

# SECTOR: HEALTHCARE

HSS106-NQ 2013: Communication at Workplace

**NVEQF Level 1 (CLASS IX)**

**STUDENT WORKBOOK**



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## Preface

The National Curriculum Framework, 2005, recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle makes a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home, community and the workplace.

The student workbook on "**Communication at Workplace**" is a part of the qualification package developed for the implementation of National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF), an initiative of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India to set common principles and guidelines for a nationally recognized qualification system covering Schools, Vocational Education and Training Institutions, Technical Education Institutions, Colleges and Universities. It is envisaged that the NVEQF will promote transparency of qualifications, cross-sectoral learning, student-centred learning and facilitate learner's mobility between different qualifications, thus encouraging lifelong learning.

This student workbook, which forms a part of vocational qualification package for student's who have passed Class VIII or equivalent examination, was created by a group of experts. The Healthcare Sector Skill Council (HSSC) approved by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) for the healthcare sector developed the National Occupation Standards (NOS). The National Occupation Standards are a set of competency standards and guidelines endorsed by the representatives of Healthcare Industry for recognizing and assessing skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively in the workplace.

The Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE), a constituent of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in association with Healthcare Sector Skill Council (HSSC) has developed modular curricula and learning materials (Units) for the vocational qualification package in Healthcare sector for NVEQ levels 1 to 4; level 1 is equivalent to Class IX. Based on NOS, occupation related core competencies (knowledge, skills, and abilities) were identified for development of curricula and learning modules (Units).

This student workbook attempts to discourage rote learning and to bring about necessary flexibility in offering of courses, necessary for breaking the sharp boundaries between different subject areas. The workbook attempts to enhance these endeavours by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups and activities requiring hands-on-experience. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centred system of education outlined in the National Policy of Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school Principals and Teachers will take to encourage children to reflect their own learning and to pursue imaginative and on-the-job activities and questions. Participation of learners in skill development exercises and inculcation of values and creativity is possible if we involve children as participants in learning, and not as receiver of information. These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table would be a necessity to maintain the rigour in implementing the activities and the required number of teaching days will have to be increased for teaching and training.

## ABOUT THE WORKBOOK

This workbook is to assist you with completing the Unit of Competency **HSS106-NQ2013: Communication at Workplace**. You should work through the workbook in the classroom, at the workplace or in your own time under the guidance and supervision of your teacher or trainer. This workbook contains sessions which will help you to acquire relevant knowledge and skills (soft and hard) on various aspects of the unit of competency. Each session is small enough to be easily tackled and digested by you before you move on to the next session. Animated pictures and photographs have been included to bring about visual appeal and to make the text lively and interactive for you. You can also try to create your own illustrations using your imagination or taking the help of your teacher. Let us now see what the sections in the sessions have for you.

### **Section1: Introduction**

This section introduces you to the topic of the Unit. It also tells you what you will learn through the various sessions covered in the Unit.

### **Section 2: Relevant Knowledge**

This section provides you with the relevant information on the topic(s) covered in the session. The knowledge developed through this section will enable you to perform certain activities. You should read through the information to develop an understanding on the various aspects of the topic before you complete the exercise(s).

### **Section 3: Exercise**

Each session has exercises, which you should complete on time. You will perform the activities in the classroom, at home or at the workplace. The activities included in this section will help you to develop necessary knowledge, skills and attitude that you need for becoming competent in performing the tasks at workplace. The activities should be done under the supervision of your teacher or trainer who will guide you in completing the tasks and also provide feedback to you for improving your performance. To achieve this, prepare a timetable in consultation with your teacher or trainer and strictly adhere to the stipulated norms or standards. Do not hesitate to ask your teacher or trainer to explain anything that you do not understand.

### **Section 4: Assessment**

The review questions included in this section will help you to check your progress. You must be able to answer all the questions before you proceed to the next session.

## SESSION 1: IDENTIFY ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

### Relevant Knowledge

The term 'communication' originates from the Latin word “communicare”, which means to share or impart. When used as per its function, it means a common ground of understanding. Communication is the process of exchanging of facts, ideas and opinions and a means that individuals or organisations use for sharing meaning and understanding with one another. In other words, it is the transmission and interaction of facts, ideas, opinions, feelings or attitudes. It is also a means of interacting linguistically in an appropriate way in a range of societal, cultural and work context. It is the use of messages to produce meaning within and across a variety of contexts, cultures, methods and media. It is an important way through which facts, ideas, experiences and feelings are shared and exchanged.

Primates and other animals have been communicating without the use of language since long before humans invented verbal communication. Humans communicate both verbally and non-verbally. Verbal communication includes written and oral communication, whereas non-verbal communication includes body language, facial expression and pictures. Written communication is an effective tool for recording, reporting and management. The recording and reporting of information should be done in a systematic way. Our own beliefs, values and behaviour interact with each other and it reflects in our style of communication.

