

VERBAL COMMUNICATION*

▶ ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

🕒 **Time:** 60 minutes

➔ **Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Comprehend the basic concepts of communication.
- Recognize their own styles of interpersonal communication.
- Understand how style of interpersonal communication affects their role as a peer educator.
- Understand the differences between aggressive, passive, passive aggressive and assertive communication styles.

★ **Training Methods:** Brainstorm, Large Group Activity and Discussion, Role Play

✓ **In This Activity You Will...**

- Lead a brainstorming activity about the definition of communication (10 minutes).
- Model good communication vs. poor communication and ask group to identify differences (5 minutes).
- Describe the different styles of communication (10 minutes).
- Role play assertive communication (5 minutes).
- Ask participants to get into pairs, assign scenario and role play assertive style of communication (25 minutes).
- Lead a full group discussion to summarize (5 minutes).

(continued next page)

Instructions

Section 1 – What is communication and why is it important?

1. Ask the group to brainstorm “What is communication?”
2. Reinforce correct comments and make a list of participant responses on newsprint.
3. Emphasize that communication has several components. Talk about the three parts listed below and call attention to parallels with the group’s responses to the previous question: What is communication?

Some key concepts of communication are:

Sender – One who extends the message

Receiver – One who receives the message

Message – What is being sent (verb or non-verbal)

4. Once participants understand the first 3 concepts of communication, say the following words of greetings to the entire class. Some blank faces will reflect that participants do not understand as well as some participants may respond.
 - a. Bonjour! (French, hello)
 - b. Guten tag! (GOOTEN TOCK) (German, good day)
 - c. Hola! (Spanish, hello)
 - d. Ni hao! (NEE-HOW) (Chinese, hello)
 - e. Jambo! (like MAMBO) (Swahili, hello)
5. Ask participants, “What is missing?” The objective of asking this question is to reinforce that in order for messages to become communication it is essential that there is understanding.

* This module comes from the Missouri People to People Training Manual, 2008.

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ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY (CONT.)

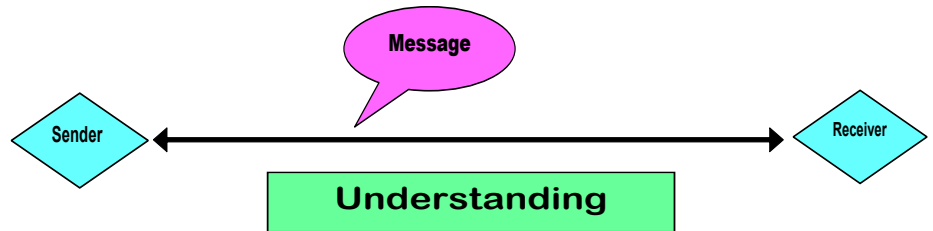
✂ Materials:

- Power Point Slides
- Newsprint
- Pencils/Pens
- Markers
- Handout - Communication Role Play Worksheet (cut role plays into strips for activity)

✂ Preparation:

- Print handouts and cut role plays into strips.

6. **To reinforce:** Draw the diagram below on a flip chart and state that to have proper communication you must have a sender, receiver, message and, most importantly, understanding.



Also relate that understanding is important when the peer educator communicates with clients as well as when clients to communicate with their doctors, nurses, and others on their multi-disciplinary team.

Understanding is essential otherwise the interaction is not considered communication.

Communication can be described as an understood message between a sender and receiver.

Section Two – What are the communication styles and is there a difference?

1. Ask the group the questions below. After each question allow the group to share their ideas. There are no right or wrong answers. Stay neutral and with a non-judgmental attitude. Then share the meaning of the terms with the group.
 - a. *What does it mean to be passive in what you say to and do with others?*

Being passive means repressing the emotions, feelings, and thoughts that we have even if by doing so we feel uncomfortable and unhappy with ourselves. Passive responders tend to act out the role of victim, making those around them feel guilty or frustrated.

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Note: Facilitator should demonstrate some passive communication styles that include no eye contact, low volume, hunched over body posture, etc. Thus, the demonstration will reinforce the above definition.

b. *What does it mean to be **aggressive** in what you say to and do with others?*

Being **aggressive** means interacting with others without respect for their rights and/or feelings. Emphasize that aggressive communication can be direct and indirect. Aggressiveness may be direct, and may involve physical or verbal assault. Indirect aggressiveness is a way of expressing anger in an unclear manner, which usually leaves others feeling nervous, guilty, or frustrated. Indirect aggressors use hostility and indifference at the same time that they say everything is fine.

c. *What does it mean to be **passive aggressive** in what you say and do with others?*

Being **passive aggressive** means displaying behavior in which feelings of aggression are expressed in passive ways as, for example, by stubbornness, sullenness, procrastination, or intentional inefficiency. It is a defensive mechanism and, more often than not, only partly conscious. For example, people who are passive-aggressive might take so long to get ready for a party they do not wish to attend, that the party is nearly over by the time they arrive.

d. *What does it mean to be **assertive** in what you say and do with others?*

Being **assertive** means expressing what we want or believe in and is an important part of clear communication. If we say what we want or feel

and explain why we have chosen a certain decision or action, we can reduce the probability of being misunderstood.

