Presentation Notes
How to Effectively Communicate with Clients

Slide 1
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How does this quote relate to oral and written communication skills?

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”
-George Bernard Shaw
Practicum in Human Services provides occupational specific training and focuses on the development of consumer services, early childhood development and services, counseling and mental health services, family and community services and personal care services. How can you defuse a client’s anger or skepticism as a customer service representative? As a counselor? As a day care director? As a finance manager? As a cosmetologist at a salon? It is important determine and practice ways to resolve conflicting interests and respond to client objections or complaints to the client’s satisfaction.
Effective communication is vital for developing rewarding relationships with family, friends, co-workers, and clients. Stating your thoughts and ideas clearly will help others understand you. On the other hand, poor communication can cause serious misunderstandings and give the wrong impression. Sometimes the message you send is not always the message that is received.

Developing good communication skills can help you work through problems and improve relationships with family, friends, co-workers and clients.

Communication is an exchange of information between two or more people.

Exchange of information by thoughts, opinions or information by speech, writing or signs.
Communication involves nonverbal and verbal skills each day and both are equally important. Two types of communication are used in sending and receiving messages. The first type is nonverbal communication, which is a way of sending and receiving messages without using words. The second type is verbal communication, which is the use of words to send and receive messages.
Nonverbal Communication Skills

We communicate with our body language, by the way we express our thoughts, feelings and emotions. Facial expressions, gestures and body motions convey different meanings and learning how nonverbal messages are sent can help you communicate more effectively.

Effective nonverbal communication

- Appearance: Looking professional will get a client’s positive attention.
- Body language
  - Negative: Arms crossed, scowl on your face, not smiling.
  - Positive: Arms open, standing tall and confident and smiling
- Eye Contact: Looking at the person is acknowledgement that you are listening. Do not roll your eyes.
- Facial expressions: Worth a thousand words.
- Gestures: Body language

Verbal Communication Skills

Heredity and environment are two strong factors affecting our ability to communicate. We learn certain language from our family which is influenced by the regions we live in as words are pronounced differently in regions of any country. Word meanings may also vary from one part of the country to another. Informal language is often used with family and friends and more formal language is used at work. Good communication is needed to be successful at school or at work. Communicating clearly requires active listening and clarity in expressing yourself both verbally and nonverbally. Barriers can impede good communication. Your self-esteem, emotional state and environment can affect the way messages are sent and received. Certain factors can get in the way of good communication, such as a closed mind, mixed messages and prejudice.
Effective verbal communication

- Conversational manners: Be sensitive, tactful, and honest without offending your clients and co-workers.
- Grammar: Using the standard grammar will gain respect from your clients. Using slang will turn them off.
- Inflection: Change in pitch or tone of voice
- Power of what you say: Be sure to be knowledgeable about what you say to people.
- Tone: Pleasant tone of voice communicates the idea that you want to express.
Communication can also be written (letters/flyers/signs) or electronic (e-mail).

Discuss the importance of correct grammar and spelling on business flyers and signage. What does this say to potential clients?
Your personal qualities play an important role in how your nonverbal communication is perceived by your clients.

- Maintain professional appearance, personal hygiene and behavior
- Demonstrate correct client care and professionalism at all times
- Project professionalism, confidence and enthusiasm when providing information
Keys to good listening include:

- be aware of strong emotions
- control your nonverbal messages
- don’t let silence make you nervous
- let the sender complete his or her thoughts
- show interest in what the other person is saying
- try to block out interruptions
- use good verbal skills in giving feedback
Client Relationships

• Good relationship skills will help you succeed on the job. Nearly all positions require the interaction with other people, whether they are co-workers, supervisors or clients. It is important to use good relationship skills. When you are serving others, being friendly is key to making someone feel comfortable. Begin by building a relationship through conversation about casual topics such as the weather, news, sports or simple observations of their dress. Sincere complements will show your concern and make them feel welcome.

• Remember, the client is always right so never argue or take up opposition with a client’s view. Be helpful. Find out what they need and make it happen.

