

Community mental health tobacco treatment training

Training guide: Module 5

## **Core communication skills**

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### Core communication skills

#### Importance:

- It is important for practitioners to be aware of principles of effective communication and how these can be used when discussing smoking and smoking cessation with SMI clients.
- It is important for practitioners to be aware about how to adapt treatment to SMI clients and SMI clients with learning disabilities (LD).

#### Purpose:

- To teach participants how to maximise the good listening and communication skills they already have and apply the skills of non-biased listening.
- To gain confidence in techniques that elicit the patient's views and questions on smoking and smoking cessation, providing reassurance, and dispelling myths in a non-judgmental, clear, and accurate manner.
- To review guidance on how to tailor communications for SMI clients, SMI clients with LD, and individual client needs.

#### Process:

Small group work

#### Resources:

PowerPoint presentation

#### Presenter's notes

Presenter's notes are found in the notes view of the PowerPoint slides. The presenter's notes provide a suggested method for presenting training content and identify where course activities occur. The sources for information and data presented are also included in the presenter's notes.

## Activity: Communication skills practice (virtual course instructions)

<b>Resources:</b> Breakout rooms
<b>Group numbers and duration:</b> Pairs; <b>Two</b> 4-minute sessions
<b>Duration:</b> 15 minutes
<p><b>Method:</b></p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise participants that they are going to split into pairs for <b>4 minutes</b>.</li> <li>• Ask the pairs to interview each other on <b>‘Something I’ve been meaning to complete for ages but haven’t got around to yet’</b> (e.g. clearing up the house, sorting paperwork, decorating or completing course work). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The aim of the exercise is to use all their excellent communication skills to try and find out what is going on from the other person’s perspective and to help the other person <b>think of a solution for themselves</b>.</li> <li>- The interviewer’s task is to <b>use listening skills</b> and <b>ask probing questions</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After 4 minutes bring the first session to a close.</li> <li>• Ask the interviewers whether they accidentally found themselves giving advice when they heard what the situation was.</li> <li>• If so, did they notice the speaker often gave replies like <b>“yes, but I’ve tried that...”</b> or <b>“I can’t do that because...”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whose problem is it? Who has the power to change it?</li> <li>- Who is likely to have the most experience to be able to change it?</li> <li>- What is most likely to make someone change, an idea they have thought of themselves, or something you suggest?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The group will agree that most people will always follow their own ideas and plans more readily than other people’s.</li> <li>• Give feedback that it is natural when someone is struggling or stuck with an issue to offer advice.</li> <li>• However, it takes more time and skill to encourage them to identify their own solutions, but the results are worth it.</li> <li>• For example, when someone wants to give up smoking it is important to use techniques that empower the client and leave them in charge of their own timescale and progress.</li> </ul>

**Step 3:**

- Instruct the group to **swap over roles and continue the exercise for 4 minutes.**
- However, this time the new interviewer **must not offer any advice or solutions but must instead concentrate on asking exploring questions** (e.g. what have you already thought of doing? How long has this thing been an issue? What have other people suggested? What stops you doing that? Does it matter if it ever gets done? Is there anyone who can help you?).

**Step 4:**

- After 4 minutes bring the activity to a close.
- **Ask the interviewers how they felt being instructed not to give advice.**
- Allow them a moment of internal reflection (many will say it was an uncomfortable experience).
- Now ask the interviewee to let you know if, in the absence of advice, there was any point to them having this conversation. Invariably, one or two people will say it was very useful because they started to think about the issue and realised the blocks they'd been putting up and had actually come up with their own answers.

**Trainer [Optional]** If you want to demonstrate the challenges of change, you could ask participants to cross their arms in the way they normally would then quickly uncross them and cross in the other direction:

- How do they feel? Likely they will say strange, uncomfortable etc.
- Was it easy, hard? Likely they will say they had to think about it and, even then, got confused with the old way.
- What do they want to do (if they haven't already)? They will likely say change back.
- Highlight that change is often hard, made even harder with smoking due to addiction.

## Activity: Communication skills practice (Face-to-face course instructions)

<b>Resources:</b> none
<b>Group numbers and duration:</b> Pairs; <b>Two</b> 4-minute sessions
<b>Duration:</b> 15 minutes
<p><b>Method:</b></p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise participants that they are going to split into pairs for <b>4 minutes</b>.</li> <li>• Ask the pairs to interview each other on <b>‘Something I’ve been meaning to complete for ages but haven’t got around to yet’</b> (e.g. clearing up the house, sorting paperwork, decorating or completing course work). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The aim of the exercise is to use all their excellent communication skills to try and find out what is going on from the other person’s perspective and to help the other person <b>think of a solution for themselves</b>.</li> <li>- The interviewer’s task is to <b>use listening skills</b> and <b>ask probing questions</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After 4 minutes bring the first session to a close.</li> <li>• Ask the interviewers whether they accidentally found themselves giving advice when they heard what the situation was.</li> <li>• If so, did they notice the speaker often gave replies like <b>“yes, but I’ve tried that...”</b> or <b>“I can’t do that because...”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whose problem is it? Who has the power to change it?</li> <li>- Who is likely to have the most experience to be able to change it?</li> <li>- What is most likely to make someone change, an idea they have thought of themselves, or something you suggest?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The group will agree that most people will always follow their own ideas and plans more readily than other people’s.</li> <li>• Give feedback that it is natural when someone is struggling or stuck with an issue to offer advice.</li> <li>• However, it takes more time and skill to encourage them to identify their own solutions, but the results are worth it.</li> </ul>

- For example, when someone wants to give up smoking it is important to use techniques that empower the client and leave them in charge of their own timescale and progress.

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