Communication Skills in Medicine: A Review

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Abstract

Effective communication is fundamental for efficient healthcare delivery. It enhances and ensures standards of patient care, patient safety and satisfaction. It fosters a positive and collaborative environment enabling and safeguarding standards of patient care and also teaching and training in medicine. In practice different methods of communication are used in complex combinations for meaningful exchange of information. Each component skill carries its significance for transfer of intended information, ideas and spirits. Dearth in any of these skills may alter the theme of the massage.

Introduction

Communication is the transfer, exchange or sharing of information from one individual to others using a system of symbols, signs, or behavior, which is known as language. It origins from the Latin word 'communis´, which means common[1]. As we communicate with others, we are trying to establish 'commonness´ with intended individual/s. Effective communication is to share information, thoughts, ideas or attitude with others meaningfully. The word has a very broad spectrum applicable to all living organisms viz. Individuals, communities, organizations, and animals extending to machines and beyond[2].

Communication in medical and health service delivery system implicates exchanging ideas, information, data, photographs and other images, signals or messages through appropriate media, enabling physicians and personals involved to (1) create and sustain a therapeutic relationship with patients and families and (2) work effectively as a member or leader of a health care team. This also ensures quality of patient care as well as upholding professionalism. Communication can also help develop a sense of trust between the patients, their relatives and care givers, which might make it easier for patients to adhere to a provider's recommendations.

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Hence a high level of competence in each of them is essential for complete and undistorted communication. Behavioral communication has significant impact for health care personals in all capacities. This paper is a brief review of different skills considered essential for physicians in their professional practice.

Key words: communication skills, listening skills, oral communication, written communication, inter personal Communication, behavioral communication

These elements can lead to several key potential long-term benefits and improved treatment outcomes.[3,4]

Effective communication is a two-way process requiring an active listener capable to interpret, clarify, confront, or reflect on information, as well as a clear, articulated speaker. Language, environment and distraction as well as the individuals involved, all can an effect on how messages are sent, received and interpreted shaping the effectiveness of the process. Yet as George Bernard Shaw perceives "The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place". In every field and profession, one should be expressive and specific so that, they can share their views, ideas, emotions and objectives precisely. It therefore implies that, we have to adhere to every aspect of communication process to accomplish our intent. Communication skills has been incorporated as a core competency for medical graduates by ACGME (Accreditation Council for Medical Graduates, USA) and has also been endorsed by ABMS (American Board of Medical Specialists)[5,6]. Communication as an essential competency has been recommended by AAMC, WFME and GMC.

To respond to the evolving global changes, it is essential to create educational programs that reflect and facilitate development of skills and attributes of an effective communicator. Steps should be taken to incorporate those into training and assessment of all trainees in all specialties.

Definition

Communication skill is the ability for an individual to accurately convey a message to another person or group of people. This enable individual to understand others and to be understood themselves. Communication skills are central to interpersonal interactions and social relationships. In general, communication occurs when a message from one individual (i.e., the "sender") influences the behavior of another individual i.e., the "receiver" [6,7,8]

The Communication Process

The five steps—also known as components or elements—of the communication process are:

- Idea formation
- Encoding
- Channel selection
- Transmission to audience / receiver
- Decoding
- Feedback

First three step involves the sender and last two are functions of receiver. All these components are dependent on their intellectual abilities of the persons involved.

Essential Principles Of Communication

Communication creates and builds relationships and frames our responses and actions. There can be a huge gap between intention, verbal words and nonverbal languages of sender and reception, understanding and the response of the receiver. There are also occasions when things are best left unsaid. Good communications demand a diverse range of skills to make those words effective.

Communication Skill Competencies

Competencies for effective communication requires ability to

- Demonstrate actions and activities that result in effective information exchange.
- Teaming with patients, their patients' families, and professional associates.
- Create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationship with patients.
- Listen actively and provide meaningful information using appropriate verbal, non-verbal and writing skills.
- work effectively with others as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group.[1]

Methods (MODES) of Communication

Communication may be verbal and nonverbal. Communication may also be 'Formal and Informal". These interact to facilitate mutual understanding between the sender and the receiver. Verbal communication primarily involves use of language, whereas nonverbal communication includes some *paralanguages* and *meta-communication*, (nonverbal signals that modify and reinforce the meaning of verbal expressions) which are less well defined but may have reflective effect on effectiveness of communication.[9]

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication refers to the form of communication in which message is transmitted through a language and symbols. Communication is done by words of mouth and, or writing. Commonly used methods are tabulated in Table 1.

