



Communication Skills: Core Skills in Humanistic Person-Centered Communication

Preceptor Module Two

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SESSION TWO OUTLINE

- I. Humanistic Psychology: Empathy, Congruence, and Positive Regard
- II. Giving and Receiving Feedback
- III. Identifying and Acting on the 'Kernel of Truth'
- IV. Choosing Our Reactions
- V. Addressing Emotional Responses
- VI. Teach-Back Technique

I. Humanistic Psychology

- Carl Rogers, the father of humanistic psychology, taught that the following three conditions are necessary for effective communication, therapy, and interactions:
 - Empathy
 - Positive Regard (Respect)
 - Congruence (Self-Awareness)

I. Humanistic Psychology

Empathy means to have some sense of what the other is feeling.

- Avoid saying that you KNOW what another is feeling; it is impossible to truly know what another person is feeling
- It is possible, though, to have some sense of what the other is feeling

I. Humanistic Psychology

Positive regard means to show respect to all; you do not have to respect someone's behavior, but you can respect the other person as a human being and show them courtesy

- For example, if someone is a criminal or drug abuser, you may not respect their actions, but you can still treat them with courtesy
- Courtesy does not mean agreeing with someone's actions, it simply means being courteous, and using respectful language in your interactions
- Even if you are setting limits, you can do it with courtesy

I. Humanistic Psychology

Congruence means to become self-aware as a health professional and to have that guide your interactions in specific situations

- For example, if you have to tell a patient bad news you might say:

“There is something I have to tell you but I cannot think of a good way to tell you”

or

“There is no good way to tell you what I am about to tell you”

I. Humanistic Psychology

- If you have to ask the patient some questions about their sexuality and you feel awkward asking, you can say,

“There are some questions that I need to ask you related to your health, but I feel a little awkward asking them.”

ROLE MODELING

- What behaviors should we model?
- We are always being role models, whether we are aware of it or not
- We must do our best to model behaviors that we would want others to use with us
- When we behave in ways that we wish had been different, it is important to own the behavior, to apologize if needed, and to acknowledge that there might have been a better approach
- Remember how a trusted teacher, advisor, or role model behaved, and try to follow that example

II. Giving and Receiving Feedback

- Remember that people are not skilled in giving or receiving feedback
- When receiving feedback, look for the ‘kernel of truth’, and if needed, let go of the rest

II. Giving and Receiving Feedback

When receiving feedback, it is often good to ask for a specific example:

- “It would be helpful to have a specific example, so that I can understand the behavior you would like me to change”
- It is important not to take the feedback personally, even if it is aimed at you
- This demonstrates that you can show respect, hear what has been said, and listen responsibly, without over-reacting
- Even if you do not agree, it is still appropriate to repeat back what you have heard, to look for a kernel of truth in what was said, and to thank the person for their feedback

II. Giving and Receiving Feedback

Focus on the Behavior, Not the Person

- The most useful feedback is related to a specific behavior
- It should be given privately, courteously, with an offer to help create a plan for the person to work on the behavior
- Feedback should be directed at the behavior, not the person

II. Giving and Receiving Feedback

When giving or receiving feedback:

1. Don't make assumptions
2. Don't take it personally
3. Be careful with your words; if you can't respond courteously in the moment, then take a deep breath, and say you that you need a few moments to reflect on what was said
4. Do your best to respond well (think about how you would want someone to respond to your feedback)

Adapted from the book *The Four Agreements*
by Don Miguel Ruiz

II. Giving and Receiving Feedback

Practice receiving feedback using the Four Agreements

If a supervisor tells you that you need to dress more professionally, what do you do?

1. Don't assume that you know what the supervisor means
2. Don't take it personally
3. Be careful with your words as you reply
4. Do your best to respond well

III. The 'Kernel of Truth'

- When you are receiving feedback, there is usually a seed or 'kernel of truth'
- Most people are not skilled at giving feedback
- It is not possible to control how someone gives us feedback, but we can have some control over how we receive it
- Often, when feedback is given, it is given in a way that has a great deal of energy and feeling with it
- It is often given in a way that may elicit frustration and disappointment

III. The 'Kernel of Truth'

- If someone gives you feedback, do your best not to be defensive
- Do your best to listen and repeat back what was said to demonstrate that you have heard
- If you know what the person is talking about, and especially if you agree, you can say so, and explain how you are working on changing the behavior
- If you feel that you have been incorrectly criticized, you might respond, "I can see how you might have thought that to be true"

IV. Choosing our Reactions

- Most of the time when we are surprised by someone giving us feedback or when someone says something hurtful, we react defensively
- A better option is to learn to create space between the statement and our response; to choose how we respond

IV. Choosing our Reactions

- To create space, the first step is to breathe
- Practice quieting the mind, taking comfortable breaths, imaging a color or a favorite place, or a place that provides a sense of sanctuary and wellbeing
- Practice this several times a day

IV. Choosing our Reactions

Social Tai Chi

- Tai Chi is a traditional Chinese series of movements, a personal discipline, and a martial art
- In Tai Chi, one centers oneself: one breathes and calms the mind, and moves in a calm controlled fashion to achieve a goal
- In Social Tai Chi, one centers oneself: one breathes and chooses the next move, whether to move back, sideways, or forward

V. Addressing Emotional Responses

Las Joyas De Amor

- Learning to be present with the tears of ourselves and others (patients and colleagues) in a respectful, accepting way
- One teaching is that when tears come, we say that they are Las Joyas De Amor, which means Jewels of Love
 - When tears feel safe to come out, we have touched love or truth

V. Addressing Emotional Responses

If your tears could speak, what would they say?