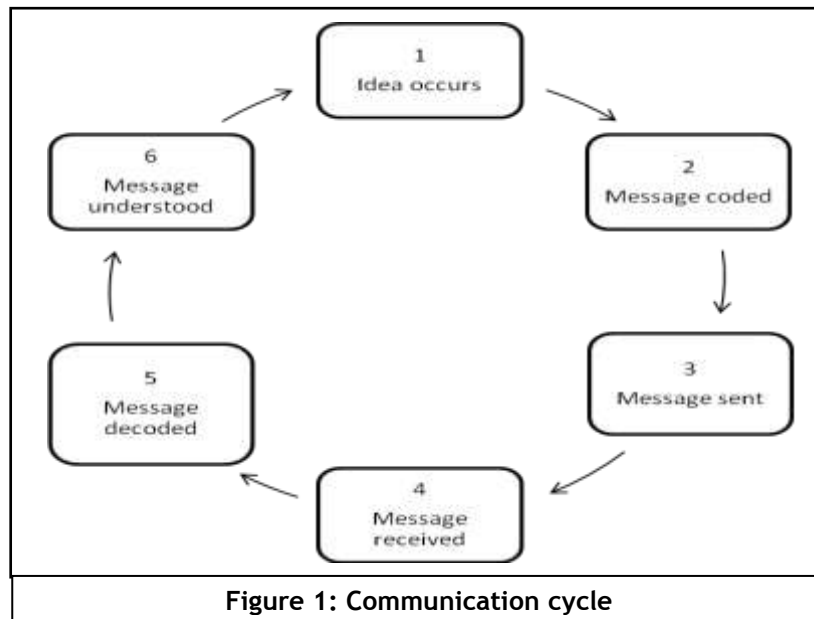
Communicating in an effective manner, irrespective of the mode of communication used is a skill. Effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit. It involves the use of proper equipment, providing information to the appropriate people and carrying out communication effectively. Breakdown in communication is either due to lack of skills in communicating or lack of coherent thought process. It can also happen due to the breakdown of the communication network. In this Unit you will learn about communication cycle, the various forms of communication barriers and how to communicate effectively.

### Different Elements of Communication

Communication has three important parts – transmitting, listening and feedback. The sender transmits the message through one medium or another. The receiver listens to the message and then conveys his understanding of the message to the sender in the form of feedback to complete the communication cycle. The process of conveying a message is complete only when the person receiving it has understood the message in its entirety.

To understand the communication process better we need to familiarize ourselves with the communication cycle (Fig.1). Let us now try to understand what we mean by communication cycle.

The communication cycle in essence is the process of communication. The “sender” “encodes” the message into words and sent the coded message as he/she speaks or writes the “message” out. Message is conveyed through channels including telephone, video-conferencing, letters, emails, meetings, memos, records and reports. It is then “decoded” by the “receiver” by hearing or reading the message in order to understand what the sender wants to convey.



In an effective communication cycle, the receiver understands the language and the message in the same way that the sender meant it to be. The words, tonal quality, body language, all convey the same message and nothing gets distorted or lost in the process of sending it and the receiver is able to relay back exactly what was intended to be conveyed to him/her. Let us look at each of the elements of the communication cycle individually.

- **Sender:** The sender gives or **encodes** the message, for example the sender greets a visitor or a client by saying “Good morning Sir/Madam”.
- **Message:** The message in this case is “Good morning Sir/Madam”, which is also known as the content of the communication.
- **Medium:** It is the **channel** used for communication. It may-be in any of the following forms – **verbal, non-verbal, pictorial, symbolic or written.**
- **Receiver:** The receiver **decodes** the incoming message, or expression, translates and presents an output in the form of a response or reaction.
- **Feedback:** How the receiver responds or reacts is known as feedback. It is the effect, reply or reaction to the information being transmitted.

Communication is understood and acted upon at different degrees of effectiveness. A communication is effective when the experience of both the communicator and receiver is satisfying and the goal of the



interaction is achieved and vice-versa. Six essential principles of an effective communication are as follows:

1. The information should be delivered in a clear message.
2. Message should be delivered timely.
3. Message should be complete.
4. Message should be concise.
5. Message should be factual.
6. Message should be accurate.

## Providing Feedback

Feedback conveys to the sender, the effectiveness of his/her communication. For individuals who are not trained in communication skills, providing feedback is unconscious. However, when individuals are trained in communication, feedback is a tool for both the listener and the sender to make the communication effective. Similarly, the listener has the opportunity to respond (thus giving feedback to the sender) with a clarification to ensure the accuracy of listening. Therefore, in order to ensure that the discrepancy between what is spoken and what is understood is minimal, the communication should not only be accurate, brief and clear, but adequate feedback should be sought or provided.

