

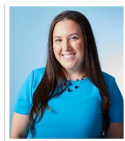


De-Escalation & Conflict Resolution Approaches for Families & Care Teams

Today's Panelists



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Course Objectives

Upon completion of each session, participants should be able to:

- Recognize common sources of conflict among families, caregivers, and healthcare providers.
- Apply practical de-escalation techniques during emotionally charged care situations.
- Utilize structured communication tools to improve clarity, collaboration, and problem-solving.
- Strengthen care transitions through aligned expectations and proactive engagement strategies



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Families and Care Professionals

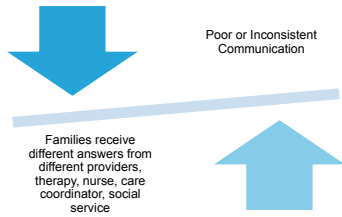
Communication – Conflict



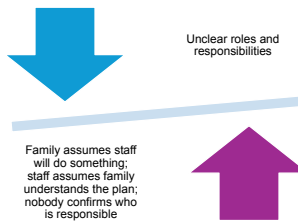
Communication – Conflict

- Different expectations about care
- Communication breakdowns
- Unclear role
- Differences in care priorities
- Resident / Client preferences
- Changes in condition or prognosis
- Disagreements about treatment decisions
- Caregiver stress
- Cultural religious and personal differences
- Loss of trust

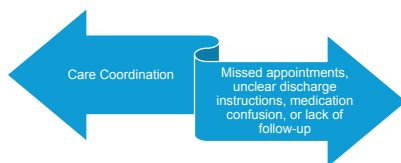
Inconsistent Communication



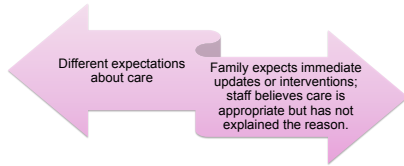
Unclear Roles



Care Coordination

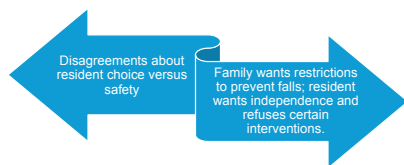


Expectations





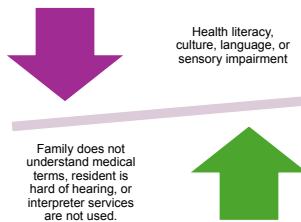
Disagreements



Decision Making



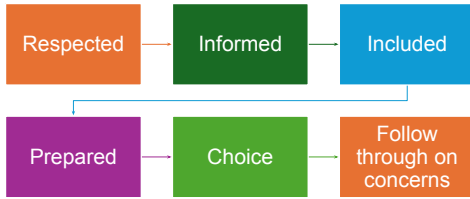
Communication Barriers



Trust



Importance of Trust



De-escalation Strategies

De-Escalation

Avoid	Avoid aggressive body language
Maintain	Maintain eye contact
Calm	Slow calm breaths
Stand	Stand at a right angle
Speak	Speak calmly

De-Escalation

Never argue

Do not challenge

Allow only one person to talk

Treat with respect

Allow time to respond.

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PATHWAY HEALTH



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PATHWAY HEALTH

Teepa Snow's - Positive Approach to Care®

• Knock on the door or table

• Signal your approach

• Open hand, smile (Do not approach until resident / client makes eye contact)

• Call the person by preferred name

• Approach the person from the front

• Offer hand

• Stand to the side of the person

• Greet the person

• Get to the person's eye level

• Deliver the message

Homepage - Positive Approach to Care

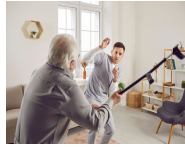
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ComForCare HOME CARE

PATHWAY HEALTH

Teepa Snow Approaching a Distressed Person

- Do not argue
- Avoid
- Listen
- Allow personal space
- Focus on behavior, not the person
- Do not touch the person
- Do not threaten
- Do not ask "Why"



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De-Escalation and the Environment



- Know the environment
- Remove objects that may cause harm
- Maintain the person's public space
- Assess the environment for triggers; TV programs

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De-Escalation Communication

- Remain calm and respectful
- Listen without interrupting
- Acknowledge emotions
- Use simple, clear language
- Maintain personal space
- Do not argue or become defensive
- Offer reasonable choices
- Reduce stimulation
- Set respectful boundaries
- Explain the next step
- Allow time to calm
- Seek assistance when necessary

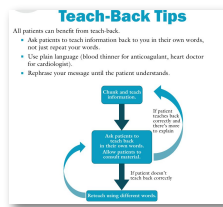
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Strategies to Improve Communication

Tips to Improve Communication

- Medication instructions
- A new diagnosis
- Next steps for follow-up testing
- Recommended behavior changes
- Treatment options
- Treatment plans



Service Concern

- Delayed response
- Missed or delayed family updates
- An incorrect meal
- Lost clothing or personal belongings
- Poor communication between staff and families
- Concerns about staff attitude or conduct
- Delayed care or assistance
- Medication or treatment questions
- Housekeeping or laundry concerns
- Dissatisfaction with care planning or routines

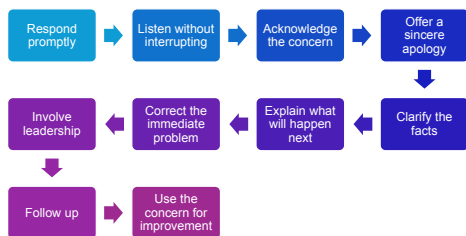
Case Study: Family Concern about Delayed Care

- Mr. Lewis is an 86-year-old nursing home resident who requires assistance with toileting. His daughter arrives for an afternoon visit and finds him waiting for help after using the call light. She becomes visibly upset, raises her voice at the nursing station, and says, "No one is taking care of my father. I have called three times, and I am reporting this facility."
- The nursing assistant responds defensively and says, "We are short staffed, and everyone is busy." The daughter becomes more agitated, begins speaking louder, and demands to see the Director of Nursing immediately.

