MODULE # 3: Effective Communication

Improving Access to Health Care for People with Disabilities

A self-directed training for aging and disability organizations
Why is Effective Communication Important?

• Effective communication is critical so that:
  – People with disabilities can explain their health and long-term services and supports (LTSS) needs and ask questions in a manner that can be understood
  – People with disabilities can understand what their health plans and health care providers are saying to them about:
    • LTSS
    • Treatment options and plans
    • Preparation for tests
    • Understanding and following medication regimens
  – People with disabilities can get information from their health plan about covered benefits and services, LTSS, participating providers, and request accommodations or file complaints
Effective Communication with People who Have Sensory Disabilities

• Ensuring effective communication with people who have sensory disabilities may involve auxiliary aids and services. For example:

  – People who are deaf or have hearing loss might require
    • Qualified interpreters
    • Notetakers
    • Real-time captioning
    • Written materials
    • Assistive listening systems
    • Computer assisted real time transcription services (CART)
    • Open and closed captioning
Examples of Communication Problems and Solutions
Sign Language Interpreters

**PROBLEM**
Communicating with people who use Sign Language

**SOLUTION**
Sign Language Interpreters

• Like any other language interpreters, Sign Language interpreters translate English and American Sign Language (ASL) so people who are deaf and use ASL and people who can hear and speak English can communicate.

• ASL is a visual-gestural language used by millions of Americans of all ages.

• ASL is a rich and complete language that has a different grammatical structure than the English language.
Assistive Listening Device

PROBLEM

Communicating with people who are hard of hearing

SOLUTION
Assistive Listening Device (ALD)

• Help amplify the sounds someone wants to hear, especially where there’s a lot of background noise

• ALDs can be used with a hearing aid or cochlear implant to help a wearer hear certain sounds better

• With the development of digital and wireless technologies, more and more devices are becoming available to help people with hearing, voice, speech, and language impairments communicate effectively
CART

**PROBLEM**
Effective communication with people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or who have certain cognitive or learning impairments

**SOLUTION**
CART
(Computer Aided Real-Time Transcription)

• Computer Aided Real-Time Transcription (CART) refers to the instant translation of the spoken word into English text using a stenotype machine, notebook computer and real-time software.

• CART is a method to provide access to spoken communication for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who have certain cognitive or learning impairments.

• The text produced by the CART service can be displayed on an individual’s computer monitor, projected onto a screen, combined with a video presentation to appear as captions, or otherwise made available using other transmission and display systems.
**PROBLEM:** Telephone access for people who have difficulty hearing or speaking

**SOLUTION**
Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS)

- Enables standard voice telephone users to talk to people who have difficulty hearing or speaking on the telephone.

  - Text-to-Voice Relay
    - A TTY/cell phone user calls a TRS relay center and types the number of the person he or she wishes to call.
    - The communication assistant (CA) at the relay center then makes a voice telephone call to the other party to the call, and relays the call back and forth between the parties by speaking what a text user types, and typing what a voice telephone user speaks.
Video Relay Service for ASL Users

1. Deaf user signs to the interpreter

2. Interpreter speaks to the hearing user

3. Hearing user speaks to interpreter

4. Interpreter signs to deaf user

Photo used courtesy Sorenson Communications
Video Relay Service (VRS)

• VRS is an Internet-based form of TRS that allows persons whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with the communications assistant (CA) in ASL using video conferencing equipment

• The CA speaks what is signed to the called party, and signs the called party’s response back to the caller

• VRS allows conversations to flow in near real time and in a faster and more natural manner than text-based TRS
Voice and Hearing Carry Over Relay Service

**PROBLEM:** Telephone Access for people who have difficulty hearing or speaking

**SOLUTION**

DIAL 711
Voice and Hearing Carry Over

• Voice Carry Over
  Voice Carry Over (VCO) is a type of TRS that allows a person with a hearing disability, but who wants to use his or her own voice, to speak directly to the called party and receive responses in text from the CA. No typing is required by the calling party. This service is particularly useful to older people who have lost their hearing, but who can still speak

• Hearing Carry Over
  Hearing Carry Over (HCO) is a type of TRS that allows a person with a speech disability, but who wants to use his/her own hearing, to listen to the called party and type his/her part of the conversation on a TTY. The CA reads these words to the called party, and the caller hears responses directly from the called party
For TRS Dial 711

- Dial 711 to connect to certain forms of TRS anywhere in the United States.
Picture Communication