Feedback is also a way of helping another person to consider changing his behaviour. For instance, in the case of mobile service operators, there is a system of feedback through Short Service Message (SMS) and Electronic Mails (Emails), which helps the company and also the individual at the customer care centre to improve upon the communication and relationship with the customer.

Giving and receiving feedback are skills that can be learnt. Let us now look at the characteristics of feedback. Some of the **characteristics of feedback** are as follows:

- **It is descriptive, rather than evaluative:** Descriptive feedback mentions the behaviour that needs to change, whereas **evaluative feedback** makes judgments which do not help in changing behaviour. For example, *“Please get all the columns filled in by the visitor in the logbook every time a visitor enters the gates”* is a descriptive feedback, whereas “You are irresponsible as you did not get the columns filled in by the visitors.” is an example of evaluative feedback.
- **It is specific, rather than general:** The feedback should be specific as the receiver should know specifically the area that needs to be handled. For example, if the sender says, *‘Please update the records’*, the message is too general and does not indicate what is to be specifically done in record keeping. On the other hand, if the sender says *“Please get all the columns filled in by the visitor in the logbook every time a visitor enters the gates”* then the receiver knows that he/she is supposed to get all the columns filled in by the visitors.
- **It is directed to changeable behaviour:** Feedback that suggests alternative ways of behaving allows individuals to choose and own the changed behaviour. This ensures that the behaviour

change is permanent. For example, saying “***A useful way of filling up of the visitor’s logbook is to get the visitor to fill it, while you observe to ensure the accuracy***” enables the person to take initiative and either follows the suggestion or come up with their own way of getting it done. However, saying, “***You should be more prompt in record keeping***” or “***The real problem is that you are not prompt***” does not provide options to the listener to change to the desirable behaviour.

- **It is solicited, rather than imposed:** Feedback is most useful when the receiver himself/herself has formulated the kind of questions, which those observing him/her can answer.
- **It is well-timed:** In general, feedback is most useful if it is timely or given at the earliest opportunity.
- **It is checked to ensure clear communication:** In order to check whether the receiver has been conveyed the message clearly, the receiver can be asked to rephrase the feedback he/she has received to see if it corresponds to what the sender has in mind.

Three aspects that you should always consider while giving a constructive feedback are as follows:

- (i) Give neutral and honest (stick to facts) observations.
- (ii) Propose an alternative or give examples to prove your point.
- (iii) Show the benefits of the alternative.

Three aspects of feedback that you should always consider while receiving feedback are as follows:

- (i) Listen carefully what the other person has to say.
- (ii) Ask questions, if you need any clarifications.
- (iii) Do not become defensive or emotional.

### Exercise

- Listen to the English programmes on radio.
- Read newspapers daily.

### Assessment

Answer the following questions:

- a) What is communication?

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- b) State the different elements of communication?

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c) What are the six essential principles of effective communication?

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d) Why is feedback important in effective communication?

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### Checklist for Assessment Activity

Use the following checklist to see if you have met all the requirements for assessment activity:

#### Part A

- Define communication.
- State the different elements of communication.
- List the six essential principles of an effective communication.
- List characteristics of feedback
- Differentiate between Sender, Message, Medium, Receiver and Feedback

#### Part B

Discussed in class the following:

- (a) What is communication?
- (b) What are the different elements of communication cycle?
- (c) Why understanding communication cycle is important for effective communication?

#### Part C

#### Performance Standards

The performance standard may include, but not limited to:

Performance standards	Yes	No
Identify elements of communication		
Demonstrate the knowledge of effective communication		

## SESSION 2: DEMONSTRATE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

### Relevant Knowledge

Effective communication helps us better understand a person or situation and enables us to resolve differences, build trust and respect, and create environments where creative ideas, problem solving, affection, and caring can flourish. As simple as communication seems, much of what we try to communicate to others, and what others try to communicate to us gets misunderstood, which can cause conflict and frustration in personal and professional relationships. By learning these effective communication skills, you can better connect with your spouse, kids, friends, and coworkers.

### Effective Communication

In the information age, we have to send, receive, and process huge numbers of messages every day. But effective communication is about more than just exchanging information. It is also about understanding the emotion behind the information. Effective communication can improve relationships at home, work, and in social situations by deepening your connections to others and improving teamwork, decision-making, and problem solving. It enables you to communicate even negative or difficult messages without creating conflict or destroying trust. Effective communication combines a set of skills including nonverbal communication, attentive listening, the ability to manage stress in the moment, and the capacity to recognize and understand your own emotions and those of the person you are communicating with.