Table-I

Examples of verbal (Oral and written) communication	
Oral / Spoken	Written
Interviews, Lectures, discussions, tutorials : team meetings, conversations, interviews, Counseling: meetings, conferences, talks in radio, phone, TV, Webinars and other IT setting KISS keep it short and simple	Letters, notes, reports, Pamphlets, Posters, Banners. Festoons, Facebook & other social media journal articles, Books

Face-to-face interaction, is influenced by (1) environmental conditions where communication takes place, (2) physical characteristics of the communicators, and (3) behaviors of communicators during interaction. The key to effective communication is to "Keep It Short and Simple".

Non-verbal Communication

Good communications demand a diverse range of (Non-Verbal) skills   to make those words effective (*Epictetus).* Nonverbal communication include behavior, other than spoken or written forms, that creates or represents meaning. This effects doctor-patient relation profoundly[10]. It includes facial expressions, body movements, gestures appearance and others. It is very effective, maybe even more so than speech or a written document. As the saying goes, '*Actions speak louder than words'* (Table 2).

Table-II

Elements of Non-verbal communication

Elements of Non-verbal communication		
Verbal	Paralanguage	Written
facial expressions, body movements, gestures	voice quality, rate, pitch, volume, style, rhythm, stress.	handwriting, choice of words, page layout

Speech contains nonverbal elements known as paralanguage[9], like voice quality, rate, pitch, volume, style, rhythm, and stress. On the other hand, written communication has nonverbal elements such as handwriting, choice of words, page layout etc. Nonverbal communication helps receiver in interpreting the message received. Often, nonverbal signals reflect the situation more accurately than verbal messages. Nonverbal communication is effected by groups of different factors:

Appearance:	*Speaker*: clothing, hairstyle, neatness, use of cosmetics
	Surroundings: room size, lighting, decorations, furnishings
Body Language:	Facial expressions, gestures, postures and movements
Sounds / Voice:	Tone, Volume, Speech rate

Purposes served by nonverbal communication

There are five primary functions of nonverbal bodily behavior in human communication namely,

i.   Expression of emotions

ii.   Expression of attitudes

iii.   Builds relationship between speakers and listeners by meaningful use of cues

iv.   Self- evaluation

v.   Rituals (greetings)

In expressing interpersonal attitudes, a series of nonverbal actions known as immediacy behaviors are used. Examples of immediacy behaviors are eye contact, facial expressions (smiling, disappointment), touching, body positions, and others.

Advantages of non-verbal communication

Nonverbal communication facilitate ability to

i)   communicate with someone who cannot hear,

ii)   make conversation short and brief.

iii)   communicate with people of different language and culture to overcome language barrier

Disadvantages of non-verbal communication

i)   Long conversations are usually not possible.

ii)   Varies from culture to culture.

iii)   Particulars of messages cannot be discussed in detail

iv)   A public and open tool for communication so that others around (not intended) might get involved.

v)   It cannot be used everywhere

Formal and Informal Communication

i) Formal Communication

Formal communications are function related communication in organizational and professional setting, explicit and flows through hierarchy and follow prescribed form[10]. In formal communication, certain rules, conventions and principles are maintained. It occurs in official style in professional settings, corporate meetings, conferences. Slang and foul language is avoided and needs to be grammatically correct. Formal communications are commonly written, documented and reliable,

ii) Informal Communication

Informal communication is done using channels as face-to-face discussions. It happens in a teaching –learning sessions as well as amongst friends and family. Usually

informal communication is done verbally using gestures, signs and symbols. Informal communication, unlike formal communication, might cause resentment as people express more or use unfair language when talking informally. Yet, informal communication might also help in building relationships.

