

Communication Barriers:

Effective communication is vital for providing safe and appropriate client care. Below are common communication barriers and recommendations for overcoming them.

Communicating with someone that has problems hearing:

- ❖ Face the client when talking.
- ❖ Do not cover your mouth, eat, or chew gum while speaking.
- ❖ Speak clearly at a reasonable speed.
- ❖ Don't Shout.
- ❖ Stand where there is good lighting and low background noise.
- ❖ Use facial expressions or gestures to give useful clues.
- ❖ Repeat what you said if a client doesn't answer.
- ❖ Encourage the client to use the hearing aid or make sure it's turned on.

Communicating with someone that has problems seeing:

- ❖ Always inform the client when you enter or leave their room or home. Avoid approaching them without letting them know you are present.
- ❖ Sit right in front of the client in a well-lit room.
- ❖ Talk in a normal voice.
- ❖ Encourage the client to use glasses or contact lenses.
- ❖ Don't talk to others in the room, as if the client is not there.
- ❖ Before touching a client, explain what you are going to do and ensure they are comfortable with it.
- ❖ While assisting clients with tasks, talk to them as you work and let them know whenever you move from one activity or location to another.
- ❖ When assisting with feeding, describe the contents of the tray or plate using the clock-face method or by indicating North, South, East, and West.

Communicating with someone when they are non-English speaking and/or have cultural beliefs values that are different than the majority culture:

- ❖ Help the client get access to interpreters or other language assistance if needed.
- ❖ Be an active listener.
- ❖ Be comfortable with silence.
- ❖ Speak slowly and clearly and repeat information, if asked.
- ❖ Provide written materials in the client's preferred language, if able.
- ❖ Explain why you are asking certain questions.

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- ❖ Address the client formally unless told otherwise.
- ❖ Avoid rushing the client.
- ❖ Observe the use of touch among family members.
- ❖ Allow the client and their family members to choose seating for comfort. Maintain an appropriate physical distance and adopt a welcoming posture, keeping in mind that personal space preferences may vary across cultures.
- ❖ Learn about common verbal and nonverbal communication practices in a particular culture, such as eye contact, language, and personal space. Remember that each individual is unique, so observe the client and family carefully and ask about their personal preferences and priorities.
- ❖ Identify and ask who is responsible for making medical decisions in the family, and be sure to include that person when communicating with the client.