2. **Role play:** Facilitators: demonstrate one or more of the communication styles listed above, always starting with assertive first. The idea here is to demonstrate the “good” behavior before demonstrating “poor” behavior.

3. Ask the group the following question:

What difference did you see between the two?

4. **Optional Activity:** If time allows, or if participants want to do it on their own, let them volunteer to role-play the communication types above, using the Communication Role Plays worksheet.

- Review activity objectives to reinforce what participants will gain from this activity.
- Divide participants into pairs. Assign a situation from the Communication Role Plays sheet to each group.
- In their small groups, have participants read the situation and decide together which response belongs to the categories listed (assertive, passive, aggressive or passive aggressive).
- Tell participants to refer to the definitions on their sheet if they need help.
- Once participants have identified each communication style for their scenario, ask them to choose on style and role play the response.
- Remind participants that doing a role play is much like acting in a play, so they are to pretend to be the person in the scenario.

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I learned ways to make myself more efficient as a peer educator. Ways to ask the right types of questions to make the information I need from a client acquirable...I learned that there are other ways to ask questions to someone in a way that is loving and caring, to be open, because everyone is different, my way is not always correct and people have different opinions.

A Graduate of Duke
Peer Training



- Allow 3-4 minutes to accomplish this and review as a large group.
- Remind participants that they are no longer in role.
- Facilitate group discussion by asking the following questions.

What do you think?

What was effective?

What could be improved?

How is this different from the assertive example?

Summary

Wrap up session.

* This module is part of the online toolkit *Building Blocks to Peer Success*. For more information, visit http://www.hdwg.org/peer_center/training_toolkit. This module comes from the Missouri People to People Training Manual, 2008.

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SESSION HANDOUT

COMMUNICATION ROLE PLAYS

Being assertive means expressing what we want or believe in and is an important part of clear communication.

Being passive means repressing the emotions, feelings, and thoughts that we have even if by doing so we feel uncomfortable and unhappy with ourselves.

Being aggressive means interacting with others without respect for their rights and/or feelings.

Being passive aggressive means displaying behavior in which feelings of aggression are expressed in passive ways as, for example, by stubbornness, sullenness, procrastination, or intentional inefficiency.

1. You are at a department store and you are waiting in line when another customer walks past you and asks to get checked out since she is running late. The young woman behind the counter goes ahead and helps her in spite of the fact that you were next in line. What do you do or say?

Make the statement, "Well, I guess she is late so go ahead and help her."	
You push yourself to the counter and demand to get help. "I've been waiting for the last 5 minutes, you self-proclaimed diva -wait your turn!"	
Tell the young lady behind the counter "Excuse me, maybe you did not notice, but I would appreciate if you help me since I was next in line."	
Say nothing, but sigh loudly and give the woman irritated looks.	

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SESSION HANDOUT (cont.)

COMMUNICATION ROLE PLAYS (CONT.)

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2. You are at a party and everyone is drinking or getting high. Generally you prefer to enjoy a casual drink but you don't drink to excess. You have already done three alcohol shots on this particular evening and since this is your limit you don't want to drink any more. Dave, however, wants you to keep "partying." What do you say or do?

"I'll have another drink, but if something happens to me it's your fault."	
"Hey you jerk, stop bothering me. You know I don't want to drink anymore."	
"Dave, I know you want to keep partying and we can still dance and have fun, but I would feel more comfortable if I stop drinking. I have to drive home later and it wouldn't be responsible for me to drink anymore."	
"Since you are my good friend, let's go ahead and have one more, but only one."	

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SESSION HANDOUT (cont.)

COMMUNICATION ROLE PLAYS (CONT.)

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3. On the job, your fellow co-worker keeps asking you to do some of her work and in the past you have often helped. You are starting to feel mistreated, however, and would like her to start pulling her own weight. What do you do or say?

“Ana, I’m flattered that you think I am competent to do this work, however, helping you all the time has got me feeling overloaded. In the future I would appreciate it if you try doing it yourself or ask someone else.”	
Take Ana’s extra work from her, but procrastinate and do not complete it so that her deadlines don’t get met. She eventually stops asking you for help.	
“I know you don’t know what to do with this extra work, Ana. I might be able to squeeze some of it in and help you out.”	
“Ana, I am going to go to our boss and let her know what a lazy employee you are and tell her that you never do any or your work.”	

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SESSION HANDOUT (cont.)

COMMUNICATION ROLE PLAYS (CONT.)

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4. After a wonderful date with Mark you go back to his place. You start kissing and touching all over. You care about him but only want to have sex if it's with a condom. He insists that he likes it natural and just wants to feel you because he cares about you so much. What do you do or say?

"Mark, I guess since you say you care about me and we have gone out a several times it's ok to do it natural."	
"Mark, I care about you too and because I care about our relationship, I think we should use a condom."	
"You always say you care and that's great but no glove no love. I am sick and tired of you always making me feel uncomfortable."	
"Oh, great idea, genius."	