

Introductory Script

*Today we will be focusing on **Human Interaction and Communication** and the importance of your role as a DSP in this process.*

*Please take a moment to read over the **Table of Contents** for this module and familiarize yourself with the topics that we will discuss today.*

We will be emphasizing such things as:

- The importance of non-verbal communication
- How different communication challenges affect interaction
- How effective listening can facilitate communication
- The role of the DSP in facilitating effective communication

*Also, please also take a moment to read the page which is titled "**Red Light, Green Light.**" This was written by a self advocate from an organization called Illinois Voices. Illinois Voices is a State-wide self-advocacy initiative designed to empower people with developmental disabilities to make their own decisions, stand up for their rights and speak for themselves about their strengths and desires. www.ilvoices.com*

Materials Needed for this Module

- **Masking tape (for activity)**
- **Samples of augmentative communication devices used at the agency**
- **Redacted communication program sample**
- **Note cards with emotions written on (for activity)**
- **Internet access/projector for viewing web videos**

The Importance of Communication

Communication can be a very subtle process. By keeping an open mind to all the subtle things that communication can be, you will be more likely to utilize many opportunities and methods to communicate. Not all people use words to communicate. Even the tightening or loosening of a muscle can be a form of communication!

In this Module we will learn that every communication has a purpose. Even if the receiver of the message doesn't understand it, the message still has meaning. It is our jobs as Direct Care Staff to try to understand what the message is that the person is trying to communicate.

You cannot do this unless you:

- Understand the communication process
- Know what an individual is able to communicate
- Know how an individual communicates best

Individuals are constantly giving and/or receiving communication. As a DSP, your challenge is to broaden your idea of what you believe communication to be.

The Communication Process

That has certain elements.

These include:

- a sender
 - a receiver
 - a message
 - feedback
-
- **Sender**, the initiator of a message
 - **Receiver**, the one that receives the message (the listener) and the decoder of a message
 - **Message**, the verbal and nonverbal components of language that is sent to the receiver by the sender which conveys an idea
 - **Feedback**, the receiver's verbal and nonverbal responses to a message such as a nod for understanding (nonverbal), a raised eyebrow for being confused (nonverbal), or asking a question to clarify the message (verbal).

If any of these elements are missing or compromised in some way, there will be a disruption in the communication process.

The Presenter may choose one or all of the following activities to incorporate into this module.

Non-Verbal Communication Activities

ACTIVITY (A)

This exercise helps you understand the difficulties people with limited vocabularies have communicating their choices.

We are going to do a "Communication Exercise." First, find a partner. Write 10 words on a piece of paper. (Don't tell them what they will be communicating with these words.) After they have written down the 10 words, say "Now tell your partner what you would like for dinner tonight using only these ten words." (Allow 10 minutes)

After the exercise, emphasize that behavior is also a form of communication.

Understanding behaviors is a difficult task as some of us express emotions differently.

Non-Verbal Communication

ACTIVITY (B)

Presenter Instructions

Presenter should put a long piece of tape on the floor. Then presenter tells trainees:

"Without using words (talking), writing anything down on paper, or showing a driver's license or state identification card, line up according to birthday order" (from 1/1 through 12/31). Examples of birthdays are 3/14, 6/28, 11/9.

TIP: Do not point to where line should begin!

Once people feel that they are in birthday order, have them go down the line beginning with 1/1 to see if they lined up correctly. You can see how easily people become frustrated when they cannot speak or use writing to communicate their birthdays. This is a great lesson in communication and in teamwork because everyone has to work together to ensure that they are lined up correctly in birthday order!

Non-Verbal Communication ACTIVITY (C)

This activity may be used to demonstrate that facial expression/body language can convey how a person is feeling, even though the person may not have **words** to communicate.

Instructions

Presenter should write a word on a note card which indicates an emotion. Some examples include:

- ✓ **Happiness**
 - ✓ **Pain**
 - ✓ **Frustration**
 - ✓ **Fear**
 - ✓ **Excitement**
 - ✓ **Confusion**
 - ✓ **Anger, etc.**
- Have each participant "choose a card" (presenter holds a card "face down" and allows trainees to choose a card. (If there are a large number of trainees, presenter can have duplicate cards so all get a chance to participate).
 - Have each person attempt to "communicate" (act out) that emotion.
 - Have the other participants try to guess which emotion the person is trying to communicate

Presenter should emphasize that:

- ✓ Some persons with whom they will be working may not use the spoken word to communicate.
- ✓ Explain that they may use sign language, hand gestures, communication boards, pictures, electronic devices, etc.
- ✓ Discuss the importance of observation skills when persons served use facial expressions, body movements and behaviors to communicate their wishes.
- ✓ Explain that all behavior communicates something.

