

Module 5. Communication: Listening and Talking Skills

Goals

The purpose of this module is to improve participants' ability to communicate with consumers by developing three key skills: listening, paraphrasing, and asking open-ended questions.

Time

3.5 hours (includes 30 minutes for break and warm-up or closing)

Activities	Training Methods	Time
5.1 Listening Well	Interactive presentation, brainstorm, demonstration role plays, pairs work	40 minutes
5.2 Paraphrasing – Saying It in Your Own Words	Demonstration role play, pairs work, discussion	40 minutes
5.3 Asking Open-Ended Questions	Demonstration role plays, brainstorm, pairs work, discussion	40 minutes
5.4 Communication Skills Practice	Role plays and discussion	1 hour

Supplies

- Flip chart, markers, tape
- Paper and pencils
- Index cards

Handouts

- Handout 5.1 Listening Well – How It Helps
- Handout 5.2 Talking with Your Body
- Handout 5.3 Saying It in Your Own Words – Getting Started
- Handout 5.4 Saying It in Your Own Words -- Practice
- Handout 5.5 Saying It in Your Own Words – How It Helps
- Handout 5.6 Asking Closed and Open-Ended Questions
- Handout 5.7 How Communication Skills Help
- Handout 5.8 Listening and Talking Skills – Practice

Advance Preparation

Review all training and presentation materials for this module.

Copy all handouts for participants.

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Activity 5.1 Listening Well

This activity begins with demonstration role plays. If you are the only instructor, identify a participant or another staff member to help with the role plays. Prepare the person in advance by describing the purpose of the activity and his or her role. Ask the person to think about something important that happened recently to him or her that can safely be shared with the group. This activity works best if the speaker shares something that is current and important, but the person should also be comfortable sharing this story with the whole group.

Prepare flip chart pages on “Definitions of Communication” (step 1) and the Module 5 “Learning Agenda” (step 2).

Activity 5.2: Paraphrasing – Saying It in Your Own Words

Prepare a flip chart page for step 4.

Like “Listening Well,” this activity begins with a demonstration. If you are the only instructor, identify a participant or another staff member to help you. Prepare them in advance by describing the purpose of the activity and their role. Ask the person to think about a problem that he or she recently resolved that can safely be shared with the group. Be clear that you will keep interrupting to paraphrase, and that they should let you know if you have correctly caught the meaning of what they have said.

Activity 5.3: Asking Open-Ended Questions

Prepare flip chart pages for steps 6 and 7.

Activity 5.4: Communication Skills Practice

This activity includes a demonstration role play. If you are the only instructor, identify a participant or another staff member to help you. Prepare him or her ahead of time by describing the purpose of the activity and his or her role, selecting one of the case scenarios from Handout 5.8: “Listening and Talking Skills--Practice.”

ACTIVITY 5.1 Listening Well

40 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Define communication.
- Describe the nonverbal cues (body language) used in effective listening.
- Describe how it feels when someone is really listening to us vs. when they are not.
- Explain the importance of effective listening in direct-care work.

Key Content

- Two definitions for communication are: 1) the exchange of information between individuals and 2) the establishment of rapport. The accurate exchange of information is important for providing quality care. Establishing rapport is important for developing and maintaining relationships with consumers, family members, co-workers, and supervisors.
- Listening is one of the skills necessary for clear communication. When people listen effectively, they give the speaker their full attention and they really *hear* the speaker. Equally important, the speaker feels that she or he has been heard.
- Everyone has the capacity to listen effectively and can improve through practice. Unfortunately, the skills for effective listening are rarely taught. Therefore, most people are generally not very good listeners and we are not used to being listened to well.
- Body language— or nonverbal communication—can communicate messages just as words can. For example, people communicate with their body language whether they are really listening or not—intentionally or unintentionally.
- It is important to be aware of and manage one’s body language, because people often respond more to that, than to what was said.
- Listening well is a vital skill in direct-care work because:
When people listen with their full attention, they better understand and remember more of what is being communicated, whether from a supervisor, co-worker, or a consumer.
- Being listened to attentively feels caring and helpful to a consumer. Not being listened to feels hurtful and disrespectful.