- Giving people permission to give voice to their tears can be a healing process
- Holding tears back can be a source of fatigue and tiredness
- When a person lets their tears speak, often some of their deepest concerns or fears may come forth
- In a safe setting, you can build trust and create an environment where patients can express themselves

VI. Teach-Back Technique

- The Teach-Back Technique is a concept and skill initially developed in the field of pharmacy
- It recognizes that communication is a two-way street, that it is not enough to give information to a patient or staff person without confirming that they have received the information and hearing back that the person has understood
- When you use the Teach-Back Technique, you ask the person or patient to teach you back the information that you have given them

VI. Teach-Back Technique

- This can be done in one of several ways:
 - You can ask the patient to pretend that they are now the doctor or the nurse and that you are now the patient
 - Ask them to explain/teach back to you what you have just taught them
 - Explain to the patient that communication is only achieved if what one person communicates is truly understood by the one listening

VI. Teach-Back Technique

- Explain to the patient this helps you be sure that you are doing your job as a health professional
- Acknowledge that many people actually don't understand how to take their meds or what their illness is, but they are reluctant to ask the doctor or the nurse
- By using the Teach-Back Technique with everyone, we can be sure we have done a good job
- You can say: "Let's give it a try! Please describe to me, as if I was you, what this medicine is for and how to take it?"
- Or: "Please tell me why high blood pressure needs to be treated."

This technique can be used with staff and patients.

VI. Teach-Back Technique

- Examples from the field:

One MA, soon after this course, starting using the Teach-Back Technique whenever she had to explain a test, such as the FIT test, to a patient. She described feeling much more confident that her patients understood what they needed to do.

VI. Teach-Back Technique

- Another MA described that she used the Teach-Back Technique with her provider. The provider would regularly ask her to do several things in a row, and would make the requests very quickly. The MA often felt unsure of all the details. One day, she said to the provider, “I learned about the Teach-Back Technique at our course, and I would like to use it to be sure that I heard exactly what you would like me to do. You would like me to first give flu vaccine to the patient in Room 1, to set up for a PAP in Room 2, to arrange for the patient in Room 3 to talk to the health educator, and to order some more latex-free gloves. Is that correct?”
- The provider smiled, said, “That’s right,” and thanked the MA.

VI. Teach-Back Technique

Practice the Teach-Back Technique with each other, using real examples from your clinical work, or use the following:

- Explain the procedure for a colonoscopy
- Explain the procedure for a stool test for occult blood
- A patient has just been started on insulin
- A patient arrives with a bagful of medications that they are taking and you want to go over the meds, making sure that the patient knows how to take them properly

VI. Teach-Back Technique

- Explain to a patient how to get to her specialist appointment at the hospital
- Explain to a patient why he needs to take his blood pressure medication
- Talk with a patient about why diabetes medications are important
- Explain the next steps to a patient who has had an abnormal mammogram

VI. Teach-Back Technique

Practice the Teach-Back Technique with each other, using real examples from your clinical work, or use the following:

- Your provider tells you to do several things related to a patient
- She rapidly gives you a series of instructions that she expects you to carry out
- At the same time, one or two of your work colleagues approach you to ask you for help with something as well

VI. Teach-Back Technique

- You are asked by the site manager to come in to his office to receive some feedback
- He gives you several suggestions about how to improve your work
- You are asked to review a new procedure with the other medical assistants on the team

SESSION TWO SUMMARY

- Core communication skills of humanistic psychology - Carl Rogers
 - Empathy, congruence and positive regard
- Giving and receiving feedback
 - Four Agreements (Ruiz)-make no assumptions, take nothing personally, be careful with your work, do what you can
- Identifying and acting on the 'kernel of truth'

SESSION TWO SUMMARY

- Choosing our reactions—creating space between the stimulus and our response
 - Using Social Tai Chi
- Addressing emotional responses: tears, fears, anger, avoidance
 - Las Joyas de Amor
- Teach-Back Technique



Next Steps

Share with the group:

- Three things that you have learned from today's session
- Based on this training, a behavior that you might modify or do differently

Summary for Preceptor

- Core Communication Skills-Humanistic Psychology, Empathy, Congruence and Positive Regard
- Giving and Receiving Feedback
- Practice Giving Feedback
- Practice Receiving Feedback
- Identifying and Acting on the Kernel of Truth
- Choosing Our Reactions—creating space between the stimulus and our response
- Addressing emotional responses: tears, fears, anger, avoidance