Ways People Communicate

Presenter' Script

The messages we send or receive can be communicated in a variety of ways.

Turn to the page in your notebook with the heading "Ways People

Communicate" and list all the ways you can think of that we communicate verbally and non-verbally.

Possible answers:

Verbal

- Speech
- Written communication

Non-verbal

- Sounds (bells, whistles, music, grunts)
- Gestures
- Body movements
- Tone of voice
- Facial expressions
- Sign language
- Augmentative communication (pictures, boards, books, touch talkers)

Augmentative/Alternative Communication (AAC)

Augmentative, sometimes referred to as alternative communication (AAC) is a method of communication used by individuals with severe speech and language disabilities, those who have Cerebral Palsy, Autism, ALS, suffered from a stroke, etc. The type of device must be chosen carefully and is done by a professional. These individuals will use gestures, communications boards, pictures, symbols, drawings or a combination of all of these.

The **goal** of augmentative/alternative communication is:

- To find a way to get the message across to anyone, not only familiar people.
- To reduce frustration
- To help make communication more accurate and meaningful
- To support participation in the world!

Presenter should bring examples of types of augmentative communication devices/programs being used by individuals at the agency that the DSP will support.

Who Uses Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC)?

AAC users are children and adults with communication disorders due to cerebral palsy, autism, Down syndrome, ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease, stroke, traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis, and Parkinson's disease.

Note: The celebrated physicist with Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), Dr. Stephen Hawking, has used speech devices for years in his professional and personal life. As a highly accomplished scientist, Hawking has produced

What does an AAC device do?

Before computers were invented, a simple picture board was made with pictures to describe typical wants and needs. A non-verbal person could point to a picture of a hamburger to say "I'm hungry," or a book to say "I'm going to do my homework now."

Communication boards are still utilized today, but now we also have sophisticated electronic communication devices. Electronic AAC devices give users unlimited ways to express themselves. Users spell out words, or use abbreviations and symbols for short-cuts. There are all sorts of programming tools for AAC communicators to program messages with and have ready for future use.

WEB VIDEO demonstrating various types of AACs

(Video is one hour in length; presenter may wish to show in entirety or some portion) <http://www.archive.org/details/gov.ntis.ava20263vnb1.02>

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The Presenter may wish to review the following sources for AACs that are most applicable to your agency's population. Share examples of the various types of AACs available.

- **Dynavox Technologies**
Dynavox Technologies offers a diverse line of AAC devices and software, along with training and workshops offered nationwide. Visit the Dynavox Web site for a comparison of all Dynavox devices (the DV4, MT4, Dynamo, MightyMo, MiniMo, etc.):
<http://www.enkidu.net/Default.aspx?tabid=50>
- **Mayer-Johnson Company**
Makers of Boardmaker and Speaking Dynamically Pro, SuperTalker, and Advocate. Learn more here: <http://www.mayer-johnson.com>

- **Premke Romich Company (PRC)**
PRC makes several AAC devices, including the Pathfinder, Vanguard, Vantage, SpringBoard, and Chatbox. PRC also produces switch-activated devices and computer-access equipment. See PRC's entire product line:
<http://store.prentrom.com/cgi-bin/store/index.html>
- **Satillo Corporation**
<http://www.satillo.com>
Satillo Corporation not only offers their Chat products but communication products from a number of other manufacturers that specialize in augmentative communication products. These products vary in purpose and level of use required by the communicator.
- **Words +**
<http://www.words-plus.com>
Makers of communication and computer access products, including E-Z Keys, used by Dr. Stephen Hawking. In addition to word-prediction and basic speech output, E-Z Keys provides access to environmental and electrical devices.

Publications and Resources

- To receive literature in augmentative communication, see the **Augmentative Communication, Inc.** Web site:
<http://www.augcominc.com/>
- **The American-Speech Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)** offers a wide array of free informational brochures for people who have communication disorders, their care-givers, and families. Find publications, along with a directory of certified audiologists and speech-language pathologists, plus a list of self-help groups:
<http://www.herring.org/speech.html>.
- **Does My Child Have a Speech Problem?**, a book by Katherine L. Martin, a speech pathologist, examining normal speech development in children and a look at potential disorders. Contact Chicago Review Press
<http://www.ipgbook.com>

Causes of Communication Challenges

Presenter script

"Anyone can develop a communication challenge during his/her lifetime. These challenges can affect our ability to express ourselves or in the way we receive, interpret or understand information."

Presenter invites group to list as many causes of communication challenges as the group can and records on flipchart.