Activity Steps

Interactive presentation (5 minutes)

1. Ask participants:

What does communication mean to you and why do we communicate?

After a few responses, post the prepared flip chart page with the definition of communication. State that the “information” exchanged can be facts, feelings, ideas, or opinions. Note that people communicate both verbally and nonverbally.

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COMMUNICATION

- The exchange of information between individuals – e.g., by speaking, writing, or using a common system of signs or behavior
- Establishing “rapport, “ or a sense of mutual understanding and sympathy

2. Ask participants:

How is communication important for direct-care work?

Guide the discussion to cover the first bullet in “Key Content.” Post the prepared flip chart page with the learning agenda for this module. Note that the goal of this module is to improve participants’ ability to communicate with consumers by developing three key skills: listening, paraphrasing, and asking open-ended questions.



LEARNING AGENDA: MODULE 5

- Develop listening skills and an awareness of body language
- Explore and practice paraphrasing
- Develop skills of asking open-ended questions to clarify and learn more from consumers

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abilities

Demonstration role play and discussion (10 minutes)

3. Ask participants:
Why is listening important for communication?
4. After a few responses, explain that this session will help participants to explore the role of nonverbal listening cues in communication, beginning with a demonstration role play. Ask the volunteer staff person or participant (see Advance Preparation) to come forward. Explain that you are going to demonstrate listening while this person tells you about something important that recently happened to him or her. Ask participants to observe what “the listener” is communicating to the speaker and how that is being communicated.
5. Conduct the role play for two minutes. As the speaker tells his or her story, the “listener” (the instructor) should act increasingly distracted, demonstrating poor non-verbal listening skills.

⇒ **Teaching Tips**

- In this first role play, exaggerate poor listening skills by avoiding eye contact, fidgeting, playing with your papers, or checking your cell phone. In this case, one of your non-listening cues can be watching the time so that you can stop the role play after two minutes.
- One of the challenges of being the only instructor is making it clear to the participants (and to yourself!) when you are acting as a role player and when you are being the instructor. You may need a few

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cues or moments of transition between those roles. Some suggestions for transitioning include:

- Stand in different places when you're facilitating a discussion from when you're in a role play.
- Use a prop—e.g., a hat or scarf or sweater—to indicate when you're in the role play.
- Make a comment to the group about the transition—e.g. “Okay, the role play is over -- let's discuss what you observed.”

6. After the role play, debrief with the following questions:

Ask participants:

- *How well do you think the listener was listening?*
- *What was the listener communicating to the speaker?*
- *How did the listener communicate that?*

Ask the speaker:

- *How did you feel during this communication?*

7. Ask the “speaker” to continue his or her story. This time, demonstrate attentive nonverbal listening skills. Ask a participant to watch the time and to say when two minutes has passed.

⇒ **Teaching Tips**

- Demonstrate nonverbal listening skills by keeping eye contact, leaning toward the speaker, nodding, using appropriate facial expressions, and saying things like “uh-huh,” “really,” “okay.”
- It may be tempting to ask questions of the person telling the story, but to fully demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of nonverbal communication do not do this.

8. Debrief with the following questions.

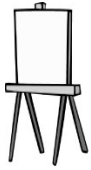
Ask participants:

- *How well was the “listener” listening this time?*
- *What was the listener communicating to the speaker?*
- *How was that communicated?*

Ask the speaker:

How did you feel this time?

List the nonverbal cues on a flip chart page labeled “Listening Well.”



LISTENING WELL

9. Ask participants:
- *What does “body language” mean to you?*
 - *What examples of body language did you see in these two role plays?*
 - *What have you learned from this activity about the role of body language in letting people know you are listening?*

10. Summarize by explaining that these two demonstrations show the impact of “nonverbal communication” — or body language — on listening. The first role play showed poor listening, while the second one showed effective listening.