Varieties Of Communication Skills [3,4]

Communication is a complex phenomenon and has been analyzed into component skills. Successful communication involves synchronized use of different skills. Each of them are independent. These skills focus on using various senses. More often are combined to facilitate transmission of information. Important effective communication skills include

Listening skill

Speaking (Oral communication) skills

Lectures, presentations in seminars and public speaking

Interpersonal communication

Interviewing skills

Children, hyperactive patients, agitated and angry persons, hearing defect, and psychologically unstable, old and frail or comatose patients

Mass Communication skills

Patient Education

Conversation skills

Difficult conversation

Visual Communication skills

Observation skills

Written communication skill

Reading skill

IT (Information Technology)

computer skills, photography and graphics

Behavioral skills (Sympathy and Empathy) ,

Self-control

Conflict Management

Verbal Communication-Listening skill

Listening is one of the essential elements of effective communication. Listening skill is the ability to pay attention to and effectively interpret what others are saying. Listening skill involves the reception, processing, interpretation and understanding of aural stimuli[11,12.] It is an active process in which a conscious decision is made to attend to and understand the messages of the speaker. Active listening involves listening with all senses (listening what is said and also what is not said).

The process of active listening are combination of both verbal and non-verbal methods. Verbal means are asking questions clarifying points of interest and note taking. Non-verbal acts include maintaining eye- contact, nodding and smiling, gestures and postures in response to cues of speaker or agreeing by saying 'Yes' etc. These all are indicative of active listening. Attentive listening helps in understanding massages in more detail. Furthermore, it also helps to assess the mood and the intent of massage and speaker. Storytelling enhances the listening skills specially for children.

Listening skill is immensely important for physicians as Sir William Osler puts *"Listen to the patient. He is telling you the diagnosis."* Considering the fact that, physicians have to deal with range of personals including patients, their relations, colleagues, nurses and other paramedics, doctors need to acquire the skills of active listening. This is also a demanding issue for efficient student assessment .The aphorism that "We have two ears and one mouth so we can listen twice as much as we speak."— (AD 55 – c.135) denotes the importance of attentive listening even in our ancestors. A key skill of listening more and talking less plays important role in ICU patient management Structured, proactive, communication processes patients and care givers and multidisciplinary team members. This allows ethical decision making for ICU patients [13].

The process of listening involves five steps: receiving, understanding, evaluating, remembering and responding.

Factors that affect listening efficiency

Many factors account for effective listening, especially in institutional set-up. These are attributed to the speaker, the listener, to the message or the environment. Whichever way it is, they all have impact on listening ability of students.

Listener Related Factors

i)   Listener's State of being

Conditions relating to the well-being of the listeners including emotional and psychological state, health conditions, comfort, tiredness/fatigue, etc. when positive, facilitate listening efficiency.

ii)   Personality of the Listener

Poor listening efficiency can be traced to the poor Intelligence Quotient (IQ) of the listener lowers the ability of understanding of the language and style of discourse. Also a pessimistic listener often misses out in the thought process of the speaker.

iii) Interest in the Subject of Discourse

This could be as a result of the difficult subject/topic, prejudice towards the speaker or the subject, or the boring technique of the teaching.

iv)   Language of Instruction or communication

When the language of instruction is other than the listener's mother tongue (MT) or when his level of proficiency in the language is low understanding of the massage becomes difficult and less effective. Improvement of vocabulary, grammar as well as phonology of the language of instruction will facilitate communication.

The Speaker/Teacher Related Factors

i)   Presentation of the massage

Communication is effected by clarity of presentation, tone of speaking, fluency and mastery of the subject, audibility, accent, speech defect, (stammering), etc. Another factor could be the use of a microphone. These factors distract the listener and mar his listening efficiency.

ii)   Verbosity and Unfamiliar Words

Using high sounding or too many words in expressing one's thoughts may be a source of confusion to the listener. The choice of words could make or mar communication; therefore, proper use of language should be the hallmark of an effective speaker.

iii) Non-verbal Communication Ability

Incorporation paralinguistic features like postures, gestures and facial expressions may further elucidate communication.