A speech that is read, for example, rarely has the same impact as a speech that is delivered (or appears to be delivered) spontaneously. Of course, it takes time and effort to develop these skills and become an effective communicator. The more effort and practice you put in, the more instinctive and spontaneous your communication skills will become.

### Effective Communication Skills # 1: Listening

Listening is one of the most important aspects of effective communication. Successful listening means not just understanding the words or the information being communicated, but also understanding how the speaker feels about what they are communicating.

Effective listening can **make the speaker feel heard and understood** which can help build a stronger, deeper connection between the speaker and the listener.

**Create an environment where everyone feels safe** to express ideas, opinions, and feelings, or plan and problem solve in creative ways.

**Save time** by helping clarify information, avoid conflicts and misunderstandings.

When emotions are running high, if the speaker feels that he or she has been truly heard, it can help to calm them down, **relieve negative feelings**, and allow for real understanding or problem solving to begin.

### **Tips for Effective Listening**

If your goal is to fully understand and connect with the other person, listening effectively will often come naturally. If it does not, you can remember the following tips. The more you practice them, the more satisfying and rewarding your interactions with others will become.

- **Focus fully on the speaker**, his or her body language, and other nonverbal cues. If you are daydreaming, checking text messages, or doodling, you are almost certain to miss nonverbal cues in the conversation. If you find it hard to concentrate on some speakers, try repeating their words over in your head—it will reinforce their message and help you stay focused.
- **Avoid interrupting** or trying to redirect the conversation to your concerns, by saying something like, “If you think that’s bad, let me tell you what happened to me.” Listening is not the same as waiting for your turn to talk. You can’t concentrate on what someone’s saying if you are forming what you are going to say next. Often, the speaker can read your facial expressions and know that your mind’s elsewhere.
- **Avoid seeming judgmental**: In order to communicate effectively with someone, you do not have to like them or agree with their ideas, values, or opinions. However, you do need to set aside your judgment and withhold blame and criticism in order to fully understand a person. The most difficult communication, when successfully executed, can lead to the most unlikely and profound connection with someone.
- **Show your interest** in what is being said. Nod occasionally, smile at the person, and make sure your posture is open and inviting. Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like “yes”.

### **Effective Communication Skills # 2: Managing stress**

- In small doses, stress can help you perform under pressure. However, when stress becomes constant and overwhelming, it can hamper effective communication by disrupting your capacity to think clearly and creatively, and act appropriately. When you are stressed, you are more likely to misread other people, send confusing or off-putting nonverbal signals, and lapse into unhealthy knee-jerk patterns of behaviour.
- How many times have you felt stressed during a disagreement with your spouse, kids, boss, friends, or coworkers and then said or done something you later regretted? If you can quickly relieve stress and return to a calm state, you will not only avoid such regrets, but in many cases you will also help to calm the other person as well. It is only when you are in a calm, relaxed

state that you will be able to know whether the situation requires a response, or whether the other person's signals indicate it would be better to remain silent.

### Quick stress relief for effective communication

When stress strikes, you can not always temper it by taking time out to meditate or go for a run, especially if you are in the middle of a meeting with your boss or an argument with your spouse, for example. By learning to quickly reduce stress in the moment, though, you can safely face any strong emotions you are experiencing, regulate your feelings, and behave appropriately. When you know how to maintain a relaxed, energized state of awareness—even when something upsetting happens—you can remain emotionally available and engaged.

To deal with stress during communication:

- **Recognize when you are becoming stressed.** Your body will let you know if you are stressed as you communicate. Are your muscles or your stomach tight and/or sore? Are your hands clenched? Is your breath shallow? Are you "forgetting" to breathe?
- **Take a moment to calm down** before deciding to continue a conversation or postpone it.
- **Bring your senses to the rescue** and quickly manage stress by taking a few deep breaths, clenching and relaxing muscles, or recalling a soothing, sensory-rich image, for example. The best way to rapidly and reliably relieve stress is through the senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. But each person responds differently to sensory input, so you need to find things that are soothing to you.
- **Look for humour in the situation.** When used appropriately, humour is a great way to relieve stress when communicating. When you or those around you start taking things too seriously, find a way to lighten the mood by sharing a joke or amusing story.
- **Be willing to compromise.** Sometimes, if you can both bend a little, you'll be able to find a happy middle ground that reduces the stress levels for everyone concerned. If you realize that the other person cares much more about something than you do, compromise may be easier for you and a good investment in the future of the relationship.
- **Agree to disagree**, if necessary, and take time away from the situation so everyone can calm down. Take a quick break and move away from the situation. Go for a stroll outside if possible, or spend a few minutes meditating. Physical movement or finding a quiet place to regain your balance can quickly reduce stress.