Pairs work and discussion (20 minutes)

11. Explain that participants will now have an opportunity to become more aware of their own body language and to experience for themselves the impact of poor vs. effective listening.
12. Give instructions and then ask participants to role-play:
- Quickly form pairs.
 - Agree on one partner to be the speaker, the other the listener. (They will switch roles later.)
 - Speakers should think of something personally important and safe to share. They will speak for 2 minutes.
 - Listeners should use their body language to exaggerate distracted or *poor* listening, remembering what was demonstrated in the first role play.
13. After 2 minutes, ask the speakers to stop. Both members of the pair should briefly share with each other how they felt.
14. In the large group, debrief with the following questions:
- Ask the speakers:
- *How did it make you feel to not be listened to?*
 - *What happened to your story while you were telling it?*

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Ask the listeners:

- *How did you feel in your role as “poor listener?”*
- *How much do you remember of what you were told?*

⇒ Teaching Tip

Some participants may become angry when they are blatantly not being listened to. Be prepared to acknowledge anger or other emotions, and remind participants that this is an exercise—the poor listeners in this activity are simply playing a role.

15. Repeat the role play and discussion, but, this time, ask the listener to use *effective* nonverbal listening skills (referring to the flip chart page, step 7) and to pay careful attention. Debrief in the large group as before, giving participants an opportunity to talk about how this role play felt different from the previous role play.
16. In order to give everyone the experience, switch roles in each pair, and repeat the two role plays. Allow time for brief feedback within the pairs after each role play. At the end, in the large group, ask how it felt to be in the opposite role (i.e., speaker vs. listener), and if anyone has any additional insights they would like to share.

Interactive presentation (5 minutes)

17. Summarize the primary points participants have made (i.e., the negative feelings that came up when not being listened to and the satisfaction of being well listened to). Ask participants:

Based on your experience here, why do you think effective listening is important in direct-care work?

18. After a few responses, distribute and review Handout 5.1, “Listening Well – How It Helps.” Also distribute Handout 5.2, “Talking with Your Body,” and note that body language is important with all communication skills — not just listening.

ACTIVITY 5.2 Paraphrasing – Saying It in Your Own Words

40 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Define and demonstrate paraphrasing.
- Describe how paraphrasing improves communication.

Key Content

- ❖ Paraphrasing is a communication skill that focuses on reflecting and clarifying information and/or feelings. Paraphrasing means stating in one's own words what someone else has just said or expressed. The purposes are to confirm or clarify the message the speaker is trying to communicate and to acknowledge that the listener has heard him or her accurately.
- ❖ Paraphrasing improves communication in five important ways:
 1. People deeply appreciate feeling heard. (recall "Effective Listening")
 2. Paraphrasing prevents miscommunication. False assumptions, errors, and misinterpretations can be corrected on the spot.
 3. Paraphrasing helps the listener to stay focused on clearly understanding what the speaker is saying.
 4. Paraphrasing helps the listener remember better what was said.
 5. Paraphrasing can stop anger and cool down a crisis because the focus is on clarifying information rather than on reacting to the situation.

Activity Steps

Demonstration role play and discussion (15 minutes)

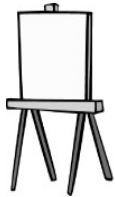
1. Explain that in this activity, participants will further strengthen their communication skills. Ask the participant volunteer for this session to come forward (see Advance Preparation). Explain that you and the volunteer are going to have a conversation about a problem the volunteer recently resolved.
2. Ask the volunteer to begin talking. After 30 seconds or so, stop the speaker and repeat back in your own words what you heard the speaker say. The speaker should say if you understood correctly, and then either clarify or continue the story. Repeat this sequence two or three times. End the demonstration after about three minutes.

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⇒ Teaching Tip

Don't use the word "paraphrasing" in these initial steps. The idea is to show participants that paraphrasing is something they may already routinely do in a conversation. If the word is new to participants, they may feel intimidated by it and not realize this is something they already do.

3. Ask participants:
 - *What did I do after listening to parts of the speaker's story?*
 - *What did the speaker do when I did not get the story exactly right?*
 - *What effect do you think this repeating and clarifying had on the conversation?*
4. Explain that "paraphrasing" is repeating in one's own words what a person has said. Post the flip chart page with the definition and purposes of paraphrasing.



