

# Enhancing Communication within the family

## Aims:

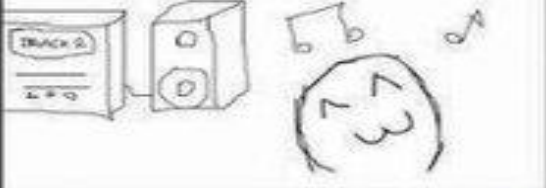


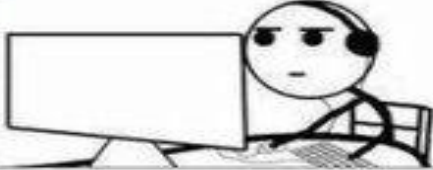






Share skills and expertise

Examine rationale for enhancing  
communication skills

Review and practice techniques

# Rationale for Enhancing Communication Skills

- Clear communication helps all family members cope with everyday stresses
- Can contribute to improving the course a persons recovery
- If family and friends can't communicate freely they are unlikely to be able to help solve problems effectively

	15 Years ago	Today
Listening to music		
Watching a movie		
Contacting people		
Reading the news		
Making Music		

# If this is to be achieved there is a need to:

- Be fully present - there with the person and actively listen
- Ask open-ended questions
- Use reflective statements
- Pause for the person to think and speak
- Recognise the challenges that the person has faced/is facing and use empathy
- Ask permission e.g. 'Do you mind if ...'
- Validate their strengths and assets
- Invite/provide choices
- Point out progress
- Remind them that they are the experts
- Support the person in taking the lead and not telling them what to do and what is good for them
- Avoid power-robbing language
- Avoid getting into battles with people - 'yes it is' 'no it isn't' ...
- Avoid 'you' statements and use 'I' statements instead.....

# 'I' statements rather than 'you' statements

Maintaining a good relationship with someone when you have different views on something is hard ... one way of doing this is avoiding 'you' statements and using 'I' statements instead

For example:

- You are being aggressive .... I was frightened of you
- You missed your appointment ... I missed seeing you at our appointment last week

'You' statements:

- Sound blaming and judgemental - like pointing the finger at the person
- Sound absolute - like my way of seeing things is the only right way
- Make the other person feel cornered and defensive - in the situation
- less likely to co-operate and less likely to look at their own part
- Inspire destructive power struggles

## Small Group Exercise

Hopeful - Recovery Based '*empowering*' I rather than You Language:

Power Robbing Language	What's a empowering alternative?
You need to	
You should	
You will never be able to...	
You can't	
Problem	
Yes, but	
The best way is	
My advice is	

# Advice in Disguise

- Have you thought of?
- Would it be a good idea?
- Should you check that you with someone else?
- The Give Away is in the first word...
- Is
- Isn't
- Should
- Are
- Wouldn't

# Empowering Questions:

- Are more likely to start with What or How
- Go beyond giving information by asking for discovery
- Raise self awareness by provoking thinking and constructive challenge
- *What are you putting up with that you would like to change?*
- *What do you like doing?*
- *What one thing would you change for the better?*
- *What impact is this having on you?*
- *What would the consequences of that be on other family members?*



# Practical Communication Ground Rules

- Talk to the person, not about them
- Use names, rather than he/she.
- Avoid asking "why?" - as this invites intellectualising analysis and challenges motivation
- Speak one at a time
- Avoid interrupting each other
- No one's opinion is any more important than the next persons

# Small Group Exercise

## Making a request

1. Group members choose a simple request. Use whatever phrase feels natural eg "I would really like it if you helped with the washing up" rather than "you should do the washing up more often"
  2. Take it in turns to practice
  3. Group members provide feedback by focusing upon what I liked and what specific aspects could be enhanced.
- Look at the person
  - Say exactly what you would like them to do - e.g. I would like you to; I would appreciate it if you would; I would be pleased if you would
  - Tell them what impact it would have upon you if they did it

# Barriers in communication are perpetuated by:

- With holding information
- Hidden agendas
- Lack of clarity/ambiguity
- Contradictory verbal and non verbal behaviour
- Inauthentic feedback
- Insensitivity
- Time management blocking technique's

# Specific Communication skills

- Listening
- Expressing positive feelings
- Making requests
- Expressing concern

# Expressing something positively: an example

- Look at the person
- Say exactly what they did that pleased you
- Tell them how their positive actions made you feel

# Expressing Positive Feelings

Day	What exactly they did that pleased you	What did you say?
MON		
TUES		
WED		
THURS		
FRI		
SAT		
SUN		

Examples:

•I really liked it when you.....

Helped in the garden; Were on Time; Listened; Made that suggestion; Tidied up;  
Offered to help; Cooked that meal; Made that call

# Making a request: an example

- Look at the person
- Say exactly what you would like them to do - e.g. *I would like you to; I would appreciate it if; I would be pleased if you could...*
- Tell them the impact their participation would have upon you ... *"it would relieve me of the worry of not getting everything done; help tremendously; reduce my work load; great to do something together"*

Note: Use whatever phrase feels comfortable and natural. As a general principle, requests should start with "I" would really like it if you helped with the washing up" rather than "you should do the washing up more often"

# Making a Request

Day	Person who made the request	What exactly did you request?
MON		
TUES		
WED		
THURS		
FRI		
SAT		
SUN		

In asking someone for something, you can use phrases like:

- I would like you to.....
- I would appreciate it if you would .....
- I would be pleased if you would .....



# Expressing concern: an example

- Look at the person
- Say exactly what they did that concerned you
- Tell them how you felt
- Do something to try and resolve the issue that led you to have these feelings e.g.. Make a request, suggest problem solving the issue.

Effective communication involves being alert to pitfalls such as :

- Talking in the third person
- Putdowns
- Lacking specificity when expressing concern
- Not addressing obstacles to effective communication when and if they occur

# Effective Communication involves:

- Setting aside a "good" time and having a clear agenda
- Listening, praising, assertion, making requests and expressing concern eloquently
- Adhering to ground rules
- Giving clear, unambiguous information
- Allowing discussion and dialogue
- Supporting and encouraging the expression of feelings
- Practice

# References and Bibliography

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- Meriden Programme: family work manual  
<http://www.meridenfamilyprogramme.com/>
- Gamble, C., Brennan, G (2006) Working with Serious Mental Illness: A manual for clinical practice. Elsevier: London