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INTRODUCTION

In this essay, I am going to define communication, models of communications that are employed at my workplace and the communication skills that are used. The essay will also highlight examples of poor communication in the workplace and how it could be improved.

Communication is used of words and behaviour to construct, send and interpret messages (Keyton, 2011) it is also the act of conveying information from one person to another person.

Communication is used as a two – way action which comprises of a sender, message and a receiver according to (Bach and Grant, 2011)

There are two types of communications verbal and non-verbal communication.

They argued that communication can either be verbal through spoken words or in written and non-verbal communication which uses expression in body language (Blazer and Riley, 2007)

Verbal communication involves the use of spoken and written words. Verbal communication forms an essential and greater part of everyday communications, because less mistakes are committed when used.

Non-verbal communication is the way, we communicate without the used of spoken words and written documents it includes tone and rate of voice, body language, facial expression, touch, posture, hand movement, gaze etc.

When I interact with service users at work, I use both verbal and non-verbal communication skills with the service users as claimed by Leonard et al, (2004) that communication when done effectively create a well-understood care plan which reduces errors causing harm to patients.

I have learnt from my experience at work that communication enables staff and service users to establish a therapeutic relationship and also helps service users to cooperate effectively with staff when effective communication skills are used, such as active listening skills.

Active listening is an effective communication and intervention told used in mental health settings to elicit information from service users and carers. Good communication skills and interpersonal skills helps to build a good rapport between service users and healthcare staff, especially when there are concerns or in crisis (McCabe and Timmins, 2006).

However, there is a problem of noise that prevent messages from getting through to the recipient as demonstrated by Maria and Pedro's case study.

In this case study Maria the wife who called the husband Pedro at work to buy something for the family, but, the husband could not hear the message because of background noise.

The model of communication which is used to explain this type of misunderstanding is the Shannon-Weaver model.

Pedro misunderstood Maria's message because of the noise at the building site.

This could have been prevented if Pedro called back to get the message right.

Berlo's model of communication (1960) also explained how messages error could have been avoided by feedback.

According to (Pauley, 2010) described that poor communication can cause barriers if there is no effective communication. If noise disrupts the communication it will not be achieve then the message did not transpire, she also suggested that when feedback did not happen communication is one-way, but two-way communication happen when feedback take place.

Six examples of poor communication in workplace that could affect the messages sent not to be received or misunderstood by the receiver.

The first example of poor communication in workplace arises when feedback to messages are no received to confirm receipt of messages sent. For example, a service user was scheduled to have his annual health checks on a particular day. Every arrangement including his blood test was planned prior to the appointment, a courier was booked at 16:00 hours, the courier did not come on the day of the appointment, he came the next day for collection. He stated when I asked him why he did not come on the day the collection was booked he said he received the message late and therefore had no time to confirm receipt and subsequently forgot all about it. This, according to Berlo's model stresses the fact that feedback allows the sender to decide whether the message has been received and understood.

The second example of poor communication in workplace relate to the use of non-verbal communication Jones (2012), indicates that observation to one's body language will allow room for patient to talk and engage well with the intervention being provided. An example is when a service user who was booked for annual health checks found out from reception that her appointment has been rescheduled due to staff training. She was upset and became verbally abusive to the staff at the reception. When staff intervened, it was established that prior letters and follow up calls made severally to her but would not respond to calls from staff. When she came and heard the appointment has been cancelled she was very angry and became agitated, she was not happy about the cancellation which was evidence in her non-verbal body language shows how upset she was which could prevent intervention to be conducted.

The third example of poor communication in workplace is poor record keeping. The home depot team turned up on a service user's house, who has missed his medication for 2 days, the service user was adamant that he had his injection from his care coordinator. The care coordinator did not sign the medication chart to indicate that the service user had been given the injection, this is a clear case of verbal communication and feedback did not take place, the care coordinator apologised to the home team.