PARAPHRASING

Definition:

Saying in your own words what you heard someone say or express

Purposes:

- Confirm or clarify what the other person means
- Show that you have heard the other person.

5. Ask participants to name some of the words and phrases they heard you use during the role play that initiated paraphrasing. Ask for ideas about other phrases that could be used. Distribute Handout 5.3, "Saying It in Your Own Words – Getting Started," and note any phrases that are not on the list.

Large-group and pairs work (10 minutes)

6. Explain that participants will now try paraphrasing in a work situation. Distribute Handout 5.4, "Saying It in Your Own Words -- Practice," and read the instructions aloud. Read the first consumer's statement, and ask for volunteers to try paraphrasing.

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⇒ Teaching Tip

If a participant does not accurately paraphrase what you said, give feedback and encourage him or her to try again. If he or she seems really stuck, ask if another participant can help out.

7. After demonstrating with two quotes, ask participants to form pairs. Ask them to work together to write a paraphrase statement for each of the remaining quotes.

⇒ Teaching Tip

If participants are struggling with the concept, continue this activity in the large group. If you need more quotes for demonstration purposes, use some from Handout 5.8, “Listening and Talking Skills – Practice.”

Discussion (15 minutes)

8. When the pairs have finished working, ask them to share their work. Read one statement aloud and ask one pair to read their paraphrase statement. Give feedback and ask for other ideas for how to paraphrase. Encourage their efforts, while making sure that the paraphrasing is effective (i.e., not simply repeating). If necessary, help modify the paraphrases.
9. Ask participants:
 - *How did it feel to paraphrase?*
 - *What specific aspects of the task felt hard (if any)?*
 - *How do you think paraphrasing could improve communication between direct-care workers and consumers?*
10. Summarize by emphasizing that, as with any skill, paraphrasing may seem awkward at first, but participants can gain confidence in paraphrasing through practice, both on the job and elsewhere. Note that there will be more chances to practice later on.
11. Pass out and review Handout 5.5, “Saying It in Your Own Words – How It Helps.”

ACTIVITY 5.3 Asking Open-Ended Questions

40 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain the difference between closed and open-ended questions.
- Explain the importance of using open-ended questions to communicate with consumers.
- Create open-ended questions that will be useful in direct-care work.

Key Content

- ❖ Closed questions usually generate short facts or yes/no answers. Open-ended questions encourage responses that include feelings, opinions, descriptions, or explanations. Open-ended questions usually begin with “how,” “what,” or “why?”
- ❖ In direct-care work, sometimes workers need to ask closed questions to get specific information from consumers. However, open-ended questions are much more effective when the worker needs to know about the consumer’s thoughts, feelings, or experiences. Such information may be difficult to obtain using closed questions, especially if the consumer is having problems and is hesitant to talk about the situation.

Activity Steps

Demonstration role plays and discussion (15 minutes)

1. Ask for a volunteer to help with this activity. Begin by explaining that you are going to ask some questions; the content of the answers doesn’t matter, but participants should observe the style of the questions and the types of answers such questions elicit.
2. For about 30 seconds, ask your volunteer a series of closed questions--e.g., “Are you feeling okay?” “Are you enjoying the workshop?” “Are you nervous right now?” “Is it too hot in the room?”
3. After the questions and answers, ask the other participants what they observed about the kinds of questions you were asking and the kind of answers you got. After a few responses, move on to the next step, explaining that you will repeat the exercise but with a difference. The observers’ task is to determine how it is different.
4. Ask the volunteer similar questions, but make them all open-ended, e.g., “How do you think the workshop is going so far?” “How would you describe the temperature in the room right now?” “What are your feelings about doing this role play with me?”

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5. Thank the volunteer for helping you with this exercise. Then ask the other participants —“What do you think is different about the questions I asked this time and the ones I asked before?” Follow up by asking, “How were the answers different?”
6. Display the prepared flip chart page. Discuss the points, referring to the demonstration for examples.



