



**SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION**

Working Together, We Can Accomplish Anything



SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION

Working Together, We Can Accomplish Anything

Getting to know us . . .



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

The Strength of People



The Power of Community



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Communication Skills for Helpers

What agency are you from

What would you like to get from this training today?

What are communication skills for helpers?

What are communication skills for helpers?

Communication skills for helpers consist of communication principles that professionals and paraprofessionals use to connect with clients (program participants), build relationships, and navigate the helping relationships. The helpers use evidence-based communication practices to communicate effectively.

Who are helpers? Helpers are any professional or paraprofessional who works with others to provide services to someone in need.

Why is communication important?

Communication is important for several reasons:

Building Relationships: Good communication skills help build strong relationships with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders. This fosters trust, respect, and goodwill, essential for successful professional interactions.

What is the difference between personal & professional skills?

Personal and professional skills are both essential for success in various aspects of life, but they differ in their focus and application:

Personal Skills

- Personal skills are those qualities and attributes that individuals possess that are primarily related to their personality, attitudes, emotions, and behavior.
- They are often innate or developed over time through personal experiences, upbringing, and interactions with others.
- Examples of personal skills include communication skills, interpersonal skills, empathy, resilience, adaptability, creativity, emotional intelligence, and time management.
- These skills are relevant in both personal and professional settings, as they influence how individuals interact with others, handle challenges, and manage their own emotions and behaviors.

Professional Skills:

- Professional skills, on the other hand, are specific abilities and competencies that individuals develop to excel in their chosen careers or fields of work.
- They are typically acquired through formal education, training, and on-the-job experience, and they are directly related to the tasks and responsibilities associated with a particular profession or industry.
- Examples of professional skills include technical skills (e.g., coding, data analysis, accounting), leadership skills, project management skills, problem-solving skills, industry-specific knowledge, and networking abilities.
- These skills are crucial for performing effectively in the workplace and achieving success in one's career goals.

What are communication challenges?

- **Lack of Trust:** Clients may struggle to open up if they don't trust their counselor or feel judged. Building trust is essential for effective communication.
- **Miscommunication:** Counselors must convey complex ideas in a way that clients can understand. Miscommunication can occur if counselors use jargon or fail to tailor their communication style to the client's needs.
- **Client diversity:** Counselors work with clients from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences, requiring them to adapt their communication style to meet individual needs.

What are communication challenges?

- **Nonverbal Communication:** Counselors need to be attuned to both verbal and nonverbal cues from clients. Missing subtle signs can lead to misunderstandings or overlooking important issues.
- **Cultural and Language Barriers:** Differences in language, culture, or background can hinder communication between counselors and clients. It's important for counselors to be culturally competent and able to adapt their approach accordingly.
- **Emotional Barriers:** Clients may struggle to articulate their feelings or may be hesitant to discuss certain topics due to shame, guilt, or fear. Counselors need to create a safe and supportive environment to help clients overcome these barriers.

What are communication challenges?

- **Emotionally charged topics:** Counselors often deal with sensitive and emotionally charged topics, making effective communication challenging.
- **Resistance to Change:** Clients may resist discussing certain issues or may be unwilling to make changes in their lives. Counselors need to use effective communication techniques to explore resistance and help clients move forward.
- **Burnout and Compassion Fatigue:** Counselors may experience burnout or compassion fatigue, which can impact their ability to effectively communicate with clients. Self-care and support are essential for counselors to maintain their well-being and provide high-quality care.
- **Time:** it can take **time** and effort to establish a trusting relationship, especially in the context of counseling and social service providers.



What are effective communication skills

- **Active listening:** This involves fully concentrating on what the client is saying, understanding their perspective, and responding appropriately.
- **Empathy:** Being able to understand and share the feelings of the client, demonstrating compassion and sensitivity towards their experiences.
- **Nonverbal communication:** Paying attention to body language, facial expressions, and other nonverbal cues to better understand the



What are effective communication skills

- **Cultural competence:** Being aware of and sensitive to the cultural backgrounds, values, and beliefs of clients, and adapting communication approaches accordingly.
- **Conflict resolution:** Effectively managing conflicts or disagreements that may arise during counseling sessions, promoting open communication and mutual respect.
- **Feedback:** Providing constructive feedback to clients in a respectful and nonjudgmental manner, focusing on strengths and areas for growth.
- **Pacing** the conversation is very important because people are hearing and engaged at speed. The more difficult the conversation, the slower the pace.
- **Establishing rapport:** Building a trusting and supportive relationship with the client by demonstrating genuineness, warmth, and respect.



What are effective communication skills

Communication assumptions refer to the underlying beliefs or expectations that individuals hold about the process of communication. These assumptions shape how people interact with one another, interpret messages, and form relationships. Some common communication assumptions include:



What are effective communication skills

- **Lack of Shared Understanding- People** assume that others share their understanding of language, symbols, and gestures. This assumption is fundamental to effective communication but can lead to misunderstandings if individuals have different interpretations.
- **Negative Intentions:** Individuals often assume that others communicate with negative intentions. They believe that the speaker's goal is to deceive or manipulate.
- **Clarity:** There's an assumption that their communication is clear and unambiguous. People expect messages to be easily understood without the need for clarification. However, miscommunication can occur when messages are vague or open to interpretation.
- **Reciprocity** Communication is assumed to be a reciprocal process where both parties participate equally. Each person expects the other to listen, respond, and contribute to the conversation.
- **Trust:** Trust is an underlying assumption in communication. People typically trust that others will be honest, reliable, and competent in their communication efforts. When trust is lacking, communication breakdowns are more likely to occur.
- **Cultural Norms**:** Individuals often assume that others share their cultural norms, values, and beliefs. However, cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings if these assumptions are not addressed or acknowledged.
- **Empathy** There's an assumption that others will demonstrate empathy and understanding towards their thoughts and feelings. This assumption facilitates emotional connection and mutual support in communication.
- **Context Sensitivity:** Communication is assumed to be sensitive to the context in which it occurs, including the physical environment, social norms, and relational dynamics. However, people may misinterpret messages if they overlook contextual cues or fail to consider the broader situational factors.
- **Intent vs. Impact:** Individuals may assume that their intentions are always clear to others when communicating. However, the impact of communication can differ from what was intended, leading to misunderstandings or unintended consequences.

What is our takeaway?

The end

j.winford@shpa-il.org

