

Strategies for Student Success in Health Occupations
California Community College Health Care Initiative

Communication Skills Activity

Group Activity: Divide the students into groups of four based on the results of their Temperament Scale. Give each group a communication situation to discuss and solve in ten minutes. Have each group report their results to the class, identifying the general characteristics of their type and the consistencies noted among the group members.

<p>#1 You are an EMT-Paramedic who transported a patient who fell off his bicycle. You followed protocol, and based on your assessment, the patient did not meet criteria for transport to a Trauma Unit. As you are completing your paper work, the nurse comes into the report room and, in the hearing of your intern and other staff, starts yelling at you that you made a big mistake by not taking this patient to a Trauma Unit. At that point, you get another call and leave prior to clearing up the issue.</p>	<p>#2 A respiratory therapist working the evening shift on a busy medical surgical unit notices that the patient's O2 liter flow rates are frequently above the 2L/minute level he sets them at on his first rounds. He is very frustrated about this and turns the flow rates down to 2L without saying anything to the nursing staff. The next time he makes rounds, the flow rate has been increased again.</p>
<p>#3 You are the radiology technician who is performing a Barium Enema on an elderly woman with colon cancer. She is very weak and has trouble controlling her bowels. She says she does not want the test and wonders aloud why she must go through such agony at her age and states that she just wants to die. You bring the situation to the attention of the Radiologist who tells you to perform the procedure and "be quick about it" as you are running behind. He also says that she should not have a problem in that it is covered by her insurance.</p>	<p>#4 You are a dental hygienist working with a group of patients in a skilled nursing facility. You notice that one of your patients is soiled and ask the nursing assistant to change the patient's clothes while you care for another patient. The assistant gives you a dirty look and tells you that the routine is to change all the patients before visiting hours (two hours from now), as they will just soil themselves again</p>

Group Activity: After a break, reconvene and divide the students into groups of four, with multiple types represented in each group. Assign one student to play the role of observer. Give each group the same situation to process and solve in ten minutes. Have the observers report their findings to the group: 1) Flow of communication, 2) Observed blocking behaviors, 3) Observed evidence of frustration, 4) Facilitating behaviors noted, 5) Blocking behaviors noted, 6) Advantages and disadvantages of same style groups vs. diverse groups, 7) Adaptations needed with diversity in communication styles.

Group Discussion: Note the similarities and differences in opinions, attitudes, biases and responses in groups with the same communication style and those with different communication styles in a group.