CLOSED QUESTIONS:

- Begin with *did, do, are, is, when*
- Answered by “yes” or “no” or
 - simple facts
- Stop the conversation
- Require many questions to
 - get the full story

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS:

- Begin with *how, what, or why*
- Clarify information
- Keep the conversation open
- Allow people to tell their story

Brainstorming and discussion (15 minutes)

7. Explain that asking questions — showing curiosity and concern about someone — is important in building any new relationship. In later modules, participants will learn more about the importance of building a relationship with the consumer. For now, ask them to think about meeting someone — anyone — for the first time. Ask them to brainstorm the kinds of questions they would ask to get to know more about that person. Write the questions on several flip chart pages, *with the exact wording* that participants use.



GETTING TO KNOW SOMEONE: QUESTIONS TO ASK

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⇒ Teaching Tips

- It is important to write the exact wording that participants use, because the questions will be rewritten to make them more open.
- Leave several lines blank under each question to have enough room for re-writing.
- If participants have trouble thinking of questions, suggest topics like —family, hobbies, favorite foods, routines.

8. Looking at the first question you recorded on the flip chart, ask participants if it is open-ended or closed. Refer back to the flip chart with guidelines for open-ended and closed questions.

⇒ Teaching Tip

If participants are still confused, ask the question of one of the participants and see what kind of an answer they give (either long or short). If it is a closed question, show how to turn it into an open-ended question, and write the new, open-ended question underneath the closed question.

9. Continue with the next few questions, asking participants if it is open-ended or closed. For each closed question, ask participants to reword it as an open-ended question, guiding the discussion to help them if necessary. Once they get it, write the new open-ended question beneath the closed one.

⇒ Teaching Tip

Some closed questions —e.g., “Where do you live?”—do not make sense as an open-ended question. In that case, encourage participants to follow it up with an open-ended question —e.g., “How do you like living there?”

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Pairs work and discussion (10 minutes)

10. Have participants form new pairs. Assign one or two of the remaining closed questions on the flip chart page to each pair, asking them to make each one open-ended.

⇒ **Teaching Tip**

- If most of the participants are struggling to understand the concept of open-ended questions, you can continue doing this in the large group.

11. After a few minutes, ask them to share their open-ended questions. Correct or revise as necessary, and write the open-ended version under the closed question.
12. Distribute and review Handout 5.6, “Asking Closed and Open-Ended Questions” and Handout 5.7, “How Communication Skills Help.”

ACTIVITY 5.4 COMMUNICATION SKILLS PRACTICE

60 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate active listening, paraphrasing, and asking open-ended questions in order to more effectively manage challenging situations.

Key Content

- ❖ The communication skills that have been discussed in this module are keys to setting the stage for effectively handling challenging situations:
 - Listening well helps workers to hear better what consumers are trying to say and reassures consumers that they are getting their workers' full attention.
 - Paraphrasing shows that the worker understands and allows the worker to clarify the consumer's meaning.
 - Asking open-ended questions helps the worker to get sufficient information to accurately describe a challenging situation and to explore possible ways of addressing it.
- ❖ While these skills may seem awkward now, after practice they will become second nature. Practice helps participants to learn. Using these skills in the classroom, with co-workers, and at home will help participants to apply the skills better when working with consumers.

Activity Steps

Demonstration role play and discussion (15 minutes)

1. List the communication skills that have been discussed so far and ask participants how each one would help in understanding a challenging situation or solving a problem with a consumer. (See Key Content)
2. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to allow participants to practice using these communication skills in a challenging situation with a consumer. Note that managing our emotional reactions is also part of listening well and they will learn more about that skill later on in the training. For now, if one of the practice remarks triggers a strong emotion, they should do their best to move past their first emotional reaction and try to focus on using their listening and talking skills.

