

# Unit 1: Communication

We will begin this course by examining issues of fundamental importance to the successful provision of health & social care, communication. We will explore communication in written, oral and non-verbal forms. This will include the alternatives to verbal communication, where the reader will gain the ability to adapt to different ways of communicating to ensure the care user can express feeling and opinions and are provided with effective services that are appropriate for their needs.

Discussion and examples will be given as to why there needs to be clear and effective communication with clients/professionals/colleagues. Examples will be given in regards to good and bad communication and how this can impact on the client and service provider.



**Figure 1: We will explore a range of communication methods**

**Activity 1 – Why do you think effective communication is necessary?**

## **Methods of Communication**

Communication is important because, when we communicate, we impart information to other people. This helps individuals to be more effective during an interaction of question and answer, where both parties will begin to understand what information is being shared. This also assists in clarifying any misunderstood points; where both individuals can be clear on an objective. Communication is important for health and social care professionals in establishing working relationships with clients.

Communication includes verbal communication, that is, spoken (oral), written, and non-verbal communication, which is frequently used to support verbal communication.

This section will explore the different types of verbal and non-verbal communication, the effectiveness of communication skills which are relevant to specific individuals and client groups. It will also look at the difficulties that impact on the effectiveness of communication.

### Oral or verbal communication

Face to face or oral communication involves using words and sentences (verbal communication). Speaking or signing is central to establishing relationships between people, such as health and social care professionals, with clients (care users). For instance, these professionals need to be able to communicate effectively and be equipped with appropriate social skills in order to identify the wide range of emotional needs that services users will have.

Language can be defined as verbal communication. 'Verbal' means 'using words'. Language can be identified as being used not just verbally, through speech, but also by sign language such as the use of British Sign

Language or Makaton. Here, different signs have specific meanings, where the gestures translate into words and speech (Smithson, 2005). Below gives examples of the type of tasks where good communication is important:<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 2: Communication is vital in a number of areas**

## **Activity 2 – What do you think would be the consequences of poor communication in health and social care settings?**

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from Moonie 2005 at:

<http://books.google.com/books?id=M4c85YvHyicC&printsec=frontcover&dq=a+level+health+and+social+care#PPT59,M1>

# Assignment 1

1. Analyse communication methods and assess their effectiveness in a care setting (1000 words)
2. Analyse the factors that can support or inhibit effective communication (1000 words)
3. Discuss the physical and psychological factors that can affect an individual's quality of life (1200 words)
4. Why should a care worker treat a client with respect? (400 words)