Case Study: Family Concern About Delayed Care

- The charge nurse approaches calmly, maintains a respectful distance, and says, "I can see that you are very concerned about your father. Let's first make sure he is comfortable, and then I would like to hear exactly what happened." The charge nurse asks another staff member to assist Mr. Lewis immediately and invites the daughter to speak in a private area.
- The nurse listens without interrupting, acknowledges the daughter's frustration, and apologizes for the delay. The nurse explains that the concern will be reviewed, identifies who will follow up, and gives the daughter a specific time for the next update. The nurse also completes a resident assessment, documents the concern, notifies the appropriate supervisor, and reviews call-light response times with the care team.

Service Recovery



Service Recovery Process: LEARN

L- Listen

E- Empathize and acknowledge

A- Apologize and access

R- Respond

N- Notify



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Staff Training: Case Study

Mrs. Thomas's daughter arrives at the facility and is upset because she was not notified that her mother refused breakfast and morning medications. The nurse had assessed Mrs. Thomas and contacted the provider but had not yet called the family. The daughter states, "No one communicates with me, and I cannot trust this facility."

Appropriate staff response

The nurse should move the conversation to a private area, listen without interrupting, acknowledge the daughter's concern, and apologize for the delayed update. The nurse should explain the resident's current condition, assessment findings, provider notification, and plan of care. The nurse and daughter should agree on when the next update will occur and who will provide it. The concern and follow-up plan should be documented according to facility procedure.



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Discussion Questions

- What contributed to the conflict?
- What should staff say first?
- Did the resident / client require an immediate assessment?
- Who should be notified?
- What communication plan could prevent this concern from recurring?



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Immediate Service Recovery

- Providing requested care or assistance
- Correcting a meal or environmental concern
- Clarifying the care plan or treatment rationale
- Contacting the charge nurse, provider, or department manager
- Locating missing clothing or personal property
- Correcting inaccurate information
- Arranging a meeting or care conference
- Establishing a schedule for family updates

Receiving Concern

- Move the discussion to a private location when appropriate.
- Allow the resident / client or family member to explain the concern.
- Remain calm, respectful, and non-defensive.
- Thank the person for communicating the concern.
- Clarify the desired outcome or resolution.
- Avoid discussing confidential information in the presence of unauthorized individuals.

De-escalation Techniques Used

Approached with a calm voice and nonthreatening body language.

Acknowledged the daughter's emotions without arguing.

Addressed the resident / client immediate need first.

Moved the discussion to a private and quieter area.

Listened without interrupting.

Avoided blaming staff or making excuses.

Aligned Training that Supports Effective Communication & Conflict Resolution

Creating Consistency Across Care Teams

- **Develop partner-aligned training** that promotes shared accountability and equips caregivers with consistent approaches for managing difficult conversations and resolving conflict.
- Reinforce the **value of empathy-driven communication** by helping caregivers understand how their interactions influence trust, family satisfaction, and positive care experiences.
- Utilize **role-playing exercises, real-world care scenarios, and technology-enabled learning tools** to strengthen communication skills and de-escalation techniques.
- **Co-develop clear communication protocols and escalation pathways** that reduce uncertainty, support timely problem-solving, and improve confidence when navigating emotionally charged situations.
- Promote a **team-based, person-centered approach** that aligns expectations among families, caregivers, healthcare providers, and community partners, reducing fragmentation and fostering collaboration and mutual respect.



De-Escalation & Conflict Management Training in Action

Building Communication Competency Through Practice

- Incorporate de-escalation techniques into onboarding and ongoing education.
- Use real-world scenarios involving family concerns, dementia-related behaviors, care transitions, and service expectations.
- Reinforce empathy-driven communication that builds trust and reduces tension.
- Provide structured communication tools that support consistency and confidence.
- Utilize coaching and mentorship to strengthen communication skills and best practices.



Reinforcing Skills Through Coaching & Support

- Review real-life situations to reinforce successful conflict resolution strategies.
- Promote active listening, emotional awareness, and person-centered communication.
- Equip caregivers with clear escalation pathways when additional support is needed.
- Encourage collaboration among caregivers, families, nurses, and community partners.
- Foster proactive communication to reduce conflict and strengthen care coordination.



Closing Thought...

Communication skills are not innate.
They are developed, practiced, and reinforced
through intentional training.

Helpful Resources

- ["De-escalation Techniques to Go from Hostile to Harmonious," Lauren Stenson, December 4, 2024, Provider Magazine.](#)
- [National Institute on Aging. \(n.d.\). Coping with agitation, aggression, and sundowning in Alzheimer's disease. National Institutes of Health.](#)
- [Horovitz, B. \(2026, February 10\). 14 ways to de-escalate a tense caregiving situation: Expert advice on handling difficult moments with loved ones to ensure a calmer caregiving environment. AARP.](#)
- [Positive Approach to Care. \(n.d.\). Mission and values: Teepa Snow's transformative Positive Approach to Care®. Teepasnow.com](#)

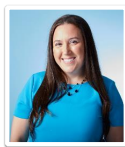
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Thank You!



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