Environment Related Factors

i)   Background Noise

Noise at the background impairs the listening ability of the listener and, understanding of the message.

ii)   Poorly ventilated Lecture Halls/Rooms

Poor ventilation in lecture halls is uncomfortable for listeners and, thus distracts them during learning.

iii) The Seating Arrangement

Overcrowding will lead to loss of concentration. The environment is a key factor to consider when it comes to increasing listening effectiveness.

Message Related Factors

i)   The Quality of the Message

The quality of a message as perceived by a listener can contribute to concentration or otherwise. Intelligence of listener helps understanding the message. The content of a message may also add to difficulty of understanding a massage.

ii)   Appeal of the Message

Listeners always get attuned to the subject matters they feel drawn to and avoid disliking matters.

iii) Organization of the Message

The choice of subject matter, logicality in presentation, appropriateness of the topic, and terminologies should be taken cognizance of in the message to be effective.

Elements of active listening

There are various key elements indicative of active listening. They all help to ensure that both speaker and receiver are aware of the meaning of the massage.

i)   *Paying attention.* Uninterrupted attention to the speaker, and to acknowledge the message remains the heart of communication.

ii) *Expression of interest.* Overt expression of interest encourages the speaker. Non-verbal   cues of speaker and listener are strong tools to convey meaning of massage and effective communication.

iii) *Providing feedback.* Comments and questions that reflect understanding of the massage are indicative of active listening.

iv) *Avoiding early judgment.* Interruption based on judgment before completion of speech frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message.

v)   *Appropriate response.* Open, honest and appropriate response is indicative of active listening.

vi) *Validating* for effective listening, massage received needs validation to remove any confusion.

Barriers to effective listening may be intrinsic like anxiety, self- centeredness, extrinsic noise, visual distractors and settings.

Verbal communication - Speaking / oral Communication

Speaking is an interactive process of communication that involves articulating and producing expressive sounds (words) followed by receiving and interpreting signals (sound) into a meaningful information. It's form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, the physical environment and the purposes. It is the cornerstone of effective communication [14].

Effective speaking is defined as speaking in a way that message is clearly heard and understood. Main elements of effective speaking are what is spoken, and how it is delivered by the speaker and how this is received and understood by receiver. Choice of wards constituting the massage is as important as the way the massage is spoken. Non-verbal languages also have significant impact on the effectiveness.

Aspects of Effective Speaking

Effective speaking includes considering every possible tool and aspect to ensure that nothing distracts or detracts the message. There are three main elements of effective speaking. These are constituting words, quality of voice, other non-verbal communications like facial features and kinesics, particularly body language.

Selection of words of the massage have to be considered that is most suitable to the audience and their level of understanding of the subject. Simple words and shorter sentences are easily understandable. The tone and clarity of voice and body language also should support the messages. Hesitancy, shyness, eye contact and confidence of speaker can strongly influence effectiveness of verbal communication.

Improving command on voice can help to boost confidence. Speaking slowly, eye contact with the audience, occasional strategic pause, grammatical perfection, wide vocabulary to choose precise words, and pronunciation helps audience to understand the massage easily.

For versatility the speaker must:

o   Pronounce clearly

o   Pace comfortably

o   Pause strategically. (at key points, to digest information or to gather thoughts).

o   Choose Precise words and

o   Speak fluency with appropriate Pitch and tone

For improved patient compliance specially when patients are unable to follow written instructions, verbal explanation are more effective.[15]

Oral communication skills and interpersonal skills are related but distinct concepts:

Interpersonal Skills:

The ability to interact effectively and harmoniously with others. It focuses on building and maintaining relationships through various forms of communication, including verbal and non-verbal. This might include, Active listening, Empathy, Conflict resolution, Teamwork, Building rapport and trust through Effective collaboration

Oral communication skills are a subset of interpersonal skills. While oral communication focuses on speaking, interpersonal skills encompass a broader range of interactions, including non-verbal communication, emotional intelligence, and relationship-building.

In essence, oral communication is about how you speak, while interpersonal skills are about how you interact with others, including speaking, listening, and emotional engagement.

