

Communication Barriers

Effective communication is an essential part of appropriate and safe client care below are common communication barriers with recommendations for overcoming these barriers

Communicating with someone that has problems hearing:

- Face the client when talking
- Don't cover your mouth eat or chew gum when 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

- Tell the client when you enter or leave the house/room. Don't sneak up on them without telling them you are there
- 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 the client tell them what you are going to do it make sure it's okay
- As you assist clients with tasks talk to them as you work and tell them as you move from one stop to another
- As you are assisting with feeding describe the contents of the tray/plate using a clock face method or North, South, East, 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
- Address the client formally unless told otherwise
- Avoid rushing the client
- Observe the use of touch among family members
- Allow the client and family members the opportunity to decide where they want to sit for comfort
- Maintain appropriate physical distance keeping body posture in a welcoming manner the need for personal space varies by culture
- Learn about common verbal and nonverbal communication for a particular culture such as eye contact, spoken language, and personal space. However, every individual is different so also watch the client and family carefully and ask them what they prefer and what is important to them
- Understand and ask about who makes the medical decisions for the family. You will need to include this individual when communicating with the client