

MODULE 4

EFFECTIVE AND RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION

Providing Independent Living Support:
Training for Senior Corps Volunteers

HANDOUT WORKSHEETS

Client Role:
Communication Challenges Exercise

Volunteer Role:
Communication Challenges Exercise

Reflection: Setting Limits

Training Feedback Survey

CLIENT ROLE

Communication Challenges Exercise



The purpose of this exercise is to give you some practice dealing with challenging communication situations that you may encounter when working with a client. You might also discover that you will understand your client better when you put yourself in his/her shoes!



“Client” Instructions: The facilitator will assign you and your partner one of the situations listed below. You will play the role of the client; your partner will play the role of the volunteer. ***Don’t show your partner this sheet until after your role play.***

1. Take a minute to read your “client role” and think about what this person would be feeling and experiencing.
2. You and your partner, “the volunteer”, should take about 5-7 minutes to act out the situation and see where it takes you. The volunteer is coming to your home for the weekly visit and will begin the role play.
3. When you are finished, discuss together what you have learned. Jot down some notes to the questions on page 2, and be ready to share with the group.

SITUATIONS (Client Roles)

1. You become distracted easily and lose your train of thought. For example, you start telling a story and then get lost, quickly forgetting what the original point was. You have difficulty following others when they are talking, partly because you have a hard time blocking out noises so you can concentrate.

Idea for role play: Start a story and stop in the middle. Start a different story. Ask the volunteer to repeat what they said regularly.

2. You repeat words, questions, or phrases, without realizing you are doing it. Often it is not relevant to the current conversation.

Idea for role play: You ask when lunch will be ready over and over; you repeat certain words for no apparent reason; you ask your guest “how have you been” several times, forgetting that they have already told you.

3. You feel sad today. This morning you saw someone with a dog like the one you used to have and felt suddenly nostalgic and lonely. You might feel better if you talked about it, but aren’t sure you want to. You don’t like to complain and have always had a hard time expressing “bad” feelings. Instead, you tend to express unhappiness nonverbally, with sighs and body language.

Idea for role play: Provide mumbled or no responses, slump over, sigh often, keep your head down.

4. People have told you that you have a temper and that you are “too negative.” They also tell you that you should “look on the bright side”. You feel people who say these things don’t understand your difficulties. You spend a lot of time at home alone.

Idea for role play: Tell a story of a neighbor in a heated tone, and then start another complaint about staff at the doctor’s office. For instance, “Last night that smart-alecky neighbor kid parked his car too close to my driveway again, even though I yelled at him about that just last week! And why can’t the people who answer the phone at the doctor’s office speak so I can understand them?” Complain that the volunteer is unrealistic if he/she makes optimistic suggestions.

“Client” and “Volunteer”: After the role play, discuss the following questions and jot down what you’ve learned:



1. What was the communication challenge for each of you? How did it feel?

Volunteer:



Client:

2. What did the volunteer try that didn’t work so well? What could the volunteer have done differently? Client, what did you need from the volunteer?



3. What did the volunteer try that worked? For example, what was said? How was it said, including nonverbal messages?

4. Any final thoughts?

VOLUNTEER ROLE

Communication Challenges Exercise



The purpose of this exercise is to give you some practice dealing with challenging communication situations that you may encounter when working with a client. You might also discover that you will understand your client better when you put yourself in his/her shoes!



“Volunteer” Instructions: The facilitator will assign you and your partner one of the situations listed below. You will play the role of the volunteer; your partner will play the role of the client.

Don't show your partner this sheet until after your role play.

1. Take a minute to read your “volunteer role” and think about how you will begin a conversation with your client when you arrive at his/her home for your weekly visit.
2. You and your partner, “the client”, should take about 5-7 minutes to act out the situation and see where it takes you. You, the volunteer will start the role play.
3. When you are finished, discuss together what you have learned. Jot down some notes to the questions on page 2, and be ready to share with the group.

SITUATIONS (Volunteer Roles)

1. You arrive at the client's home thinking about the client's care plan, which includes help with organizing. This is the day you have agreed to work on organizing paperwork and paying bills. After greeting your client, begin to discuss working on this task together.
2. According to yesterday's phone call with your client, you will be taking the client to a new doctor today. After greeting your client, assist with any preparations needed to be able to get to the doctor's office for the appointment, such as finding the doctor's name and address and a list of your client's medications.
3. Your client has previously expressed an interest in playing cards and today you brought a deck of cards and some ideas about which games you might play together. Usually you do crossword puzzles but that has been getting old.
4. Your client has been depressed lately. Your supervisor and the client's doctor suggested more exercise. After greeting your client, talk with your client about taking a walk or doing some other exercise to help improve mood.

“Client” and “Volunteer”: After the role play, discuss the following questions and jot down what you’ve learned:



1. What was the communication challenge for each of you? How did it feel?

Volunteer:



Client:

2. What did the volunteer try that didn’t work so well? What could the volunteer have done differently? Client, what did you need from the volunteer?



3. What did the volunteer try that worked? For example, what was said? How was it said, including nonverbal messages?

4. Any final thoughts?

Reflection: Setting Limits



Many people find it difficult to say “no” to a request, even when saying “yes” will be harmful to their mental or physical health, or finances. Communicating your limits in polite but firm way is a survival skill.

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Think of a situation where you have had difficulty saying “no” to a request. The request may have come from a client, family member, friend, boss, or someone else. How would you/will you do things differently? Jot down some notes to the following questions and share them with a partner. This worksheet is for your own use; you do not need to turn it in.

1. What was the request?

2. For you, what were the consequences of saying “yes”? What did you believe would be the consequences of saying “no”?

3. How will you set limits next time? Give an example of something you might say politely but firmly. Remember: be clear about your limits, offer choices you can live with, and make no excuses.

Example: *Sylvia is a proud grandmother. Her son lives down the street with his wife and four young children. For the last six months during the weekdays, Sylvia has been taking care of the four children while their parents were at work. At first, this was to be a temporary arrangement until her son could find a day care center nearby. However, there has been no mention of finding a day care center for months. Sylvia has hinted that she does not have the energy she used to have, and that the kids are really a handful, to no avail. Finally, she found some quiet time with her son and daughter-in-law, and said, “As much as I love my grandchildren, I can no longer care for them every day. The physical toll is too much. However, I would be happy to baby-sit one day a week, if you like. Which day would you prefer?”*

Training Feedback Survey

Please help us improve our training sessions by providing feedback on the training you attended. Thank you!

Training/Session Name: _____ Date: _____

Lead Facilitator: _____

Program you serve with: SCP RSVP Other: _____

Please rate this session using the following scale:

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. The subject matter was presented effectively. | | | | | |
| 2. The facilitator was knowledgeable. | | | | | |
| 3. The facilitator responded to questions. | | | | | |
| 4. There were enough opportunities for discussion. | | | | | |
| 5. The written materials are useful. | | | | | |
| 6. The session met my expectations. | | | | | |
| 7. As a result of this training, I gained new knowledge applicable to my volunteer assignment. | | | | | |
| 8. I plan to apply what I learned at this session. | | | | | |

9. What did you like best about this session?

10. What would have improved this session?

Thank You! Your feedback will help us to improve our training!