Interviewing skills: Commonly "interview" refers to a one-on-one conversation between an *interviewer* and an *interviewee*. In an interview, a structured conversation proceeds according to a plan where one participant asks questions, and the other provides answers and are used for various purposes. In health delivery, interview with patients is of immense importance as it forms the basis of disease diagnosis as well as treatment and follows up. Interview (History taking) in *children, hyperactive patients, agitated and angry persons, hearing defect, and psychologically unstable, old and frail or comatose patients may be specifically difficult and need special attention and skill.* For an experienced physician, history taking becomes an art of clinical diagnosis.

Mass Communication skills involves newspapers and other print media, radio, TV and other social and

electronic means which are used in involving communities or national setting mainly to disseminate. Preventive measures. It is much effective in emergencies and natural calamities.

Patient Education is tailored to the need of individual patient. This is essential and involves both written and oral means and ensure patient compliance.

Conversation skills

Conversation is an effective way of sharing ideas and opinions often leading to an understanding. Starting and holding engaging conversations is an important skill for building professional and personal relationships in the workplace. It involves face to face dialogue with professional colleagues, patients and their relatives, sometimes legal advisors, media people, law enforcing agents and politicians. Active listening, showing interest and understanding, sharing opinions and ideas in clear and soft language along with use of suitable non-clues are essential for effective conversation.

Difficult conversation includes situations like breaking bad news, counseling for organ donation, End of life issues, conflict management etc. This needs to create a win-win situation through active listening, polite discussion with patience showing empathy and respect for all.

Written communication and good writing skill

Written communication is an extensively used format. It uses words and language in hand written, printed or digital form to convey massage. It is a form of verbal communication. Memos. Press releases ,Websites, E-mails, Reports, Blogs Bulletins, Journals, Essays, Questionnaires, Brochures, Pamphlets, Circulars, Social media posts are commonly used. Drawing, illustrations, graphs, tables etc. may be inserted into text for better understanding of the massage. Written communication is most reliable but takes time to prepare, send and for getting a response or feedback. It serves as a permanent record and acceptable as a legal document. A written document needs to be formal, highly structured and comprehensive. Written communication has less room for errors and mistakes including spelling, grammar, punctuation, style of writing and actual wording. Medical students should be trained in improving their written communication skill as this will have favorable impact on patient care. [16, 17]

Good writing skill

Writing skills involve adequate knowledge and ability to express thoughts, ideas and directives in written words. It is a powerful skill for health professionals. It needs knowledge of medicine as well as language with wide vocabulary along with skill of writing. Creditable writing skill can be achieved through structured training. Writing ability needs skills like research, planning, outlining, organization, editing, revising, spelling and grammar and punctuation.

For effective communication, the document should be easy to read, provide a clear indication of the purpose, and carry accurate and objective information arranged in a suitable order of information. The minimum acceptable standard of a letter include i) a subject line and ii) the writer's address, iii) The date, iv) Reader's address, v) Salutation, vi) Body, vii) Complimentary closure and viii a legible signature.

Reading Skills

Reading skills are abilities to read, decode, interpret and comprehend written language and texts. Reading is the process of making the meaning of symbols, specifically those of a written language, by means of sight or touch. It also take account of other types of reading, such as pictograms (e.g., a hazard symbol and an emoji), which are not based on speech-based writing systems. The common link is the interpretation of symbols to extract the meaning from the visual notations or tactile signals (e.g. braille).

Reading skills encompass several key steps (i) Decoding. (ii) Phonological and phonemic awareness. (iii) Reading fluency. (iv) Reading comprehension. (v) Vocabulary. (vi) Memory. (vii) Logical thinking, and (viii) Rapid naming. These work together to develop overall literacy skills, including comprehension, fluency, vocabulary and strategies that helps to read. Reading can open up to a wealth of information and knowledge to learners. One starts to develop this skill at early age of schooling. Exceptional reading skills can be highly beneficial to assimilating and responding to written communications like emails, messages, letters and other written messages. Using reading skills in the workplace can also be important for ensuring effective written communication, which can result in less miscommunication or misunderstanding of expectations.

Reading comprehension is a key educational ability that is essential for academic performance and lifelong learning.

Reading comprehension is a key ability pertaining to academic performance and continued medical education. To cope with available of huge volume written documents in different media, readers take different techniques. Four key reading techniques are — Skimming, scanning, intensive reading and extensive reading. Skimming is one of the tools used to read long document rather rapidly. Skimming refers to looking *only* for the general or main ideas, and is important and purposeful.

