few seconds
  - Useful business, booking tickets, making appointments
  - Provides information in current topics

### Check Your Progress 3

- 1)
  - Communication gap
  - Mistrust between participants
  - Faulty listening
  - Laziness etc.
- 2) Write your own answer.