Communication Skills for Health Care Providers
Lesson 6 of 8
Speak Directions

Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

1. More effectively communicate spoken directions in the workplace.

Introduction

To do your job well you must communicate with supervisors, coworkers, and residents. The ability to communicate spoken directions is a vital component of your daily work activities.

Prescription for Understanding – Job Related

In the everyday performance of your job duties you need to be able to give and receive clear directions. Everyone will need to give directions that could include what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. The ability to be accurate when giving spoken directions is very important as well. You may have to vary the way you give directions based on who you are directing. An experienced coworker will more easily understand your directions than a new employee will. Also, residents will more likely need more specific and brief directions. Always try to give directions that your listener will understand. It is also a good idea to use objects, pictures, or drawings that show what you mean visually. You will use spoken directions for as long as you work. The way you give those directions, both politely and clearly, will affect your relationship with others around you. Strive to build the skill of giving spoken directions whenever you can.
Example

Janet has just walked into the kitchen area. Karen, a new employee, is trying to do a great job by washing the pots and pans. Janet realizes that her intentions are good but she is washing the pots and pans incorrectly. Janet must correct her and teach her how to do the job correctly.

Example Question:

1. Should Janet stop Karen and show her the correct procedure for washing pots and pans?
   a. Yes
   b. No

Correct Answer⇒ a. Yes
Skill Check

Review the scenario on the previous page about Janet and Karen and then answer the following questions.

1. Janet should:
   a. Order her to stop and to correctly rewash the pots and pans.
   b. Let Karen finish and rewash the pots and pans later.
   c. Tell Karen that she is a hard worker, and politely explain to her the correct procedure for washing pots and pans.
   d. Tell Karen that she must wash the pots and pans until she gets them cleaned correctly.

2. Janet would best teach Karen the correct way to wash pots and pans by:
   a. Giving her the manual.
   b. Telling her to pay better attention to instruction.
   c. Demonstrating and explaining the correct way to wash pots and pans herself.
   d. Find another worker the next day to show her how to wash pots and pans.

3. Because Janet assumed that Karen was trying to do a great job it would be correct to think that:
   a. Janet was uninterested in Karen’s willingness to work hard.
   b. Janet considered Karen a loafer.
   c. Janet had a positive outlook on her job and in her trainee’s abilities.
   d. Janet felt that Karen was unhappy.
Let’s Apply to Your Workplace
Communications - Lesson 6 of 8

Read the following scenario and answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

Carol and Briana are working the food serving line. Briana is training Carol. Carol is not reading the dietary cards, giving too little or the wrong food item to residents, and is not smiling at or talking to the residents. Briana knows she must teach Carol how to do her job, but she wonders how she can let Carol know how important it is for her to care about the residents.

1. Briana could help Carol by:
   a. Giving her the training manual and sending her home.
   b. Telling her to shape up and do her job correctly.
   c. Taking Carol aside and instructing her about what her job duties are and why her ability to complete her job is very important to the health of the residents.
   d. Telling her that she will do better tomorrow.

2. Briana knows that Carol needs to have a more positive outlook about how she does her job, one possible method to make this happen would be:
   a. A lecture on her job duties.
   b. Taking Carol to meet and talk to the residents while eating at the tables and visiting them in their rooms.
   c. A review of the training manual policy.
   d. Telling Carol she is doing a good job more often.

3. When Briana gives directions to Carol she should, whenever possible:
   a. Tell her once and let her try it for herself.
   b. Tell her to watch others doing it and start when she’s ready.
   c. Explain the job duties and demonstrate how to do the job correctly.
   d. Let her start doing the job and check on her when she can find time.