### Effective communication skills #3: Emotional awareness

Emotions play an important role in the way we communicate at home and work. It is the way you feel, more than the way you think, that motivates you to communicate or to make decisions. The way you react to emotionally driven, nonverbal cues affects both how you understand other people and how they understand you. If you are out of touch with your feelings, and do not understand how you feel or

why you feel that way, you will have a hard time communicating your feelings and needs to others. This can result in frustration, misunderstandings, and conflict. When you do not address what is really bothering you, you often become embroiled in petty squabbles instead—arguing with your spouse about how the towels should be hung, for example, or with a coworker about whose turn it is to restock the copier.

Emotional awareness provides you the tools needed for understanding both yourself and other people, and the real messages they are communicating to you. Although knowing your own feelings may seem simple, many people ignore or try to sedate strong emotions like anger, sadness, and fear. But your ability to communicate depends on being connected to these feelings. If you are afraid of strong emotions or if you insist on communicating only on a rational level, it will impair your ability to fully understand others, creatively problem solve, resolve conflicts, or build an affectionate connection with someone.

### **How emotional awareness can improve effective communication**

Emotional awareness—the consciousness of your moment-to-moment emotional experience—and the ability to manage all of your feelings appropriately is the basis for effective communication.

Emotional awareness helps you:

- Understand and empathize with what is really troubling other people
- Understand yourself, including what’s really troubling you and what you really want
- Stay motivated to understand and empathize with the person you’re interacting with, even if you do not like them or their message
- Communicate clearly and effectively, even when delivering negative messages
- Build strong, trusting, and rewarding relationships, think creatively, solve problems, and resolve conflicts

### **Effective communication requires both thinking and feeling**

When emotional awareness is strongly developed, you will know what you are feeling without having to think about it—and you will be able to use these emotional cues to understand what someone is really communicating to you and act accordingly. The goal of effective communication is to find a healthy balance between your intellect and your emotions, between thinking and feeling.

### **Emotional awareness is a skill you can learn**

Emotional awareness is a skill that, with patience and practice, can be learned at any time of life. You can develop emotional awareness by learning how to get in touch with difficult emotions and manage uncomfortable feelings, including anger, sadness, fear, disgust, surprise, and joy. When you know how

to do this, you can remain in control of your emotions and behaviour, even in very challenging situations, and communicate more clearly and effectively.

## Applying Elements of Verbal and Non Verbal Communication

**Verbal communication** uses words as the medium of communication. An effective verbal communication is a two-way process; speaking and listening must occur. Usually verbal communication is in the one-to-one mode or one-to-one interaction.

An important factor in verbal communication at a distance is the fact that the two communicators are not facing each other. The sender can only use words and tone of voice to communicate with the receiver. Not being able to see the body language of the receiver is a disadvantage. It is very important to maintain **accuracy, brevity** and **clarity** in verbal communication. The sender should also ensure that he speaks clearly into the instrument and also conveys respect through his choice of words. Let us now see how we can speak clearly. The acronym RSTP is a useful guide for speaking clearly.

**R - Rhythm** – Maintaining rhythm while speaking is important for communicating effectively. Pauses in speech allow the speaker the time to think of his/her next thought, and also provide the listener enough time to process the information.

**S – Speech** – It is the act of delivering a formal spoken communication to an audience.

**T – Tone** – Tone is the quality of sound that portrays feelings or changes in meaning. A monotone delivery could indicate that a speaker is fed up. An emphatic tone might reveal interest or anger. The statement: "**That is just great**" delivered in a normal tone would mean the speaker likes something. A speaker delivering this statement in a sarcastic tone: "**That is just GREAT**" would mean the opposite.

**P – Pitch** – Pitch occurs because of the vibration of the human vocal cords. Changes in the tension of the vocal cords cause differences in pitch. Pitch in spoken language refers to the perceived frequency of sound. Higher frequencies of sound produce higher pitch than lower frequencies of sound. Usually, the pitch of women's voices is higher than that of men.

**Non-verbal communication:** It is the communication that uses physical parts of the body. It includes facial expressions, tone of voice, sense of touch, sense of smell, and body movements.

By understanding the important aspects of non-verbal communication or body language, you can learn to read people more easily. Argyle and his associates have been studying the features of non-verbal communication that convey information. The following summarizes their findings:



### ***(a) Static Features***

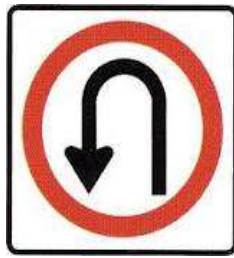
1. **Distance:** The distance one stands from another frequently conveys a non-verbal message. In some cultures it is a sign of attraction, while in others it may reflect status or the intensity of the warmth or feeling. In India, a foot away from another person is considered as a respectful distance while communicating.
2. **Orientation:** People may present themselves in various ways: face-to-face, side-to-side, or even back-to-back. For example, cooperating people are likely to sit side-by-side while competitors frequently face one another. In the security sector, face-to-face orientation is common.
3. **Posture:** Your posture conveys message. For example if you are sitting on a chair with your legs crossed or our arms folded, then such postures convey a degree of relaxation in the communication exchange. For a security officer on duty, there are only two acceptable postures – attention and stand-at-ease.
4. **Gestures with hands and arms:** Shaking hands, touching, holding, embracing or patting on the back, all convey messages. They all reflect an element of intimacy. For instance, in case of people who have to be escorted out of the premises, physical contact can involve touching the hand or the shoulder to emphasize the message of moving from that area.