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3. Note that you will first demonstrate how they can do this. (Use one of the case scenarios from Handout 5.8, “Listening and Talking Skills – Practice.”) Set the stage by explaining that you are playing the role of a direct-care worker, who is asking your consumer what you can do for him or her today. Ask your “assistant” (see Advance Preparation) to come forward, and introduce your assistant (“This is my consumer, Mrs. or Mr. ...”).
4. Conduct the role play, demonstrating listening, paraphrasing, and asking open-ended questions. Then, thank your volunteer. Ask participants:
 - *How did you know I was listening?*
 - *How did I paraphrase?*
 - *What open-ended question did I ask?*
 - *How do you think the consumer was feeling about this interaction?*
5. Note that in these role plays, the focus is only on the communication skills and that the role play stops after you use them. This may feel awkward and incomplete, but the purpose here is to practice the skills — problem-solving will come later.

Pairs work (10 minutes)

5. Divide participants into pairs. Distribute Handout 5.8, “Listening and Talking Skills – Practice” and assign one scenario to each pair. Explain that they will have less than 10 minutes to prepare for a role play. They should decide which one of them will play the role of the consumer and which one will play the role of direct-care worker.

Role plays (35 minutes)

6. Ask for one pair to volunteer to go first. Designate an area of the classroom for the role plays, and ask the role players to come forward. Ask those who are watching to be supportive of their classmates by paying attention and not interrupting the role play. Read the pair’s case scenario aloud, and then ask them to start the role play. Remind them to concentrate on the communication skills and not try to solve the problem.
7. Stop the role play after the “direct-care worker” has demonstrated the three communication skills—or become stuck. Give feedback on what the “direct-care worker” did well and what he or she could improve upon. Spend about 5 minutes for each role play, including discussion.

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⇒ Teaching Tips

- Do not overwhelm participants with negative feedback. Emphasize what they have done well. Note that there's no one "right" way to use these skills, and that everyone will improve with practice.
- It is natural to try to solve the problem during this role play. However, the focus here is on practicing the communication skills. Stop a participant if he or she starts to problem solve.
- If the class is very large and there are two instructors, you could divide the class in half and do the role plays in two groups, simultaneously. It is hard to keep the attention of a large class during role plays.

8. Ask for another pair to conduct their role play. Follow the same procedure. Continue until all the groups have finished.
9. Debrief by asking:
 - *How did it feel to do these role plays?*
 - *What did people struggle with?*
 - *Were any of the situations a surprise?*

End with a review of the importance of these communication skills as the building blocks for building relationships and solving problems

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Module 5 Handouts

Communication: Listening and Talking Skills

Activity 5.1: Listening Well

Handout 5.1
Listening Well: How It Helps

Handout 5.2
Talking With Your Body

Activity 5.2: Paraphrasing—Saying It in Your Own Words

Handout 5.3
Saying It in Your Own Words: Getting Started

Handout 5.4
Saying It in Your Own Words: Practice

Handout 5.5
Saying It in Your Own Words: How It Helps

Activity 5.3: Asking Open-Ended Questions

Handout 5.6
Asking Closed and Open-Ended Questions

Handout 5.7
How Communication Skills Help

Activity 5.4: Communication Skills Practice

Handout 5.8
Listening and Talking Skills — Practice

Handout 5.1—Listening Well: How It Helps

Page 1 of 1

Listening well is a key skill in direct care. Read how it helps these workers.

Gabe's Story

“When I listen well, I understand more of what supervisors and consumers tell me. That makes it easier to recall what they said later on.”

Katy's Story

“I'm a good listener. So consumers know that I care about and respect them.”

Handout 5.2—Talking With Your Body

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Body language is the way you move and speak. It can tell consumers that you care about and respect them. It can also let them know that you are paying attention.

Read how these workers manage their body language.

Lonnie's tip — Put on a happy face.

“People can often tell how I feel by the look on my face. So I try to smile.”

Ed's tip — Look consumers in the eye.

“I look people in the eye as much as possible. This is extra important when I help someone bathe or use the toilet. Eye contact lets them know I respect them.”

Donna's tip — Position yourself at eye level with consumer.

“So many of my consumers are sitting or in bed when I'm working with them. When we're talking, I try to sit or otherwise get down to their eye level, so they don't have to look up at me all the time.”

Drew's tip — Touch people gently.