The fourth example of poor communication in workplace is poor handover by staff. An example happens when a service who is on CTO (Community Treatment Order) attended the clinic for review. A consultant must review and renew the treatment order every 6 months if need be. The responsibility of the depot clinic nurse is to check that the consent form has been renewed before given the medication. It was handed over during the morning meeting that the CTO for the service user has expired and that staff should not give the medication until the doctor had reviewed and signed the CTO form. When the service user attended the clinic for his injection the clinic nurse did not do the necessary checks before given the medication. It was later realised that the CTO has not been reviewed and authorised by the Doctor, when she realised what she had done she was asked to fill the incident form.

The fifth example of poor communication in the workplace comes when conducting meetings online using apps such as teams/zoom for meeting.

This can cause breakdown in communication. People do not hear clearly especially when connection is lost causing the camera and the microphone to lose vital information being passed around.

Vital information is sometimes lost due to such interruptions or drop in services/connections. This makes it difficult or impossible to feedback and respond to any messages according to Shannon-Weaver model of communication.

The sixth example of poor communication in the workplace is the lack of communication between healthcare providers in different settings. The service user was admitted to the hospital because of a physical health condition. The staff in the 24 hours supported housing where the patient lives failed to inform the clinic's home depot team, until the home team turned up at the supported housing and they were told of the patient's admission to the hospital. No verbal communication took place prior to their arrival causing waste of time and resources.

Barriers to communication in the workplace.

There are language barriers that confronts staff in mental health settings. Language barrier can have a negative impact on patient's capacity to engage with services and therefore, hinders the creation of subsequent rapport between the nursing staff in their care and treatment. This creates lot of confusion, agitation and fear among patients (Kozier et al., 2012). As it happened in the example below:

The home depot team turned up at the service user home to administer her prescribed medication, she is a Muslim lady. She refused her injection saying that, she will like a female staff to give her the injection not a man, it is against her religion she says, so the home team have to arrange another day for a female staff to go and administer the injection.

service user who is not able to hear using the sign language, they arrange the interpreter, the staff write it down in a paper, no background noise, no distraction, make the service user he understands before given injection.

Another barrier to communication is where the service user is not able to hear and required staff to use non-verbal communication like sign language/arrange an interpreter. Staff will write what is about to happen on a piece of paper and show it to the service user to get his/her consent before given the medication. This can easily be misunderstood by either the staff or the service user.

Consequences of Poor communication in the Workplace.

Firstly, poor communication in the workplace bring about confusion. As communication is central to achieving all goals in the organisation and helps co workers collaborate better with one another. Breach of this in terms of not sharing information causes friction, frustration and confusion (Xuirong et al., 2010). However, good communication behaviour in the workplace creates and provide purpose for both staff and management. This helps an organisation to have same purpose with management and the entire organisation.

Secondly, poor communication in the workplace hinders a transparent organisational culture. Goals and objectives provide direction for every organisation, especially the health care sector. Where this is unclear or not known in any organisation it certainly affects moral of the workers, because they feel unvalued or unappreciated resulting in employees who are demoralised to give their best to that organisation. On the other hand, (Xiurong et al., 2010) is of the view that good communication in the workplace provides purpose for staff and the organisation as a whole.

Thirdly, poor communication in the workplace leads to workplace conflicts. The result of poor communication may leave staff with difficult time meeting their targets or expectations by catching up with their deadlines. This can affect staff confidence and can also leave them embarrassed and feeling of guilt. This should be attended to immediately to maintain a healthy work-life balance to continue to work efficiently. However, Leonard et al., (2004) claimed that good communication culture in an organisation provide accountability and clearly identify who is responsible for what.

Conclusion

In conclusion this essay has looked at the definition of communication. The essay has considered some examples of poor communications in my workplace. The essay has considered the consequences of some poor communication and how this can affect the care and treatment of patients. The essay looked at some models of communications and how this affect the channels of communication. The essay has looked at some barriers of communication and how this could be prevented to bring collaboration and harmony at work. And, finally the essay looked at what good communication at workplace do in general wellbeing of the staff at work.

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