### ***(b) Dynamic Features***

1. **Facial Expressions:** A smile, frown, raised eyebrow, yawn, and sneer all convey information. Facial expressions continually change during interaction and are observed constantly by the recipient. There is evidence that the meaning of these expressions may be similar across cultures. Smiling is considered to be pleasant and helpful. A frown conveys confusion and at times anger. Raised eyebrows, yawn, a sneer are all unacceptable body language, as they reflect anger or ignorance.
2. **Gestures:** One of the most frequently observed, but least understood cues is a hand movement. Most people use hand movements regularly when talking. Hands at the side or at the back are considered non-threatening, encouraging and acceptable.
3. **Looking:** A major feature of social communication is eye contact. Eye contact is crucial for effective communication. The frequency of contact may suggest either interest or boredom. For example, a Security Officer should look straight into the eyes of the person, although pleasantly and affably.

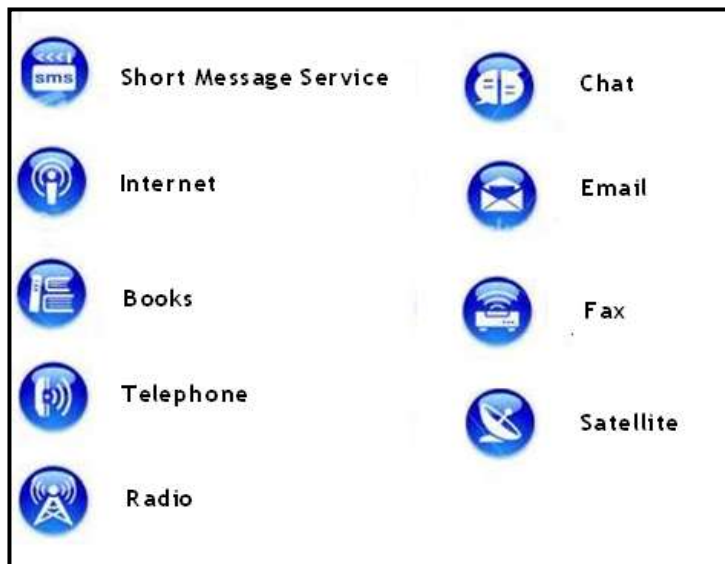
### ***(c) Pictorial Communication***

includes communicating with signs like traffic signals, the 21-gun salute, horns, sirens, etc. For example, the sign of 'stop' tells you to stop at the given point, the sign of two children with school bags indicate the school zone, the sign of U-turn tells you to take a U turn, and the sign of a person crossing the road indicates the place where you can cross the road.



#### ***(d) Symbolic Communication***

Symbolic communication uses symbols that signify religion, school, status, affiliation, communication devices, etc. Given below are some of the symbols used for symbolizing various communication devices.



### **Applying Principles of Effective Communication**

The principles of effective communication can be categorized as 7 C's, which are applicable to both written as well as oral communication. Let us now try to understand them one by one.

**1. Clarity:** Clarity is of utmost importance and communication by hospital support staff should have a definite purpose for communication.

**2. Comprehensive:** Little knowledge is dangerous and, therefore, it is imperative to include all the necessary facts and background information to support the message while communicating, more so, in hospitals. Totality of communication is integral to the process.

**3. Conciseness:** Brief and short pieces of communication ensure effective communication, however, one needs to keep in mind the reader's knowledge of the subject and their time constraints. Information should be conveyed as quickly and easily as possible.

**4. Concreteness:** This element needs to be used with utmost care as it could lead to confusion. The message needs to be based on facts and be real.

**5. Courtesy:** Keeping the ambience of hospital in mind, courtesy needs to be given due credit for patient may arrive at hospital in a state of distress or traumatized.

**6. Correctness:** It is of utmost importance that all pieces of information released by hospital support staff are checked to ensure that it is accurate and timely. Double checking all information whether written or verbal, will ensure right communication occurs all the time.

**7. Coherence:** Logic and rationale need to be used while communicating. A delicate balance needs to be stroked in order to ensure effect communication. Sound and consistent communication will ensure that patient comes back.