List the following if overlooked by DSPs:

- Birth defects (prematurity or birth complications such as cerebral palsy)
- Diseases (strokes, meningitis)
- Injuries caused by accidents (closed head injuries, etc.)
- Autism
- Different languages or cultures
- Aging process (such as loss of hearing/vision)
- Substance abuse

Presenter script

"Today we will discuss the following causes of communication challenges"

- Hearing Disabilities
- Visual Disabilities
- Speech and Language difficulties
- Autism and Autism Spectrum Disorders

Communication Challenges for People with Autism and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

A recommended resource on this topic is:

"In My Language"

8 minute video demonstrating aspects of autism and communication:

<http://youtu.be/JnylM1hI2jc>

Types of Sign Language Systems

Resource: An interactive DVD with some basic signs has been developed by the American Sign Language Project in conjunction with DePaul University.

For more information please visit:

<http://asl.cs.depaul.edu/contact.htm>

Common Effects of Communication Challenges

Challenges affect all aspects of a person's life. For example, communication challenges affect areas such as learning, understanding time, organizing information, making friends, and being independent. Let's take a look at some of the most common effects of communication challenges.

Presenter should use as many examples of each communication challenge as appropriate for your agency.

Problems with Understanding Questions

If an individual cannot understand words like 'who,' 'where,' 'when,' 'why,' 'how' and 'which,' s/he cannot answer questions or respond to requests. The individual may not respond because/he doesn't understand what you want him/her to do.

Sometimes we may interpret his/her lack of response as non-compliance or lack of interest. Our job is to realize why the person isn't responding, so we can help the person better understand the request."

Problems with Negation

Ask the DSP to suggest other ways that they could communicate that plans had changed without using a negative word.

Examples can include such statements as:

"We will go swimming another day"

"Let's make a cake today"

"Would you like to take a walk today?"

Presenter should also discuss with trainees how supplementing visual cues can assist with understanding (calendar, shoes to symbolize walking, holding up cake mix box when discussing baking the cake, etc.)

Talking to the People you Help Support

Below is more information about some of the numbers in the series of communication tips:

5. Parallel talk - This is very similar to self-talk but you include talk about what others are doing as well. Usually done while you are working alongside another person where you are both engaged in a similar activity. This is NOT simply giving the other person verbal prompts on what to do next. Example (during an art activity): *"Look everyone. John is using the blue paint. He's painting the sky. Sue has red. Do you like red? Sue is making a red flower. I think I'll use yellow for my flowers. etc. etc. etc...."*

6. Self-talk - This is the technique that works great with groups of people who have very limited communication so they don't respond verbally to staff attempts to talk. Staff should just talk about what the staff person is doing, using specific words and labels for the actions and objects. There's no need to wait for response from persons receiving services. Just talk about what you are doing. Example: *"It's time for me to wipe the table. I need bleach water and paper towels. First, I'll spray the table. I missed a spot. There I got it. Now I need to wait for the bleach water to work. Now I'll dry the table. I need to be sure to dry it all. Now I'll put everything away. The spray goes into the cabinet. The paper towels go into the trash. etc. etc. etc....."*

7. Naming (Labeling) - Label objects and actions as you encounter them throughout the day. Encourage persons in your group to repeat the labels (using words or signs). Reinforce all attempts - even if they aren't perfect.

8. Empowering People through Corrective Role Modeling - Used when a person uses incorrect grammar, wrong word, or mispronounces something. Staff should repeat the information; uses correct grammar/pronunciation and slightly emphasize the corrected word. Example: person served says "I **goed** to work." Staff corrects by saying "You **went** to work today." or person says "thorry." Staff models correct pronunciation by saying "you're **sorry**" (with emphasize on the correct sound).

Verbal Abuse As we've discussed in other training courses, you must never verbally abuse a person. This type of abuse is defined as "harm caused by an act or omission that precipitates emotional distress or maladaptive behavior in the individual, or could precipitate emotional distress or maladaptive behavior, **including the use of words, signs, gestures or other actions toward or about and in the presence of individuals.**"

Expansion - if person served uses one or two words/signs to communicate, expand the information into a more detailed sentence by adding additional words. Example: Person served says "out." Staff expands to "Go out. You want to go outside."

Listening Effectively

Listening is an important part of communication.

Become an active listener. Use all the available clues to figure out what an individual is attempting to communicate to you. In other words, be an involved partner in the communication process.

Be aware of non-verbal communication. It may indicate how the person is feeling physically or emotionally. Also, remember that people are communicating non-verbally, even when they are being silent. Their silence can be an important communication.

Pay attention to the tone and inflection of the person's voice. Monitor your own voice tone, etc., to ensure that you are sending the message you intend to send.