Scanning is another useful technique for speedy reading. Reading is focused *only* for specific facts or piece of information without reading everything. For comprehension and in depth analysis, understanding structure of document the is desirable to locate the specific information you need. Scanning also allows finding details and other information in a hurry[19].

Of the other techniques SQ3R is commonly used. This involves five steps viz. survey, question, read, recite and review.

Structure-Proposition-Evaluation – is a reading technique useful for reading books and understanding in depth.

Visual communication skill
The process of communication that employs one's sense of sight to deliver a message without the usage of any verbal cues is termed visual communication. Information and ideas are conveyed through visual elements such as images, print, paintings, and hand-drawn illustrations symbols, typography and colors. It transcends language barriers and engages viewers in a compelling manner. Visual contents attract and retains attention more effectively than text alone. It helps in conveying messages quickly, because *our brains process visuals at a staggering 60,000 times faster than text.* Digital mediums, such as graphic design software, digital cameras, motion graphics tools, and interactive media platforms are powerful tools for creating and sharing visual contents widely. easily and rapidly. Storage, editing and retrieval of massages have also become easier there are new avenues for creativity, collaboration, and engagement, and have a lasting impression.

Five essential elements of effective visual communication are; Clarity, Design, Contrast, Proximity, and Rhythm. In the digital age, visual communication has become an essential tool for conveying complex ideas and information in a simple and engaging manner.

Virtual interactive 3-dimensional models (VI3DM) and immersive virtual reality are implemented in medical education and surgical training. VI3DM allow interaction with and manipulation of 3D images of anatomical specimens and surgical simulations on digital screens, web applications, mobile applications, and head mounted devices[20].

Observation skill
Observation in general terms of science is the collection of certain data or values recorded by any scientific instrument during a scientific activity or experiment. In communication observation is the consciousness of the human mind to observe or notice the series of activities and changes happening around him. Observation skills include the abilities to notice, distinguish, analyze and process information. These skills focus on using various senses for activities, such as attention to detail (ability to extract precise information including all minor issues), communication, , active listening and skilled reading, critical thinking, emotional intelligence to notice and analyze his surroundings or environment during a communication to make it effective. A keen observer develops the ability to notice delicate and precise details from any primary source. Precision of the observations is critical. Precision is often improved by making quantitative observations. Qualitative observations also have significant role in communication.

ICT (Information and Communication Technology) skills

Tremendous advancements in technology and appliances has revolutionized communication in terms

of speed and global reach. New knowledge and expertise is required to avail benefit of these developments. Information and communications technology (ICT) skills are ability to contact with people through various technologies for regular, everyday tasks. This involves being conversant with use of computers, smartphones and other electronic gadgets for communicating through verbal and non-verbal means. One must also be *conversant* with the key processes and those that should arise from direct experiences or the experiences of others.

Commonly used areas are:

i) Instant Connectivity: IT enables real-time communication through emails, messaging apps, and social media platforms.

ii) Global Reach: Individuals and organizations can communicate with people around the world effortlessly. This global reach supports international collaborations, remote work, and the sharing of diverse perspectives.

iii) Efficient Collaboration: Tools like video conferencing, cloud storage, and project management software allow teams to work together seamlessly, regardless of their physical location. This fosters innovation and productivity.

iv) Accessibility: IT has made information and communication more accessible. For example, people with disabilities can use assistive technologies to communicate effectively.

v) Social Networks: Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn have transformed the way we interact socially and professionally. They provide spaces to connect, share ideas, and build communities.

vi) Multimedia Communication: IT allows the integration of text, images, audio, and video, making communication more dynamic and engaging.

vii) Data Management and Security: IT provides tools to manage and secure communication data, ensuring that information is stored safely and can be retrieved when needed.

viii) Cost-Effective Solutions: Virtual meetings save on travel expenses, and enabled digital marketing which is more affordable, easy, rapid and personalized.

ICT skills can be acquired and improved by regular use of technologies. Sometimes friends are very helpful. Watching instructional video conferencing may give new avenues and encouraging ideas. Photography and graphics designing ability adds to effectiveness of communication.