“I try to touch consumers as gently as possible. But before I touch someone, I always ask if it's OK. Some people don't mind being touched. Some people really like it. And then others don't like it at all. So it's important to ask.”

Handout 5.2—Talking With Your Body

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Mandy's tip — Use a friendly voice.

“People really pay attention to the tone of my voice. So I try to make my voice sound warm and caring.”

Talking with Your Body — Review:

- Put on a happy face.
- Look consumers in the eye.
- Position yourself at eye level with the consumer.
- Touch people gently.
- Use a friendly voice.

Handout 5.3—Saying It in Your Own Words: Getting Started

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Part of being a good listener is paraphrasing. That means reflecting back, in your own words, what someone else said.

Here are some ways to get started:

“Did I hear you say ...”

“So what you’re saying is ...”

“Am I hearing you right that ...”

“Are you saying that ...”

“I believe that you are saying ...”

Handout 5.4—Saying It in Your Own Words: Practice

Page 1 of 1

Read one of the quotes below. Imagine that a consumer is speaking to his or her direct-care worker. Think about how you could reflect back what the consumer said, in your own words, if you were the direct-care worker. Then write your paraphrase in the space below the quote.

1. “I’m so tired today. Can’t we do these exercises another time?”

2. “I didn’t get along well with the worker before you. I hope you’ll be better.”

3. “I’m so bored. Isn’t there something else you could do with me today?”

4. “The last person who took care of me was so sweet. I don’t think you’ll be as nice as she was.”

Handout 5.5—Saying It in Your Own Words: How It Helps

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Paraphrasing — saying in your own words what someone else said — may seem difficult at first. With time and practice, it gets easier. Read how paraphrasing helps these workers to communicate better at work.

Lily's tip — It shows you are listening.

“I like to say in my own words what someone else said. It lets them know I am listening.”

Mandy's tip — It helps avoid confusion.

“Sometimes, when I say things back in my own words, I find out that I didn't understand what the person was trying to say. With paraphrasing, if I don't understand, they can tell me right away and we don't get all confused.”

Jon's tip — It helps keep you focused on the consumer.

“Sometimes people say things that make me feel really emotional. Paraphrasing helps me focus and brings me back to what the other person is really saying. That makes it easier for me to stay calm.”

To review — Paraphrasing:

- Shows you are listening.
- Helps avoid confusion.
- Helps keep you focused on the consumer.

Handout 5.6—Asking Closed and Open-Ended Questions

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It's important to know the difference between closed and open-ended questions. Both kinds of questions are useful for different situations.

Closed questions:

- Can be answered in a few words
- Help you get information
- Stop the conversation

Examples:

“Do you want me to get your sweater now?”
“How many cookies do you want?”
“When did you see the doctor?”

Open-ended questions:

- Encourage a longer answer
- Help you find out thoughts and feelings
- Keep the conversation going

Examples:

“Why are you sitting by yourself?”
“How did you make that blanket?”
“What jobs have you had?”

Handout 5.7—How Communication Skills Help

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Good communication means using the talking and listening skills you have just learned. Here's how listening, paraphrasing, and asking open-ended questions can help you do your job well.

To review — Good communications skills:

- Help you understand what the consumer is thinking and feeling.
- Help build good feelings between you and the consumer.
- Make it easier for you and the consumer to solve problems together.

Handout 5.8—Listening and Talking Skills: Practice

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Work with a partner. Role-play a talk between a consumer and a direct care worker. Then switch roles.

Consumer:

Read one of the quotes below.

Worker:

Respond with listening, paraphrasing, and open-ended questions. Don't try to solve any problems — yet.

1. "I'm not hungry. Let me just sleep now and eat later."
2. "I don't want your kind here! I keep telling them not to send you people!"
3. "The last person who took care of me didn't like me. She kept poking and hitting me, and sometimes she swore at me!"
4. "My daughter just left. She is so mean. She only visits to ask for money."
5. "I'm bored. Isn't there something else we could do today?"
6. "You're always late! I'm going to ask for another worker who can be on time."
7. "Ouch — you're too rough with me! I've never had so many bruises."