Don't tune-out what the individual says because it doesn't seem to make sense, or be understandable. Make an effort to understand what s/he is saying. For example, pay attention to those communication methods s/he prefers, and join him/her in using them.

Keep in mind that the person's inappropriate or ineffective behaviors may be an attempt to communicate some need to you. Pay attention to the message behind the behavior. If possible, try to meet that need, and then teach a better way to communicate.

Show you are listening. Make eye contact, nod or restate what the individual said, ask open ended questions to show you are paying attention.

Summarize the conversation. Review, condense and/or clarify what the person said.

Individual's Right to Express Emotion

An individual who is unable to express ideas, feelings or needs, and who is unable to understand the environment may express the pressures and frustrations s/he feels through behaviors that cause problems for him/herself or others. S/he may also have learned that attention-seeking behaviors do, in fact help him/her meet needs.

Problem behaviors may be the person's only way to communicate. Our job is to teach the person more effective, acceptable, and appropriate ways to communicate.

By helping him/her develop alternative ways to meet his/her needs, we can teach the individuals that s/he can make a positive impact upon their environment.

Communication Roadblocks

✓ Directive Language

Presenter Script

"Our behavior can build roadblocks to communication. This happens when we:

- *Order*
- *Warn*
- *Command*
- *Direct*

These behaviors represent a struggle for power or control. They are not consistent with developing a supportive relationship. Part of our job is to offer the people we support as much choice and flexibility as possible while maintaining their safety."

Presenter should:

Ask DSPs to generate a list of behaviors which could be roadblocks to communication. These might include:

- **Threaten**
- **Promise**
- **Moralize**
- **Preach**
- **Advise**
- **Lecture**
- **Judge**
- **Criticize, etc.**

✓ **Decision Making**

Presenter Script: *Another roadblock to communication involves our role with regard to choice making. There are many decisions we make for the individuals we support because we do not think that they have the ability to do this on their own. We often want to make decisions for them."*

*Why is this **NOT** a good idea?"*

Presenter should bring up the following and ask trainees for additional reasons:

- Creates dependency
- Takes control of an individual's life away from him/her
- Removes opportunities for choice

"We feel justified in making decisions for an individual because we feel we know what is in the person's best interest. We don't feel s/he can make good decisions because of his/her disability and lack of experiences.

However, we need to advocate for the individuals we are supporting. This includes encouraging an individual to exercise his/her rights and providing him/her with opportunities to make decisions.

She/he may initially only feel comfortable making decisions about what s/he wants for dinner or what movie to watch. As s/he becomes more comfortable with making choices, his/her choices may include an element of risk.

Your job will then be to prepare the individual to follow through on his/her choice while minimizing the risks associated with the choice.

Discuss the following Steps in the Choice Making Process with Trainees:

1. Observe the individual.
2. Identify opportunities for choice or preference.
3. Assist the individual in developing a range of choices.
4. Recognize the health, safety, financial and risk parameters associated with the choice.
5. Offer opportunities for choice.
6. Show value to the individual's choice.
7. Educate and negotiate when choices are outside of the parameters.
8. Process the choice experience with the individual.
9. Document the choice experience.

Communication Programs (Agency)

Presenter will provide trainees with sample copy of agency communication program.

Presenter's Script:

"Let's spend the next few minutes looking at a sample communication program/plan."

Spend a few minutes reviewing the sample communication plans.

Point out what the DSP's responsibility is for correctly implementing a communication plan. Presenter may also wish to instruct DSPs where the speech/language and hearing evaluations are located in the person's record.

Supporting a Grieving Person with a Developmental Disability

We have social structures, support systems, teachings and rituals that help us understand and recover from significant loss. It is not uncommon for adults to feel they must protect others from these difficulties, including children, elderly, and persons with disabilities.

Historically, there has been more time and energy spent on *controlling* people with disabilities with medication, physical restraints and other restrictions. Counseling was often excluded as an option.

It is imperative that all people be able to access the supports given to understand death and loss. Protecting someone usually results in more problems in that grief and mourning will not be properly experienced, leading to more significant future difficulties.

Here are some points to consider when offering grief support to an individual with intellectual disabilities:

- It's important to listen-understanding the permanence may come slowly
- Avoid assessment of skills during the grief process
- Minimize change
- Respect photos & other mementos
- Actively seek out non-verbal rituals

Presenter may wish to give other examples as needed.

Have trainees read over the supplement on supporting a grieving person. Class may wish to discuss the material as a group.

CONCLUSION OF TRAINING

Ask trainees what questions they have and carefully go over them.

Spend a few minutes introducing the On-the-Job (OJT) Training activities and Competency Based Training Assessments (CBTAs) for this module.

Last page