

A reflection on a time where communication has helped to overcome a communication barrier.

Description

I asked to assist with teaching a family member to use a hoist, when receiving a handover from the therapist i was informed that the patient could only speak polish and the daughter could speak little English. The demonstration was for the daughter to be the second carer to support with hoist transfers, it was important for the patient and the daughter to be able to understand all the risks and safe handling of using the hoist. Language line were unable to assist us, however i knew one of the physiotherapists in a different team spoke polish who was happy to translate between us the patient and retaliative.

Felling's

I was feeling let down by language line as this is important for discharge and they made no effort to assist us, i have attempted to use them on serval occasions and have never had any success with them. I was nervous about the situation and could feel anxiety building as i realised how important clear communication would be for the safety and understanding of all involved. Despite my initial concerns i gathered myself and collaborated with the polish speaking physiotherapist, which eased the tension. The support allowed for all involved to feel reassured and to make sure the family were understood. After i felt satisficed knowing that by seeking support and adapting my assessment the language barrier was no longer an issue and the patients care needs were met as.

Evaluation

This experience highlighted the challenges and rewards of finding of seeking alternative ways to communicate when resources are unavailable. By seeking out the polish speaking physiotherapist, i was able to ensure that care and safety instructions were fully understood. Which not only protected the patient it gives the relative the confidence to support the patient and a sense of empowerment. The successful outcome reinforced the value of teamwork and flexibility, resulting in the thought that effective communication is often relied on by the support and willingness of colleagues to draw on their strengths, and the creative problem solving. This situation could have also had a negative effect and caused harm to the patient and family. Gov.wales(2025)

Analylis

The situation showed me that despite my reservations around the demonstration, the impotence of adaptability and resourcefulness of overcoming communication barriers. Drawing on the skills and support of my colleagues not only gained a trust and understanding between therapy staff and the family it allowed to facilitate the practical element and safety of the demonstration. This demonstrated that effective communication goes beyond language. This has allowed me to be empathetic, patient and showing my willingness to find creative solutions to ensure that everyone involved is heard and receives the support that they need. It has shown me the impotence of building positive relationships with colleagues, from diverse backgrounds as their skills can be invaluable. It has also encouraged me to approach future situations with more confidence and adaptability.

Conclusion

This experience has been important in showing me the impotence of being proactive and resourceful when faced with communication barriers. It has taught me that when the outcome does not seem possible, there is often a solution that comes from collaboration with the wider multi-disciplinary team. Going forward I will continue to adapt a flexible approach and build positive relationships with my colleagues to ensure the patients' needs are met and the best outcomes for both the patient and their families. And to recognise the vital role of effective communication and how this impacts compassion and safety of care received.

Action plan

I will continue to seek out language and cultural resources as early as possible and familiarise myself with the language skills within my team. I will also make more of an effort to use visual aids when appropriate to demonstrate techniques when verbal communication is limited. I plan to highlight and share the impotence of effective communication in relation to language barriers and how and where to seek out the resources and information needed. I plan to keep improving skills and following guidelines and training. NHS England (2025)

Reference list

England, N. (2025). *NHS England» Improvement framework: community language translation and interpreting services*. [online] England.nhs.uk. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/improvement-framework-community-language-translation-and-interpreting-services/>. (accessed on 28/01/2026)

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