Behavioral skills (Sympathy and Empathy) ,

Self-control

Conflict Management

Behavior has a profound impact on communication, influencing both how messages are delivered and received. The reverse is also true. Ability to communicate effectively shapes the way one behaves.

Communicative behaviors are psychological constructs that influence individual differences in expressing feelings, needs, and thoughts as a substitute for more direct and open communication.[1] . Any behavior (or absence of it) may be judged as communicative if it intends to convey a message. An individual's behavioral style significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication.[3] Much of our communicative behavior is, non-verbal

There are four types of communication behavior: aggressive, assertive, passive, and passive-aggressive.

Aggressive communication

Aggression is defined as a random act of anger with the intent to hurt. They create avoidable conflict by engaging in personal attacks, and believe the only way to meet their needs is through power and control.

Behaviors indicative of aggressive communication include putting others down, not showing appreciation, ignoring other's feelings etc. Nonverbal behaviors exhibited during aggressive communication include intense eye contact and tightened jaw muscles, standing too close or rigid body stance; clenched fists, finger-pointing, and rapid or forceful speech. On the other hand, individuals receiving aggressive communication feel *resentful, defensive, humiliated, hurt, and afraid*.

Assertive communication

Assertive communication is based on respects for both the communicator's and the receiver's rights and opinions without being argumentative. This allow expressing their thoughts and feelings listening to

other's opinions and appropriately responding to them, accepting responsibilities,

Passive communication

Passive communication involves not expressing one's thoughts or feelings *Behavioral characteristics include, actively avoiding confrontation, taking responsibility and making compromised decisions.* Many non-verbal behaviors reflect passive communication. A soft voice, speak hesitantly,

Passive-Aggressive

The Passive-Aggressive style incorporates aspects of both passive and aggressive communication styles. Individuals feel powerless, resentful, and stuck. A passive-aggressive communication style does not adequately address pertinent issues or problems.

Typically, individuals engaging in passive-aggressive communication display asymmetrical postures and quick gestures. Innocent facial expression and act excessively friendly to conceal their anger or frustration.

Common means how behavior affects communications are:

i) *Nonverbal Cues: Body language, facial expressions, gestures, and eye contact all play a crucial role in communication.* For instance, maintaining eye contact can convey confidence and interest, while crossed arms might suggest defensiveness or disinterest.

ii) *Tone of Voice: Our pitch, volume, and intonation—affect how our message is perceived*. A warm, friendly tone can make the listener feel comfortable.

iii) Active Listening: Engaging in active listening, such as nodding, making appropriate facial expressions, and providing verbal affirmations, *fosters a more meaningful and effective exchange.*

iv) Empathy and Understanding: Demonstrating empathy and understanding helps build rapport and trust.

v) Respect and Courtesy: Behaving respectfully and courteously is fundamental to positive communicate

vi) Openness and Transparency: Openness and transparency fosters trust and encourages reciprocal openness from others. This can lead to

more productive and meaningful conversations.

vii) Consistency and Reliability: Consistent and reliable behavior, keeping promises and maintaining predictable communication patterns, builds trust and credibility. Meaningful engagement improves with reliability

viii) Cultural Sensitivity: Understanding and respecting cultural differences in behavior and communication styles is vital in diverse settings.

These behavioral aspects, can enhance communication and build stronger, more effective connections with others.

Conflict management

Conflict arises from disagreement or difference of opinions amongst individuals. This is potentially harmful for any profession or w0rking environment. It commonly involves personal agendas, insights, or goals of the group or team members. Conflict management seeks to resolve the disagreement or differences with positive outcomes that is beneficial to the group. Conflict management is a crucial competency that leaders should possess, for the success of the team. For conflict resolution often the best course of action is assertive communication that resolves the disagreement while maintaining a respectful relationship [21].

Commonly taken steps for resolving conflicts are

i) Stay calm and take a moment break.

ii) Find a separated, comfortable place to discuss the conflict.

iii) Acknowledge that a problem exists.

iv) Agree to find a resolution.

v) Work to understand the perspective of everyone involved

Self-control

Self-control is the ability to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in the face of temptations and impulses. It's like an inner guardian that helps coping difficult situations.