## Barriers in Communication

We learnt about the communication cycle and the feedback in the previous sessions. Let us now try to understand the various factors that not only influence communication, but may also act as barriers or deterrent to an effective communication. These factors can be broadly categorized as environmental, attitudinal, system design, individual linguistic ability, poor retention, inattention and emotional state. We will also look into some of the possible measures that you may adopt as solution(s) to overcome the barriers.

### A. Environmental Factors

Environmental factors that affect communication include noise and physical obstacles like distance and lack of proper instruments for communication.

**(i) Noise:** Noise causes stress. Background noise and excessive echo are great distracters to listening, especially for the persons with poor concentration. Similarly use of loud speakers, noise from generators or other machinery interferes with communication.

**Solution:** *Removing noise elements or sound proofing the area of verbal communication will improve communication. For example sound proofing is done in studios for sound isolation and noise blocking.*

**(ii) Physical Obstacles:** Physical obstacles like distance and use of defective instruments for communication affects the effectiveness of communication. Poor lighting, uncomfortable seating arrangements and unhygienic room also affect communication.

**Solution:** *Development of expertise in using instruments like telephone, fax machine and computers can help to overcome the barriers of distance. Checking the instrument before using it for communication is useful in avoiding unpleasant situation.*

### **B. Attitudinal Factors**

Attitudinal factors that affect communication include cultural compulsions, fear of upsetting others, fear of rejection or ridicule like “**Don’t speak unless you are asked to**”, feeling responsible for the other person, circle of musts (ought to, must, have to), and low self image.

**Solution:** *Personality development training sessions can help you to develop abilities for removing attitudinal barriers and to make your communication effective.*

### **C. System Design**

**(i) Time:** Some functions are time sensitive and cannot be delayed. They however, may cause other procedures to be completed in haste and as a result communication could be hampered. Time pressures affect the ability to communicate.

**Solution:** *Manage your time and pace of communication to ensure effectiveness.*

**(ii) Information overload:** Overloading a person with a pool of information may result in confusion, misinterpretation and loss of information.

**Solution:** *Control information flow and document them, else the information is likely to be misinterpreted, forgotten or overlooked.*

**(iii) Complexity in Organisational Structure:** Greater the hierarchy in an organisation (i.e. more the number of managerial levels), more are the chances of communication getting misinterpreted or destroyed.

**Solution:** *Keeping the levels few and ensuring systematic flow of information will reduce the problem of distortion in communication or communication breakdown.*

### **D. Individual linguistic ability**

**(i) Individual characteristics** – Individual characteristics include biological factors like lisping (a speech disorder characterized by the inability correctly pronounce the sounds of ‘s’ for ‘z’, known as sibilant

consonants), and educational factors like proficiency in language. Individual differences in terms of the knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, etc. affect communication effectiveness.

**Solution:** *Education and training in standard language scripts and their usage can reduce individual differences in linguistic ability.*

**(ii) Perceptual and language differences:** Perception is generally how each individual interprets the world around him. Communication distortion occurs if there is wrong perception about the message.

**Solution:** *Rephrasing communication and checking for understanding helps in reducing barrier due to perceptual differences.*

### **E. Poor Retention**

Human memory cannot function beyond a limit. One can't always retain what is being told, especially if he/she is not interested or not attentive. This leads to communication breakdown.

**Solution:** *Use of notes, written messages, e-mails, etc. should be made to avoid communication breakdown.*

### **F. Inattention**

At times we do not listen, but only hear, especially when there are more important things to be taken care of. For instance, if a visitor comes to you at the same instance when you are answering the phone, then it is important to excuse yourself from the person on the phone so that exclusive attention can be given to the visitor or you may request the visitor to wait for some time.

**Solution:** *Use of numbering system helps in giving individual attention. Avoid jumping from one message to another without completing the former.*

### **G. Emotional State**

Emotional state at a particular point of time also affects communication. For example, if you are shocked for whatever reasons, you may not be able to express yourself as you are in unstable state of mind.

**Solution:** *Managing emotions enables appropriate and effective communication.*

## Exercise

1. Identify the main barriers that you have encountered during the communication with your teacher.

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2. Write the solutions that you would like to adopt to overcome the barriers that you faced during the communication with your teacher.

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3. List all the barriers that you have faced while communicating with your friends in a birthday party.

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4. Read the following conversation that takes place between the patient/visitor and the receptionist at the hospital.

### Patient

- I need to make an appointment.
- I need to see the Doctor.
- When is the Doctor free?
- I need to renew my prescription.
- I need to make an appointment for my husband/wife/child.
- My child needs to come in for a check-up.