• Successful client relations will get you noticed by the supervisor so make sure you are taking the time to develop client relations skills. A smile and a simple “Hello” are always good first steps to start a conversation and a friendship.
Dealing with Difficult Client Service Situations

- Don’t get defensive or take it personally. The client could be upset for many reasons. Don’t try to understand the specifics. Concentrate on diffusing the situation.
- Express empathy for the client. Remember the first time you were treated inappropriately by an employee or company. Also show regret. Regret is to feel sad or sorry about something that you did or did not do.
- Inform your supervisor after dealing with a difficult client. Be adequately familiar with the company’s protocol for handling a difficult client/situation.
- Listen and allow the client to express his or his dissatisfaction. A client will be unable to listen to reason until he or she has had an opportunity to “vent.”
- Never argue with a client. If you are unable to resolve the situation, refer the client to your supervisor.
- Provide options for solving the problem/situation
Dealing with Difficult Customers
Keeping customers is as important as getting them. This training video demonstrates a simple method for dealing effectively with angry customers. First, deal with the person; then, deal with the problem.
http://youtu.be/a1nrWFCys6A
A Guide to Working with ‘Difficult’ Clients

We love our clients! This indeed is a true statement for without clients, there can be no success or even a business in the first place. However, once in a while a client comes along that is not so easy to work with.

http://www.searchenginejournal.com/a-guide-to-working-with-difficult-clients/54036/
VideoBlog Keys to Working with Difficult Clients
Sarah Bonkrude board certified music therapist and licensed professional counselor talks about how to deal with difficult clients.
http://youtu.be/GYVHZAiKlxg
The Effects of a Bad Customer Service Experience

- On average, loyal customers are worth up to ten times as much as their first purchase.
- It is 6-7 times more expensive to acquire a new customer than it is to keep a current one.
- Take the time to address unhappy customers and do everything in your power to remedy the situation. It’s not only worth keeping their business, but also avoiding any negative word of mouth exposure.
- 91% of unhappy customers will not willingly do business with you again.

According to Helpscout.com, a bad customer service experience can effect a business in a multitude of ways.

Teacher note: You may opt to assign the students to read the information on customer service. There are eight chapters containing facts, quotes and statistics at:

75 Customer Service Facts, Quotes and Statistics
Learn how your business can deliver with the best of the best.
http://www.helpscout.net/75-customer-service-facts-quotes-statistics/
Top Six Ways to Get an Angry Customer to Back Down
Six quick tips to help you diffuse anger and create calm with unhappy customers. This video is part of the “Golden Method” e-learning course for handling difficult customers.
https://youtu.be/ACKbkmO9rLg
Have students brainstorm additional job interview questions which are client-based. Allow time for class discussion.

Job Interview Questions
How do you deal with difficult customers? How to answer interview questions.
http://youtu.be/-KOn9KI0NI
Presentation Notes
How to Effectively Communicate with Clients

Slide 19

Review

• Compare and contrast nonverbal and verbal communication skills.

• What do conversational manners include?

• Explain three keys to good listening.

• Describe four techniques in dealing with difficult client service situations.

• How can bad customer service effect a business?
Presentation Notes
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Slide 20
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http://www.searchenginejournal.com/a-guide-to-working-with-difficult-clients/54036/

Textbook:

Websites:
- Babson College Customer Service Guidelines
  http://www.babson.edu/offices-services/human-resources/employment/students/policies/Pages/student-employee-policies.aspx
- 75 Customer Service Facts, Quotes and Statistics
  Learn how your business can deliver with the best of the best.
  http://www.help scout.net/75-customer-service-facts-quotes-statistics/
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References and Resources

YouTube™:
• Dealing With Difficult Customers
  Keeping customers is as important as getting them. This training video demonstrates a simple method for dealing effectively with angry customers. First, deal with the person; then, deal with the problem.
  http://youtu.be/a1nrWFCys6A

• Job Interview Questions
  How do you deal with difficult customers? How to answer interview questions.
  http://youtu.be/-8On9KMQ0N8

• Top Six Ways to Get An Angry Customer to Back Down
  Six quick tips to help you diffuse anger and create calm with unhappy customers. This video is part of the "Golden Method" e-learning course for handling difficult customers.
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