It's a critical skill for personal development, helping to stay focused, disciplined, and in control of decisions and actions. Self-control is crucial in both medical practice and medical education for several reasons. In medical practice this ensures patient safety,

professionalism, stress management and ethical decision-making. In medical education self-control significantly improve academic achievement, emotional resilience and professional development.[22]

Developing self-control can be challenging but incredibly rewarding. Some common strategies used to improve self-control are:

i)   Setting specific, achievable goals to focused.

ii) Creating a Plan of manageable steps.

iii) Avoiding Temptations and reducing exposure

iv) Being aware and mindful to make thoughtful decisions.

v)   Seeking support from friends, family, or a mentors.

Importance of Skilled Communication
Objective of every communication is to have people understand what we are trying to convey information. Effective communication plays a powerful role in medical education and also various aspects of health service delivery. Purposes for communication are to

• educate and give instructions to bring about expected behavioral changes

• create awareness in the community and give opportunity to objectively participate in prevention of diseases and promotion of life.

• enhance self-understanding and insight

• influence and persuade team members and people around

• build trust and credibility

• enhances understanding and cooperation

• develops teamwork and collaboration

• promotes exchange of ideas, opinions, and feedback

• build strong professional relationship

• impacts service delivery

Assessment of Communication Skills
There are different methods for assessment of communication and interpersonal skills: (1) checklists of observed behaviors during interactions with real or simulated patients; (2) surveys of patients' experience in clinical interactions; and (3) examinations using oral, essay, or multiple-choice response questions. Methods and tools that may be used in the field of physician-patient communication has been proposed in the

"Kalamazoo II" conference declaration and used and validated. These methods may be incorporated into educational programs to assess learning needs, create learning opportunities, or guide feedback for learning both for formative and summative purposes. Tools that might help assessment includes written open questions or MCQ's of different types and observation with check-list for direct observation of communication with a real or simulated patient or indirectly by audio or video in different set up. OSCE has also been effectively used. Behavior communication may be assessed as a part of workplace based assessment usin peer or 360^0 evaluation. SEGUE (Set the Stage   Elicit Information   Give Information   Understand the patient's perspective and End the encounter) Framework for assessment of conversation communication skills.

Conclusion
Effective communication is fundamental for efficient healthcare delivery. It enhances and ensures standards of patient care, patient safety and satisfaction. It fosters a positive and collaborative environment enabling and safeguarding standards of patient care and also teaching and training in medicine. In practice different methods of communication are used in complex combinations for meaningful exchange of information. Each component skill carries its significance for transfer of intended information, ideas and spirits. Dearth in any of these skills may alter the theme of the massage. Hence a high level of competence in each of them is essential for complete and undistorted communication. Behavioral communication has significant impact for health care personals in all capacities. This paper is a brief review of different skills considered essential for physicians in their professional practice.

Competencies in communication skills is fundamental for professional practice as a physician. It is imperative therefore, that doctors must be fully prepared to communicate professionally in their working environment. Education and Training for healthcare professionals on communication skills in verbal and non-verbal communication, including empathy, and behavioral communication should be included in the curriculum from the beginning of graduate course and continued through post-graduation and in professional life as a part of professional development. In addition to formal class room teaching and learning, workshops,

seminars, and role-playing exercises can be very effective. Regular interdisciplinary meetings and case conferences can help ensure collaboration amongst different groups of learners. Early exposure to patient might help in developing inter-personal communication and address cultural differences. Adopting a patient-centered approach focus on understanding the patient's needs, preferences, and concerns. This leads to develop empathy and improves ability to provide clear, jargon-free explanations of patient's problems and therapeutic decisions. Coherent use of technology and enhances communication amongst colleagues and patients. Establishing formal assessment with feedback mechanisms where teachers, colleges, patients and staff can provide input on communication practices is essential. This helps identify areas for improvement and ensure achievement of required competencies. Leadership support is crucial for fostering a culture of open and transparent communication within healthcare organization. By implementing these strategies, healthcare organizations can foster a culture of effective communication that enhances patient care, safety, and satisfaction.

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