### Receptionist

- What is your chart number?
- What is the appointment regarding?
- Which day/what time is good for you?
- I'm sorry the doctor is not taking new patients.
- We'll call you if there are any cancellations.

## 5. Role Play

Read the following conversation that takes place between Receptionist and Caller at a Hospital.

### Sample Conversation

<b>Receptionist:</b>	Nisha speaking. How can I help you?
<b>Caller:</b>	I need to make an appointment with Dr. Mehrotra.
<b>Receptionist:</b>	No problem. What is your name, please?
<b>Caller:</b>	I am Abhijit.
<b>Receptionist:</b>	Okay Mr Abhijit. Hold for a moment.
<b>Caller:</b>	Sure.
<b>Receptionist:</b>	Thanks for waiting. Now, what do you need to see the doctor about?
<b>Caller:</b>	Well, I am suffering from cold for more than a week, and I think I might have a chest infection. I want to consult a doctor.
<b>Receptionist:</b>	OK! Doctor Mehrotra is off tomorrow. Do you think you can wait until Thursday?
<b>Caller:</b>	Oh, I was really hoping to get in today, in case I need some antibiotics. May be you can suggest the name of another Doctor.
<b>Receptionist:</b>	OK! You can come today at 3:30 pm as Doctor Soni is available at that time.
<b>Caller:</b>	Thank you very much. I will be there at the Hospital.

Now imagine that you are a Personal Care Assistant (PCA) and you are dealing with a patient. Write down the conversation that generally takes place between them for administering medicine, grooming, bathing, dressing, medical waste management, shifting to another bed, etc. Enact this with your friends before a group/audience and take their feedback.

### Assessment

#### Short Answer Questions

Answer the following questions:

- a) What is effective communication?

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- b) State the difference between verbal and non-verbal communication?

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- c) Enlist the 7C's principles of an effective communication?

### Checklist for Assessment Activity

Use the following checklist to see if you have met all the requirements for assessment activity:

#### Part A

- Define effective communication.
- Define verbal communication.

#### Part B

Discussed in class the following:

- (a) What is effective communication?
- (b) Why understanding of 7C's is important for effective communication?
- (c) Difference between verbal and non-verbal communication

#### Part C

#### Performance Standards

The performance standard may include, but not limited to:

Performance standards	Yes	No
Demonstrate the knowledge of communicating effectively in different scenario of conversations between patient and Patient Healthcare Assistant.		

### GLOSSARY

1. **Active listening:** It is a process of analyzing and evaluating what another person is saying in an effort to understand the true meaning of the message.
2. **Attitude:** It is the transference of a value into action that is consistent over a period of time.
3. **Communication:** The process by which a person, group, organization (the sender) transmits some type of information (the message) to another person, group, organization (the receiver). It is derived from the Latin word 'communis' meaning to share.
4. **Community:** A society where peoples relations with each other are direct and personal and in mutual bonds of emotion and obligation.



5. **Courtesy** – is the name of a social behavior that extends respect to another human being, by giving him/her the right to act first.
6. **Evaluative feedback** – when feedback judges the effect of a communication in terms like ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘average’, ‘correct’, ‘right’, ‘wrong’, it is called ‘evaluative feedback’.
7. **Feedback** – is an element of communication which indicates the completion and the extent of completion of the communication cycle. It provides information to the sender on the receipt of his message. It could be in the form of another message that conveys to the sender that his message has been received and understood, or it could be in the form an action by the receiver, which informs the sender that the message has been received and acted upon.
8. **Formal Communication** – It is that which is connected with the formal organizational arrangement and the official status or the place of the communicator and the receiver. Formal communication is mostly recorded in some form for future reference.
9. **Gesture** – is a hand movement that communicates a message. For example, a salute or a handshake is a gesture of greeting.
10. **Informal Communication** – It arises out of all those channels that fall outside the formal channels. It is established around the societal affiliation of members of the organization. Informal communication does not follow authority lines, as in the case of formal communication.
11. **Message** – generally speaking, ‘message’ is the object of communication.
12. **Organization:** Hierarchically organized group of people so large that personal relationships with every member of the group are impossible.
13. **Organizational communication:** Communication between and among the individuals and groups which make up an organization.
14. **Organizational structure:** The formal configuration between individuals and groups with respect to the allocation of tasks, responsibilities, and authorities within organizations.
15. **Sentence** - A sentence is a group of words which makes a complete sense.
16. **Sign:** Something that stands for or represents something else and bears a natural, nonarbitrary relationship to it.
17. **Symbol:** Representation of an idea.
18. **Team:** A group whose members has complementary skills and is committed to a common purpose or set of performance goals for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.
19. **Telephone Message Book:** It is used to record accurately messages and information received on telephone.
20. **Visitors Register:** It includes the name of visitor, date and time of visit and the signature of the visitor.

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