PROBLEM
Complicated Communication

SOLUTION
Picture Communication Tools

- Drawings that can be used with people whose first language is not English, such as those who communicate using ASL, who do not communicate verbally, or who have cognitive or intellectual limitations. They do not replace the need for interpreters but can be particularly useful for everyday communication in health care and other settings.
Effective Communication with People who Have Sensory Disabilities

• Ensuring effective communication with people who have sensory disabilities may involve auxiliary aids and services. For example:

  – People who are blind or have low vision might require:
    • Qualified readers
    • Notetakers
    • Texts in digital formats
    • CDs
    • Audio recordings
    • Braille materials
    • Large print materials
Uniform Health Assessment Form

Each applicant must have a history and physical performed prior to consideration or appointment as part of the credentialing and privileging process. It is assumed that the applicant’s examining practitioner will directly review the health information with the applicant.

This Uniform Health Assessment Form, which conforms to New York State Title 10 Health Code 405:5:18(1)[11], has been developed by the Monroe County Medical Society, in conjunction with hospitals and other health care facilities in the Finger Lakes region. Use of this form will enable the applicant’s examining practitioner to complete a Uniform Health Assessment Form, only once, and then submit photostatic to relevant facilities/organizations. This eliminates the need to complete multiple forms for multiple organizations.

Permission by Medical/Dental/Staff Applicant: I give permission to attach this history and physical examination form in accordance with New York State regulations for the health care facilities:

Applicant’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: ______________

This section, through page 2, is to be completed by examining practitioner. The examination shall be of sufficient scope to ensure that no person shall assume further duties unless he/she is free from health impairment which is a potential risk to the patient or which might interfere with the performance of further duties.

Medical History

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Medical:</th>
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<td>Surgical:</td>
<td>Height:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Systems:</td>
<td>Blood Pressure:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allergies (including latex):</td>
<td>Vision: Corrected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medications:</td>
<td>Uncorrected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identified Health Problems That Are A Potential Risk To Patients:

Other:
Alternative Print Formats

SOLUTIONS

• Print materials in alternative formats
  – Braille
  – Large print
Digital and Audio Formats

SOLUTIONS

• Print materials in alternative formats
Meet Rashida

• Rashida is a 67 y/o woman
• She has been Deaf since birth
• She recently injured her back in a fall. She now needs to use a walker and also needs help dressing, bathing, and doing housework
• She has requested that her managed care plan provide a Sign Language interpreter so she can participate in a meeting with her care team who will be discussing her new need for personal assistance services at home
• Her plan denied the interpreter request, indicating that instead, her social worker would report the decision of the care team to her
What Can You Do?

• Disability and aging organizations can assist people with disabilities resolve health care access problems

• Possible actions:
  – Advise the person that they have health care rights
    • Non-discrimination
    • Effective communication – In Rashida’s case, a Sign Language interpreter
  – Urge Rashida to contact the managed care plan again and request an interpreter for the meeting, or contact the plan on her behalf
    • Explain that a Sign Language interpreter is necessary for Rashida to communicate effectively with her care team and is required under federal law when communications are complex
  – If the plan fails to provide an interpreter, advise Rashida to file a complaint with the managed care plan first, then with the relevant state agency overseeing managed care
**Quiz**

**Question # 1:** Effective communication for people with disabilities means (choose the most appropriate answer)

A. Identifying a family member who will convey the information

B. Avoiding complex questions because of the length of time it might take for someone with a speech disability to reply

C. Scanning printed care instructions and sending them via email attachment to someone who is blind at their request

D. Referring deaf patients to other providers who might be willing to provide Sign Language interpreters
Question #2: An example of a method for providing effective communication is (choose the most appropriate answer)

A. Instructing a person who is blind to ask a friend or family member to read aloud the printed directions for preparing for an upcoming test

B. Writing a note to a person who is deaf to convey test results that revealed a serious medical condition

C. Using the telecommunications relay service to reschedule an appointment with a hard of hearing person

D. Speaking loudly to a person with a cognitive disability to be sure the person understands what is being said
Question #1: Effective communication for people with disabilities means (choose the most appropriate answer)

A. Identifying a family member who will convey the information
B. Avoiding complex questions because of the length of time it might take for someone with a speech disability to reply
C. Scanning printed care instructions and sending them via email attachment to someone who is blind at their request
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Question # 2: An example of a method for providing effective communication is (choose the most appropriate answer)

A. Instructing a person who is blind to ask a friend or family member to read aloud the printed directions for preparing for an upcoming test

B. Writing a note to a person who is deaf to convey test results that revealed a serious medical condition

C. Using the telecommunications relay service to reschedule an appointment with a hard of hearing person

D. Speaking loudly to a person with a cognitive disability to be sure the person understands what is being said